

Congressman Donald G. Davis Remarks

- Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, for allowing me to speak on issues that matter to eastern North Carolina.
- Since I entered Congress, one of my top priorities has been expanding broadband and improving affordability.
- Much of eastern North Carolina is rural and has significant infrastructure needs.
- Broadband will significantly improve the lives of families and businesses across eastern North Carolina while also ensuring our healthcare system can continue operating.
- We cannot have a situation where our emergency services, first responders, and telecommunicators cannot contact each other

due to a lack of broadband service on a rural road.

- I want to work with this Committee to find ways to expand rural access and ensure rural infrastructure projects factor in broadband needs in our local communities.
- An essential part of that deployment is ensuring that economic development grants are usable for those needs.
- Further, our local mayors and county officials need to be able to access these grants by simplifying the burdensome, overly complicated application process.
- And we must also not lose sight of an often overlooked part of your committee's work: the United States Coast Guard.
- Spanning the jurisdiction of three committees, the Coast Guard is a vital armed

force that supports our armed services in safeguarding our national security and performing essential search and rescue operations.

- North Carolina's First Congressional District is home to United States Coast Guard Base Elizabeth City, an 880-acre installation that hosts an aviation logistics and technical training center, along with over 2,000 active duty and civilian personnel.
- While towns and cities hosting installations all strive to provide the most welcoming environment for Coast Guard personnel, only a select few have been named a Great American Defense Community, including Elizabeth City, which earned the title in 2024.
- But we cannot rest on our laurels.
- Infrastructure at Coast Guard Base Elizabeth City and other installations is aging, which is

why I supported the work of this committee to help pass the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2025, which funds Coast Guard operations and makes critical investments in U.S.-build requirements, helping to bolster our domestic shipbuilding industry, an essential part of Northeastern North Carolina's economy.

- The legislation also includes a study on Coast Guard training facility infrastructure, including the training center at Coast Guard Base Elizabeth City, to ensure that shoreside and land-based facilities are meeting high standards.
- Beyond addressing top priorities for our Coast Guard, other significant issues for eastern North Carolina include hurricanes, tropical storms, and flooding.
- I last testified before this Committee for its Member Day hearing on April 18th, 2023.

- Since then, North Carolina has experienced the destructive impacts of Hurricane Helene.
- We saw devastation across western North Carolina communities.
- Homes, businesses, roads, and more, washed away in the blink of an eye.
- We still have a long way to go in rebuilding after the hurricane, but North Carolinians have rebuilt before, and we will do so again.
- Hurricane Helene and the aftermath showed us that FEMA and how it operates need changes and fast.
- We need to move “upstream,” not “downstream,” for solutions.
- That is why I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 4669, the *FEMA Act of 2025*.

- I want to thank Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen for working together in a bipartisan way and introducing this legislation.
- This bill will address so many of the problems that countless North Carolinians are facing.
- I stand ready to work with you to get this legislation across the finish line.
- Eastern North Carolina knows hurricanes, tropical storms, and flooding all too well.
- In the east, it is not a question of if, but when.
- We need these reforms to FEMA before the next catastrophic weather event strikes North Carolina.

- To that end, I urge this committee to pursue true commonsense policies across transportation and infrastructure needs that can improve the lives of eastern North Carolinians and the American people.
- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.