



Florida International University Issue Forum Recap

On Wednesday, June 25th, 2014, Florida International University, the BuildStrong Coalition, U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, U.S. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart and other members of the Florida Congressional Delegation, and a number of high level Administration officials participated in a forum to discuss how federal, state and local policies, along with innovations in design, can yield safer, more disaster-resilient communities. The event marked the opening of the Designing for Disasters exhibit featuring the FIU Wall of Wind at the National Building Museum. Pictures of the event:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/fiudc>

Caitlin Lucchino of NAMIC represented the BuildStrong Coalition and provided a brief overview of its history and mission. She provided a short briefing on the legislation that the coalition has endorsed, i.e., the Safe Building Code Incentive Act of 2013 (H.R. 1878), Disaster Savings Account Act (H.R. 3989 & S. 1991), Disaster Savings and Resilient Construction Act of 2013 (H.R. 2241), and National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2013 (H.R. 1786).

The event provided a forum to discuss how advancements in building science can drive smart and responsible public policy at the state and federal level. The forum helped drive the conversation on resilient construction forward. BuildStrong was proud to sponsor and participate in the forum. In addition to BuildStrong, the event featured a number of guest speakers, including:

Mark B. Rosenberg, President, Florida International University

President Rosenberg provided personal recollections of the aftermath and long-term effects of Hurricane Andrew. He described the origin of FIU's International Hurricane Research Center and the relocation of the National Hurricane Center.

U.S. Congressman Mario-Diaz-Balart

Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart discussed Florida's unique role as an example of resilience and strong building codes for the rest of the country. Rep. Diaz-Balart commended FIU for its outstanding research in building sciences and cited the university as an example of how research can help influence policy and consumer behavior. He cited the Safe Building Code Incentive Act and Disaster Savings and Resilient Construction Act as ways the federal government can incentivize stronger construction.

Kathryn Sullivan, Administrator and Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Administrator Sullivan discussed NOAA's advancements in real-time forecasting and provided visual depictions of the threat of storm surge and natural disasters to illustrate the importance of the issue.

David Miller, Associate Administrator, Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency

David Miller described his work at FIMA and the role of disaster mitigation within his agency. He explained that building stronger not only reduces risk and insured losses, but also reduces costs to homeowners, businesses, and the government following a natural disaster. He explained that disaster mitigation is the key to ensuring the viability of the National Flood Insurance Program.

Richard Olson, Director, Extreme Events Institute, FIU

Dr. Olson outlined the great work FIU is doing in the field of building sciences and wind testing research. Specifically, Dr. Olson discussed FIU's Public Insurance Loss Model, CEST Storm Surge Model, and Wall of Wind (WOW). He concluded his presentation by showing a short video from the Weather Channel on the FIU Wall of Wind.