

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell,

As you finalize the legislative calendar for the end of the 118th Congress, we write to strongly urge you to ensure critical legislation to reauthorize the National Landslide Preparedness Act is included in any end of year package. The National Landslide Preparedness Act Reauthorization Act (H.R. 7003) is a bipartisan and bicameral bill that passed the House of Representatives earlier this year as part of the Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 (H.R. 6093).

As you may know, the tragic 2014 landslide near Oso, Washington, claimed 43 lives, and severely damaged public infrastructure and private property, highlighting the urgent need to better understand and prepare for landslide hazards. Following this tragedy, to improve natural disaster emergency preparedness Congress passed the National Landslide Preparedness Act, which was signed into law in 2021, to help save lives, protect communities and property and target key gaps in science and mapping critical to understanding landslide hazards.

H.R. 7003 would reauthorize the National Landslide Preparedness Act through fiscal year 2028. The law has helped communities plan for and respond to natural hazards, updated the nation's topographical maps, and informed public safety, national security, planning, infrastructure, transportation, agriculture, and natural resource management. On September 14, 2024, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) announced the first tranche of funding from the law, totaling nearly \$1 million, to help communities improve landslide hazard maps, strengthen early warning systems, and enhance community resilience to landslides. These funds are boosting landslide preparedness and research efforts nationwide, benefiting the states of Washington, Arizona, Colorado, North Dakota, Kentucky, Oregon, North Carolina, Indiana, and Utah through this initial funding round. Communities are just beginning to realize the benefits of this law, which is currently expired after Congress failed to pass H.R. 7003 before September 30, 2024.

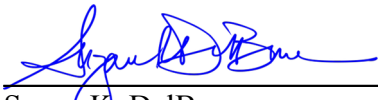
The National Landslide Preparedness Act that expired earlier this year:

1. Expanded existing early warning systems for post-wildfire landslides in recently burned areas across the United States. It also required procedures to be developed for federal monitoring of stormwater drainage in areas with a high risk of landslides, in coordination with state, local, and tribal governments.
2. Established a National Landslides Hazard Reduction program through the U.S. Geological Survey, which is identifying risks and hazards from landslides to protect at-risk communities and improve communication and emergency preparedness.

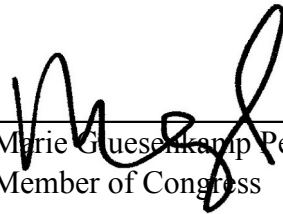
3. Directed the USGS to implement a 3D Elevation Program to increase data collection and landslide threat identification across the country. Enhanced elevation data, such as LIDAR, is critical for numerous reasons—to help communities plan for and respond to natural hazards; to update the nation’s topographical maps; and to inform a myriad of uses including public safety, national security, planning, infrastructure, transportation, agriculture, and natural resource management.
4. Authorized new programs to provide funding to state, territorial, local, and tribal governments for landslide research, mapping, assessment, and data collection.
5. Established an advisory committee on landslides and created an interagency committee to coordinate better landslide responses from multiple government agencies with jurisdiction.

Each of these provisions has been instrumental to improving our understanding of landslide risks and hazards. We have a responsibility to ensure the next natural disaster does not become a national tragedy. We urge you to ensure passage of the National Landslide Preparedness Act Reauthorization Act and/or the Weather Act Reauthorization Act before the end of the year. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We stand ready to work with you to ensure the protection of communities and the improvement of natural disaster emergency preparedness.

Sincerely,



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Marie Guesenken Perez
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



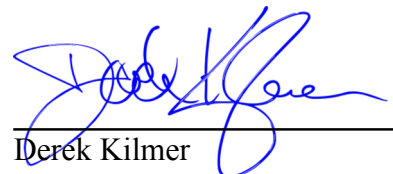
Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress