

Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this bipartisan amendment to maintain the 10 percent statutory NFIP premium increases.

While it is important to keep NFIP authorized and to begin solving its funding problems, we must make sure we are improving participation in the program and keeping premiums affordable. Low participation in NFIP in high-risk areas has been one of the program's most persistent challenges.

That is why I joined my colleagues in sponsoring this amendment. Doubling the maximum premium rate increase from 10 to 20 percent would hurt existing policyholders nationwide and in my Central New Jersey district.

If homeowners get hit with annual premium increases in excess of 10 percent, I am concerned that they will decide flood insurance is something they can do without. And when a catastrophic event occurs, taxpayers will pick up the tab with disaster aid.

I have heard from homeowners, flood plain managers, insurers, and realtors in my congressional district about the importance of passing an extension of NFIP. Although I am pleased that we are considering the underlying bill, we should be encouraging more homeowners to obtain flood insurance, not placing an extra burden on policyholders who are doing the right thing protecting their homes from flood.

I ask my colleagues to join me supporting this amendment.