

ICLEI Endorses STRONG Act to Support Local Preparedness for Extreme Weather

Federal legislation introduced today by Senators Kerry, Gillibrand, and Lautenberg would improve federal-local coordination for resilience planning, and provide data and tools to support cities and counties on front lines of extreme weather

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Proposed federal legislation announced today would support local planning to create more resilient communities in the face of increasing extreme weather events. The STRONG Act—Strengthening The Resiliency of Our Nation on the Ground—was introduced this morning by Senator John Kerry (D-MA), Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ). The bill has been endorsed by the local elected official Policy Council of ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability USA.

The bill comes as a response to a year of unprecedented extreme weather events across the United States. It would provide state and local planners with tools and information to better prepare for extreme weather events and improve the resilience of local communities. It would develop ways to improve local-state-federal planning and response coordination, and create a “Federal Extreme Weather Resiliency Plan” to support state, local, and private and public sector resilience efforts.

Statement by Mayor Frank Cownie of Des Moines, IA, and an ICLEI USA Board Member:

“After Hurricane Sandy and 2012’s record heat waves and drought, this legislation is welcome news for local governments, who serve as the first responders during extreme weather disasters. The STRONG Act will support more effective, coordinated local planning with the goal of creating more resilient, prepared communities across America. ICLEI’s Policy Council is pleased to endorse this legislation, and we applaud Senator Kerry, Senator Gillibrand, and Senator Lautenberg for their leadership.”

ICLEI’s Policy Council is comprised of six local elected officials who set ICLEI’s policy priorities on climate action, energy and resilience issues, and work to improve local and federal government relationships on these issues.

In October, ICLEI and the U.S. Green Building Council organized a small delegation of local elected officials from around the country who provided input to Senator Kerry’s staff on local government resilience and planning priorities.

Statement by Michael Schmitz, ICLEI USA Executive Director:

“More frequent and destructive extreme weather is a reality that city and county leaders cannot ignore. The time is now to recognize our communities’ risks and vulnerabilities and take steps to adapt and prepare. The STRONG Act would provide what local governments have been asking for: better data and tools to make informed decisions, and better planning coordination between local, state, and federal decision makers, as well as the private sector. This legislation is a great first step to protect citizens, local businesses, and infrastructure.”