

House Passes Temporary Extension of National Flood Insurance Program

Program expired on May 31; Big “I” continues to press for long term extension and needed reforms.

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 23, 2010 —The Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America (the Big “I”) today commented on the U.S. House of Representative’s passage of H.R. 5569, the “National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act of 2010,” sponsored by Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) and Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.), which extends the currently expired National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) until Sept. 30, 2010.

“We commend the House for passing a temporary extension and urge the Senate to take up an extension immediately,” says Charles Symington, Big “I” senior vice president of government affairs. “The program has been expired since May 31, putting millions of consumers at risk from the economic dangers of flood right in the midst of the hurricane season and storm season in the Midwest. The expiration has also threatened to wreak havoc in both the real estate and insurance markets during a period of great economic difficulty. It is vital that the program be extended and we therefore urge the Senate to act on this bill without delay.”

The NFIP expired on May 31, 2010 and is currently in the midst of one of its longest lapse since it was enacted.

“More than three weeks into the 2010 hurricane season, which started on June 1 and scientists are forecasting will be very active, millions of homeowners and small businesses are in flood insurance limbo,” says John Prible, Big “I” vice president of federal government affairs. “We are increasingly frustrated by these repeated short term extensions and the periods of expiration that sometimes result from them. While we commend the House action today, a more permanent solution in the form of a long term extension of the program is a top priority for the Big ‘I’ and the 300,000 independent insurance agents, brokers and staff we represent.”

In the 110th Congress, the Flood Insurance Reform and Modernization (FIRM) Act of 2007 made progress in the House and Senate. The legislation would have extended the program for five years and made significant and needed reforms to help put the program on sound financial footing. This summer, similar legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives.

Founded in 1896, the Big “I” is the nation’s oldest and largest national association of independent insurance agents and brokers, representing a network of more than 300,000 agents, brokers and their employees nationally. Its members are businesses that offer customers a choice of policies from a variety of insurance companies. Independent agents and brokers offer all lines of insurance—property, casualty, life, health, employee benefit plans and retirement products. Web address: www.independentagent.com.

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