

For Immediate Release January 14, 2013 Contact: Matt Dennis 202-225-6506

Congresswoman Nita Lowey, Ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, today delivered the following statement at the Rules Committee regarding consideration of emergency disaster relief:

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for the opportunity to testify here on behalf of speedy passage of this legislation. The underlying bill, with the addition of the Frelinghuysen amendment, will help families, businesses, and communities affected by Sandy to recover and rebuild.

Sandy devastated much of the Northeast and is one of the costliest natural disasters in our nation's history. I am pleased that the first order of business in the 113th Congress may be passing this emergency disaster relief.

However, I was disappointed that similar legislation wasn't enacted before the end of last Congress and I remain wary that some in this House wish to scuttle the effort. By Friday evening, the Rules Committee had received 92 amendments. I am deeply concerned the rule will make in order so many as to constitute filibuster by amendment, or any number of small reduction amendments making for death by a thousand cuts.

I also worry that the Rules Committee will make in order poison pill amendments such as several attempts to re-litigate Davis Bacon or other controversial matters and unprecedented efforts to offset the entire cost of the bill, including FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund. I ask the Committee not to propose a rule that hinders swift House passage of a bill the Senate can pass and the President can sign.

On the other hand, I share the concerns of some of the other amendments' sponsors. Mr. Holt's amendment to waive the FY 1999 limitation on use of CDBG funds is a good idea. I also support efforts to help others affected by Sandy or impacted by other natural disasters.

However, my chief concern is speedy passage of H.R. 152, as amended by the Frelinghuysen amendment. While there are some provisions I would modify if I could, my first concern is seeing this legislation promptly enacted. If the Rules Committee decides not to make the other useful amendments in order, I hope we can find other opportunities to move them.

Again, I thank my good friends Mr. Rogers and Mr. Frelinghuysen for their efforts. And I thank the New York, New Jersey and other Northeast delegations for all their hard work. I hope this Committee and this House will act quickly to fulfill the fundamental obligation of the federal government to help those affected by Sandy to recover and rebuild.

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