

This week, I met with my First District Emergency Response Councils both in the lower and the upper ends of the First District. In these meetings, the discussion centered on how, at the federal level, the government can help in local efforts to prevent, respond to and reduce the adverse health effects of public health emergencies and natural and manmade disasters. We were pleased to have special guests from the Governor's Office, who shared their efforts to assist first responders. The Virginia Department of Emergency Management outlined preparations for this hurricane season.

Atlantic hurricane season officially began June 1, 2010, and ends November 30, 2010. The House of Representatives passed legislation this week marking the importance of sharing information to be prepared for potential storms. As we mark the official beginning of summer and enter the height of hurricane season, it's important for local officials at all levels to collaborate in order for our communities to be prepared for these storms. Hurricane Isabel, which hit our area in September 2003, is a not-so-distant memory for many of us here.

It is especially important for local officials to coordinate their efforts in order to maximize the preparedness of our communities. By coming together, we can all better understand the region's needs and challenges so that everyone can coordinate resources more efficiently to focus emergency efforts. Disaster preparedness and response is a responsibility we all share—as individuals, as family members, and as citizens of our communities, our state, and our nation. Both the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) and the [Virginia Department of Emergency Management](#) have many online resources to learn what you can do to be prepared for 2010, and I encourage you to visit their websites to learn more.

On Wednesday evening, I was pleased to talk with many of you during a telephone town hall meeting where we discussed a range of issues, from the oil spill in the Gulf to the change of command in Afghanistan. But one of the most telling points of the call was the results from a poll, in which I asked what the most important issue was. The number one answer was concern for government spending, followed by the economy. I couldn't agree more that we need to stop the out-of-control government spending, and will continue working in Washington to cut spending, and assure responsible use of your taxpayer dollars.

If you didn't receive a call on Wednesday, and would like to participate, please go to my website, <http://www.wittman.house.gov/>, and sign up for my next telephone town hall meeting. I look forward to speaking with you!

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*