

Action Alert: Co-sponsors needed for the Senate Hurricane Research Bill

Last month, Senators Mel Martinez and Bill Nelson, both of Florida, introduced the National Hurricane Research Initiative Act ([S. 1485](#)), which would officially declare an urgent need to conduct long-term multi-entity hurricane research and establish the National Hurricane Research Initiative as a collaboration between NOAA and the National Science Foundation. This bill has only one other co-sponsor, Senator David Vitter (LA), and Senator Nelson is seeking many more. The timetable for moving this bill is unclear -- the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee isn't likely to take up this bill until their work on climate change legislation is complete -- which gives us time to assist Senator Nelson in garnering more co-sponsors.

Our community should support Senator Nelson and his commitment to advancing this bill by helping him to find co-sponsors in the Senate. S. 1485 authorizes about \$75 million for FY 2010-2015 to NSF and NOAA, most of which is through competitive grants. I urge you to contact both of your senators and ask them to consider co-sponsoring this bill. While your state may not be directly threatened by hurricanes, our community will be instrumental in doing the research -- and the economic impact of these large storms affects the entire country. While I am sure that this is something staffers understand, you might want to make this argument, especially if you live in a non-coastal state.

If you are willing to ask your senators to co-sponsor this bill, please call their Washington offices and ask for the staff person who handles science issues. (Be sure to speak with them personally or leave a message for them rather than just leaving a message at the front desk.) Let the science staffer know your academic title to establish credibility and then make the case for why the senator should co-sponsor S. 1485. Explain how important the competitive grants program, the National Hurricane Research Initiative, could be to you, to your institution, and to the country. Then ask them to e-mail Lea Shanley (lea_shanley@billnelson.senate.gov) in Senator Nelson's office to request co-sponsorship. (This step is critical!!) Please let Laura Curtis know you are making this effort -- and let her know if you would like her to make a follow up call with any additional information. To find the phone numbers for your senate offices, see http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

Thanks very much -- Rick Anthes