

Washington, DC (June 1, 2011) – Hurricane season starts today, and as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications, Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09) urges all citizens to take steps to ensure they are prepared.

"I regularly meet with emergency managers at the federal, state and local levels to make sure they are ready to respond to a hurricane or any other disaster that might occur," Bilirakis said. "Citizens must do their part as well by developing an emergency plan and being aware of evacuation routes in their area."

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is predicting an above-average hurricane season with the possibility of 12 to 18 named storms, six to 10 of which could become hurricanes. NOAA predicts that several of those storms could be major hurricanes with winds of 111 miles an hour or higher.

"So far this year our nation has experienced tornados, floods, wildfires, and severe winter storms. Our hearts and support go out to the victims of these disasters as they work to recover," he said. "Disasters can strike at any time, often with little warning. We must work to create a culture of preparedness. Taking these small steps now can make a huge difference when disaster strikes."

For more information and a list of resources and helpful information to prepare for a hurricane, visit Bilirakis' [hurricane resource page by clicking here](#) .