

## The Key to Protection is Hurricane Preparedness

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A recent poll found that 40 percent of residents living within 30 miles of the coast had no hurricane preparedness plan. At the same time, new forecasts report that there is a 49 percent chance of a hurricane hitting the Gulf Coast this season.

While Congressman Ron Klein and I are working on a solution to provide affordable homeowners' insurance to help communities rebuild and repair after a storm, the best defense is still preparedness. As we enter the 2007 hurricane season, now is the best time to prepare your home and your family. From now until June 12, you can take advantage of a sales tax holiday on plastic tarps, flashlights, gasoline cans, weather radios, and other items that will help you weather a storm.

A few things you can do to prepare for a storm are:

- Stock enough food and water for three days
- Obtain maps of evacuation routes
- Make plans to secure your property
- Make sure the trees around your house are well trimmed

North America has a high incidence of natural disasters. There are earthquakes in California, tornadoes in Kansas, volcanoes in Hawaii, blizzards in Buffalo, and hurricanes from Texas to Maine. We are a nation of disasters waiting to happen. While you prepare your home to mitigate risk, I am working to make sure that every American has affordable insurance to protect their biggest investment; their home.

Nearly three years since Hurricane Charlie wiped out much of Charlotte County, we are still rebuilding our community. As a country, we can do better to protect our communities and make sure that recovery efforts are swift, and comprehensive.

I have gotten a commitment from Congressional leaders - for the first time - to find a solution to the homeowners' insurance crisis. It is clear that homeowners across Florida need a national catastrophe insurance program. A national solution must also protect homeowners by providing comprehensive coverage that eliminates the loophole between wind and water. In addition, national legislation must help mitigate risk by encouraging homebuilders to use state of the art construction technology.

In the coming weeks, Congressman Klein and I will be completing legislation to create a national catastrophe program. As we work to make sure homeowners get the coverage they need, I encourage you to prepare yourself for this hurricane season. The key to protection is preparedness.

Congressman Tim Mahoney

Florida's 16th Congressional District