

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today testified before a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works entitled “Sandy and Its Impacts: A Local Perspective.” The following is the text of his opening remarks as prepared for delivery.

“I want to express thanks and appreciation for the work of FEMA under Dr. Fugate and the workers who came from all over New Jersey and from all over the United States to help protect and assist the many people in New Jersey affected by the storm.

“I join Reps. Pascrell, Pallone, Bishop, Langevin, and others in their request for emergency funds to help our region recover from Sandy. However, today we must consider much more than repairing the damage from Superstorm Sandy.

“In recent years we have experienced in various parts of New Jersey unprecedented flood, winds, rains, and tidal surges. The next storm will be different from Sandy only in detail. These unprecedented storms are the new normal, notwithstanding denials of climate change. We are deluding ourselves if we think we are not experiencing climate change.

“We must not simply replace the structures damaged by Sandy; we must build resilient infrastructure to withstand tomorrow’s superstorms. We must build for the future – the new normal.

“That means significant investment in power engineering, transportation engineering, rail engineering, wireless engineering, shoreline engineering, river flood control engineering, residential planning and strengthening – all in addition to taking aggressive steps to bring climate change under control as best we can.

“Just as levee strengthening was part of the emergency supplemental spending in response to Katrina, so infrastructure strengthening must be part of our response to Sandy.”