

**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JERROLD NADLER**

**Statement for Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
Natural Resources Committee  
Hearing on H.R. 3036, the National 9/11 Memorial at the World Trade Center Act**

**September 11, 2015**

Thank you, Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Tsongas, for holding this hearing to discuss H.R. 3036, The National 9/11 Memorial at the World Trade Center Act.

Fourteen years ago, at nearly this exact moment, two planes crashed into the World Trade Center in my district, killing thousands of innocent people. A third plane slammed into the Pentagon, and a fourth plane – likely destined for the very Capitol complex on which we now sit – was brought down by a group of courageous passengers in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

I represented Ground Zero on September 11, 2001. I left Washington in the hours after the attack and took the train back to my home in New York. I will never forget the moment I first saw the ravaged skyline of Lower Manhattan. The gleaming twin towers that had always welcomed me home were replaced by the brutal glow of raging fires and black billowing smoke. Coming out of Penn Station, it was like a scene from a movie. The city seemed completely empty. When I went down to the World Trade Center the next day, the scene was absolutely horrific. Fire, smoke, debris, twisted metal, human remains. Total devastation. And yet, even then, I saw signs of hope. Firefighters, police, and EMTs traveled to Ground Zero from around the country to offer their help. Messages of support and comfort flooded in from all 50 states. The American people were united and determined to help New York get back on its feet. The attack may have occurred in my district, but it was an attack on our nation as a whole.

In the years since the attacks, I have been grateful and inspired by how Congress has come together to rebuild New York and support the responders, survivors, and families of the victims. Congress passed the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act in 2010. The law provides health care and support to 33,000 responders and survivors in all 50 states and 429 congressional districts. It also re-opened the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund and awarded over \$1 billion in claims to those who lost their jobs or suffered because of 9/11-related illnesses. Both of these programs are set to expire within the next year, but I am actively working with my colleagues to reauthorize them. I would like to thank Mr. MacArthur and the other members of this committee who have already signed on as cosponsors of that legislation. I encourage you all to support it as well.

In addition to making our responders and survivors whole, Congress invested millions of dollars to help rebuild Lower Manhattan. One World Trade Center now fills the hole left in our skyline when the Towers fell, and businesses shuttered after the attack are re-opened and thriving. In what was once the shadow of the Towers there now stands a comprehensive museum dedicated to sharing the stories of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the bravery of those who risked everything to protect their fellow Americans that day.

In place of the smoking hole Mr. MacArthur and I saw day after day in Lower Manhattan, there now sits a somber and inspiring memorial. It is a site of remembrance and hope; a place for every American to come and reflect on what happened that September morning and to renew our promise to never forget the events of that day. It is a national memorial for a national tragedy.

That is why I am pleased to cosponsor legislation introduced by my colleague from New Jersey to provide federal support for the memorial. This legislation will help ensure the memorial

continues to provide a sacred and inspiring spot for generations to come. It is my hope this Committee will continue to move this legislation forward, and I will continue to work with all of you to ensure it passes the House with the same bipartisan spirit and support we saw in 2001.

Thank you, and I yield back my time.