

Extreme Weather...

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Precipitation, on average, is likely to be less frequent but more intense, the report finds, and at the same time droughts are likely to become more frequent and severe in some regions.



Hot, dry weather means more wildfires. Here, Lanny Thomise of the Juniper Valley Fire Department cuts into a burning tree in Colorado's Nash Ranch Fire as it reaches 1,100 acres in size. June 27, 2008. (Photo by Bryan Dahlberg courtesy FEMA)

Hurricanes will likely have increased precipitation and wind.

The strongest cold season storms in the Atlantic and Pacific are likely to produce stronger winds and higher extreme wave heights, according to the report.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, plays a key role in the Climate Change Science Program, which is responsible for coordinating and integrating climate research, observations, decision support, and communications of 13 federal departments and agencies.

The report warns that these more extreme weather patterns will be tough on the U.S. economy.

"During the period 1980-2006, the U.S. experienced 70 weather-related disasters in which overall damages exceeded \$1 billion at the time of the event," the report states. "Clearly, the direct impact of extreme weather and climate events on the U.S. economy is substantial."

Many changes in the North American climate have already occurred, the report explains.

Most of North America is experiencing more unusually hot days and nights and fewer unusually cold days. The last 10 years have seen fewer severe cold waves than any other 10 year period in the historical record, which dates back to 1895. The number of heat waves has been increasing since 1950.

There has been a decrease in frost days and a lengthening of the frost-free season over the past century.

Heavy downpours have become more frequent and intense and now account for a larger percentage of total precipitation.

Droughts are becoming more severe in some regions.

Atlantic tropical storm and hurricane destructive potential has increased substantially since about 1970.

Storm tracks have shifted northward in both the North Atlantic and North Pacific over the past 50 years. The strongest cold season storms are becoming even stronger in the North Pacific.

To read the report, "Weather and Climate Extremes in a Changing Climate," click [here](#).

POA Editorial: Corporate Bail-Outs are Inconsistent with the Free Market Doctrine

In the February '08 edition of [The Policyholder Advocate](#), we reported that the U.S. Senate rejected a bill passed by the House that would add wind coverage to the National Flood Insurance Program ("NFIP").

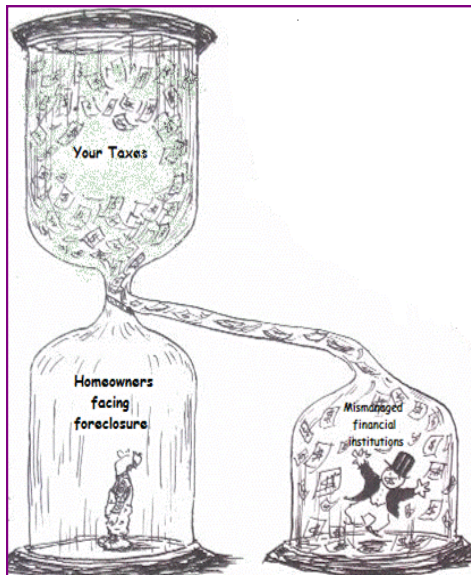
The proposed bill was the brainchild of Mississippi's own U.S. Representative Gene Taylor and was supported by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The bill was overwhelmingly approved in the House but got submarined in the Senate.

Most of the Republican Senators and a relatively significant number of Democrat Senators voted against the bill because of hefty influence from insurers who realized government-issued policies would displace their own overnight.

Many of these Senators attempted to explain away their vote by clinging to the standard old free market lingo that promotes the notion that the laws of supply and demand best dictate rates and coverage. Under many circumstances, the free market system works but when it comes to products and services, like insurance that are mandated by third parties (mortgage companies, states, etc...), government must step in to ensure availability and affordability.

If demand and supply actually worked, why then are insurers leaving geographic areas where demand is unfulfilled because of inadequate supply yet premiums are virtually unrestricted?

Moreover, if the free market theories to which many legislators subscribe truly reward well managed companies and foster growth and competition, why did the fed bail out the very financial institutions responsible for the economic melt down? Corporate bail outs go against every principle of the free market system.



Every month, another insurer announces it will no longer cover certain geographic areas – mostly properties located near one of the coasts. Since half of the U.S. population lives within 50 miles of a coast, chances are good that you will be directly and negatively impacted by the inconsistent application of the free market doctrine. You may well find that your own insurer pulls the plug on coverage, sending you into a tailspin trying to replace lost coverage regardless of the price you are willing to pay.

Legislators should revisit the subject as soon as a new president is installed in January.