**Crapo Statement at Hearing on NFIP Reauthorization**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Chairman of the United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, today delivered the following opening remarks during a full committee hearing on “Reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program, Part I.”

The text of Chairman Crapo’s remarks, as prepared, is below.

“This hearing will come to order.

“We are joined by Roy Wright, Deputy Associate Administrator of Insurance and Mitigation at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, who returns to our committee following his testimony last September on recommendations from the Technical Mapping Advisory Council.

“Today, he will provide testimony on the operations and financial condition of the National Flood Insurance Program, steps FEMA has taken to implement legislative reforms, and to recommend potential legislative reforms.

“Our nation has seen some of the most devastating natural disasters in its history the last two decades.

“These catastrophes displace families, harm businesses and disrupt lives.

“The NFIP was created nearly five decades ago as the rising cost of providing post-disaster relief fell on taxpayers.

“The Program’s mission is to expand homeowners’ access to flood insurance in exchange for local communities reducing their exposure to flood risk.

“Currently, the NFIP administers approximately 5.1 million policies, totaling $1.25 trillion in coverage across 22,000 communities.

“Unpredictable weather and changing topography leave businesses and households across thousands of communities vulnerable.

“Since 2005, Hurricanes Katrina, Irene, Superstorm Sandy, and others have overwhelmed Gulf and coastal communities and drastically increased claims.

“But flood disaster is not unique to the coasts and Gulf as nearly one-fifth of all NFIP claims come from outside of high-risk areas.

“The frequency and scale of recent catastrophes have pushed the Program to amass $24.6 billion in debt with the United States Treasury Department.

“The Program’s structural issues must continually be addressed so that it can better withstand strenuous conditions.

“Throughout its history, Congress has acted to significantly reform the Program to make it more efficient and effective.

“Since 2012, legislative action has improved communication of actual flood risk and spurred communities toward better floodplain management while also balancing affordability to promote widespread flood insurance adoption.

“But there is still work to do.

“Today, Mr. Wright will provide recommendations on how to improve the Program.

“For example, how FEMA can use technology, such as LIDAR, to create maps that better reflect true flood risk.

“How to best promote the growth of the private insurance market so that policyholders have more options – and in some cases, more affordable options than offered through the NFIP – and risk is shared by both the government and the private sector.

“And how long the program should be reauthorized to ensure reforms can be implemented and the market has greater certainty.

“Ranking Member Brown and I have started working together on a bipartisan basis to hear the thoughts and concerns of various stakeholders and members of the committee.

“And we look forward to working with FEMA to understand the legislative changes that can help the NFIP achieve its goals.”