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MAJOR DISASTER RECOVERY: ASSESSING FEMA'S PERFORMANCE SINCE KATRINA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER RECOVERY
OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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MAJOR DISASTER RECOVERY: ASSESSING FEMA'S PERFORMANCE SINCE KATRINA

THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2008

U.S. SENATE,
AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER RECOVERY,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Mary L. Landrieu, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Landrieu, Pryor, and Stevens.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LANDRIEU

Senator LANDRIEU. Good afternoon. I would like to call the Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery to order.

This is a Subcommittee devoted to major disaster recovery assessing FEMA's performance since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I am going to begin with just a brief opening statement and I thank so much the panelist that are with us today and we will introduce you all shortly.

I would say that since we scheduled this meeting, there has been a slight change in the schedule. We normally have 2 hours for a hearing. Today we only have an hour and 15 minutes and we just found out about that a few minutes ago. So I am going to try to be as brief as I can.

You have all been given 5 minutes for opening statements. You might want to think about shortening it somewhat, but we want to hear your testimony and we are very grateful for what you have submitted and we are going to try to provide as much question and answer time.

I do expect one or two other Members to join me, but we are going to go ahead and get started because of our limited time.

It may come as a surprise to many people following this hearing that since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita we have had 169 major disasters and over 250 Federal emergencies and fire emergency declarations made by the President of the United States which would call our system into play.

These figures should cause us to remain vigilant that we have to continue to improve and strengthen our responses at the local, State and Federal level.

The Stafford Act makes only two distinctions with regard to disaster declarations. There are emergency declarations which are generally reserved for the smaller events that require limited Fed-

eral funding for items like, debris removal, etc., and for assistance that does not require significant resources.

There are also major disaster declarations of which you all represent some. Clearly, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and other major hurricanes received that designation, which generally requires significant Federal aid over longer periods of time and include funding from public assistance as well as individual assistance programs. These disasters often require long sheltering, disaster housing programs and other forms of assistance.

Today, this Subcommittee will convene its first hearing on a sample of the 169 major disasters that have been declared. While not as massive as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in scope, they have had a significant negative impact on the families struggling to recover, the businesses that are struggling to recover.

Our Subcommittee's focus will be to redesign and retool, to improve the response and recovery for all levels of disasters and to begin our work to create actually a third level which is, in my view, in great need for major catastrophic events.

I will personally look forward to working with all of you and many others as we build a better system.

It is my belief that the best way to continue to refine our responses to the small, as well as the major, as well as the catastrophic is to really understand the good and the bad and the ugly of our response and to continue to improve it as we can.

So we are looking forward to hearing first from you, Major General Tod Bunting from the State of Kansas, who is the Director of the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. You will discuss tornados that touched down in Greensburg, Kansas. Greensburg, a city of over 1,500 people, was hit by an EF–5 tornado. The tornado was 1.7 miles wide on the ground for 22 miles with winds up to 205 miles per hour.

In the wake of the storm, that city was 95 percent destroyed with the other 5 percent being severely damaged and 15 people lost their lives in that storm.

The city has taken some innovative steps. We look forward to hearing about that today.

Next, we will hear from Stephen Sellers, Deputy Director, Regional Operations from the Office of the Governor in California.

I want to thank you for making the long trip from California, particularly because you all are in the midst of ongoing challenges right now. We are very interested in your perspective on what is happening there.

We also will hear from David Maxwell, the Director of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, about one of the deadliest outbreaks of tornados in years.

On February 5, more than 100 tornados, I understand, Mr. Maxwell, devastated communities in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee. I do think I will be joined by the Senator from Arkansas, Senator Pryor, all the other Senators have been invited as well.

More than 50 lives were lost, making this one of the deadliest tornado outbreaks in the United States in more than 20 years. We hope to hear from you today how some of those communities are faring.

I want to particularly thank you recently for cooperating so closely with the State of Louisiana in returning some of those goods that were lost in the system back to the victims that they were intended to serve initially.

And finally we will hear from James Bassham, Director of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, who will describe how those same storms that hit Arkansas, how they hit Tennessee, damaging, destroying more than 1,000 homes and 33 victims in Tennessee.

And after this panel, we will be hearing from our newly confirmed Deputy Administrator, Admiral Harvey Johnson, who will give his assessment from his perspective how the response has been for these disasters, but again, we must stay vigilant in our efforts to improve our response and that is the basis of our hearing today.

I would like to, just before I start, call your attention to the posters that we have tried just to give the scope of the disaster.[1]

If you turn to the second one, the closest to me, you can see that of the ones we are speaking about today, the California wildfires, the Kansas storms, the Tennessee storms and the Arkansas storms while they have been significant, $8 almost $9 million in the case of Arkansas, $12 million in Tennessee, $71 million in Kansas, the California wildfire to date is $112 million, there is just absolutely no comparison to the $24.9 billion in individual aid and public assistance for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

And I know people would think that I just sort of manufactured the scale to make it look bad, but it really is that bad in terms of the scale of the disaster of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita relative to these others which are very significant.

They are not minor disasters, the ones that you all are dealing with. I mean, they are classified as major disasters and I think that you all would agree because you are dealing with them, they are substantial and major; and yet you can see how the relative size of these really requires us to think about a third category which this hearing will be the first to kind of start pulling out what might be possible when you have, like on the side of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, a truly major catastrophe.

I think the other poster, I think this is a ranking of other storms or of other hurricanes. If you could hold that up, I think it is the earthquakes in Colorado, in California in 1989, Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the North Ridge earthquake in 1994, and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, you can still see with some of the largest that we have dealt with, still Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are just catastrophic in scope.

So one thing as we start this hearing, it is important for the country to understand there are different sizes of disasters. There are different tools required to deal with them.

And we are looking forward to hearing from you today about how the tools that we have currently available, how they have worked for you or how they have not worked for you and how you would suggest we retool them or redesign them to help you next time based on the scope of the disasters that we face, and we thank you

[1] The charts referred to appears in the Appendix on page 85.

very much for being a part of this very important effort for our country.

[The prepared opening statement of Senator Landrieu follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR LANDRIEU

You may be surprised to know that since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, there have been about 169 "major disasters" and over 250 "Federal emergencies" and "fire emergency" declarations made by the President of the United States. These figures are astounding and they are a reminder that at any given time, we are only a moment away from the next disaster or catastrophe.

The Stafford Act makes only two distinctions with regard to disaster declarations. There are "emergency declarations" which are generally reserved for smaller events that require Federal funding for of debris removal and other assistance that generally won't require significant resources.

There are also "major disaster" declarations, which generally require significant Federal aid, and include funding from the Public Assistance and the Individual Assistance programs, These disasters often require long term sheltering, disaster housing programs, and other forms of assistance that are required over a period of time. Today, this Subcommittee convenes its first hearing on a sample of the 169 "major disasters" that have been declared by the President since Katrina. While they are not as massive as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in scope, they have had a monumental impact on the families who have worked to rebuild their lives in their wake.

Our Subcommittee's focus throughout its existence has been to highlight the need to improve the response and recovery tools for all levels of disasters: emergencies, major disasters, and a third category, which I will personally work to put in place, catastrophes. It is my belief that the best way to understand the good, bad, and ugly of responses and recoveries is to look at case by case examples. Today we will hear from emergency managers from states that have experienced major disasters in the recent past.

First, we will hear from Major General Tod Bunting, of Kansas' Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. He will discuss the horrific tornado that touched down in Greensburg, Kansas in May of 2007. Greensburg, a city of over 1,500 people was hit by an EF-5 tornado. The tornado was 1.7µmiles wide and was on the ground for about 22µmiles with winds of up to 205 miles per hour. In the wake of the storm, 95 percent of the city was confirmed to be destroyed, with the other five percent being severely damaged. 15 people perished in the storm.

Since then, the City has taking some innovative steps in the road to recovery. Rather than a traditional rebuild, the City worked with groups to rebuild smarter and better. I will ask Major General Bunting to tell us more about those efforts.

Next, we will hear from Stephen Sellers Deputy Director Regional Operations Division, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. I want to thank you especially for making the trip form California, particularly during a time when California is facing another round of threats from wildfires. Thank you for joining us and God bless the people of California as the face these fires once again.

Mr. Sellers will share his assessment of the joint Federal and State collaboration during the October 2007 California Wildfires at least 320,000 evacuees were housed in temporary shelters, including more than 11,000 at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego. When firefighters finally gained the upper hand, 1,676 homes succumbed to the flames, and 10 people had perished.

We will then hear from David Maxwell, the Director of the Arkansas Department of Emergency management about one of the deadliest outbreaks of tornadoes in years. On February 5th, more than 100 tornadoes devastated communities in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee. More than 50 lives were lost making this the deadliest tornado outbreak in the United States in more than 20 years.

The tornadoes hit Arkansas particularly hard. One of the tornadoes tracked 123 miles, which is the longest track on record in Arkansas since 1950. The tornadoes destroyed as many as 300 homes in Arkansas. The tornadoes claimed the lives of 14 Arkansans.

James Bassham, Director of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency will describe how the same storm system that ravaged Arkansas moved westward towards Tennessee. Several tornadoes touched down devastating areas of Middle Tennessee in the late evening hours. The Tennessee tornadoes damaged or destroyed 1,138 homes. On March 12, the last victim died at a rehabilitation center as a result of injuries sustained during the storm. The death toll for the February tornadoes in Tennessee reached 33.

Last, the newly confirmed, Deputy Administrator of FEMA, Admiral Harvey Johnson, will give his assessment of FEMA's progress in the wake of Katrina. Admiral Johnson has often come before this committee to explain why, in his view FEMA is better able to respond to those disasters. We will ask him to provide specific examples of the "new FEMA" and how it has handled the disasters experienced by the emergency managers before us today.

I want to caution that we must stay vigilant in our efforts to improve the disaster response and recovery system in this country. I have created these graphs based on FEMA numbers to illustrate one point: FEMA's and response and recovery efforts to major disasters, such as those we are dealing with today, do not give us a good indication of FEMA's capabilities during a catastrophe.

We use a bar graph here to show the magnitude of a catastrophe compared to major disasters. This compares the Public Assistance and Individual Assistance program dollars spent from the four declared disasters discussed today, with that of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I show this graph not to belittle the dramatic impact of an EF-5 tornado, or of hundreds of homes lost in wildfires, but to illustrate the true challenge that we could be up against should another catastrophe strike.

In addition to assessing the performance of FEMA and hearing the stories of the people who suffered through these events, I hope this hearing will demonstrate the need for a disaster response and recovery system that is well equipped to handle all levels of disasters, emergencies, major disasters, and catastrophes.

I have instructed my staff to draft legislation to amend the Stafford Act to create a third declaration—catastrophe declaration—that will free the President and FEMA from the current limitations of the Stafford Act. I will not stop until we effectively redesign the Stafford Act so that the government has what amounts to a tool box at its disposal that will allow it to construct a response and recovery that fits any given disaster.

I thank our witnesses and look forward to hearing your statements and asking you some questions.

Senator LANDRIEU. So with that, General, can I turn it over to you for your remarks.

STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL TOD BUNTING,[1] KANSAS ADJUTANT GENERAL, DIRECTOR, KANSAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY

General BUNTING. Madam Chairman, I am General Tod Bunting, the Adjutant General of Kansas, and I thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of all of the emergency management professionals in Kansas and our volunteers.

You mentioned our tornado in Greensburg which was an EF–5. Twenty-two tornados were also reported in Kansas on that night on May 4. The storms resulted in 15 fatalities statewide, 12 in Greensburg. There were 95 percent damage of businesses and homes.

With the exception of the Kiowa County Courthouse, all government-owned facilities were destroyed including the city hall, the county hospital, police, fire and maintenance, all three schools, and all seven churches were destroyed.

FEMA Region Administrator, Dick Hanjie, contacted me just minutes after being notified of the devastation. He continued his contact with me throughout the evening and the next day and arrived in Greensburg with me within 24 hours after the storm with Federal coordinating officer Mike Hall, and I believe that was a significant effort.

They brought considerable communication assets and the efficient logistic teams, all of which arrived within 36 hours of the storm.

[1] The prepared statement of General Bunting with attachments appears in the Appendix on page 31.

I would particularly note that all Federal, State, county and volunteer partners worked in a unified command structure.

We would like to give special thanks to the Small Business Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Weather Service, which was instrumental in giving advance notice to the people in Greensburg, and the Environmental Protection Agency, who all did a fabulous job with us in Greensburg. And we would also want to highlight the recognition to Ameri-Corp which coordinated the thousands of volunteers.

With major damage in 23 counties, we did have a Joint Field Office but I want to note that FEMA did not lose sight of the 22 other counties that were impacted by this storm and received good service.

The U.S. Forestry Service established a 300-person base camp in Greensburg because there was no where to stay within 40 miles of the storm.

FEMA direct housing operations housed 84 families in travel trailers or mobile homes and so within 10 days we no longer had people in shelters or mass care.

There was no rental housing available, and as such, a group site was constructed just outside the city limits of Greensburg with 225 families occupying mobile homes.

If Greensburg was to recover, it was critical to allow residents to remain close to home, instead of relocating to distant urban areas. We believe that was a success.

Through the public assistance program, a total of 430,000 cubic yards of debris were removed from the city of Greensburg. I would note that as part of how people in Greensburg recovered, they refer to the landfill as old Greensburg and the city now is new Greensburg.

An area for improvement is some inconsistencies exist within the public assistance program. At times inconsistencies in policies and cost estimating formulas have created confusion on the part of local applicants in the State, and in some instances disaster payments or actual repairs are being delayed until such matters are resolved. This was the case with the Kiowa County Courthouse.

I would like to note a great success with FEMA's long term community recovery program which helped established a community process and jump-started our redevelopment. I have a copy of that plan if you would like to see it.

Together, citizen civic groups, business owners, local, State, and Federal officials, and the long-term recovery planning team developed a sustainable comprehensive plan that serves as a vision for redevelopment.

An area for improvement is in some recovery areas progress was slowed because of lack of viability of various programs.

It is our recommendation that Federal agencies having a role in recovery, such as the Departments of Commerce, Labor and Agriculture, be co-located in the Joint Field Office to provide guidance to State and local leaders.

The establishment of a business incubator was not accomplished in a timely manner.

Another example, USDA has been a strong partner in the recovery effort, funding portions of the city's water tower, courthouse

and single family homes; but as recovery efforts proceeded, these USDA partnerships were unknown to the State and we were not aware of the various programs they bring to bear.

So our suggestion is perhaps if they were co-located also with FEMA and State officials and attended the briefings, information could have been more readily shared and coordination of benefits would have been more seamless.

In the last 18 months, Kansas has had five major disaster declarations, and our close relationship with Mr. Hanjie and the FEMA VII staff has proven invaluable.

The devastation in Greensburg is one of the worst in our history leveling our entire community. Extraordinary efforts were required not only to respond and save lives but also to rebuild an entire city, which you mentioned many times, over in Louisiana and Mississippi.

But I am pleased to report that FEMA and our Federal partners responded quickly and with a positive can-do attitude. Certainly there remains much work to be done to rebuild an entire city, but the resiliency of the people of Greensburg who I have become very close to, the thousands of volunteers coupled with the strong support of the State of Kansas and our Federal partners has Greensburg well on the way to being a model and, in fact, one of the Nation's first "Green Cities."

Thank you.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you very much.

I am pleased to be joined by my Ranking Member Senator Ted Stevens from Alaska, and one of our most active Members of our Subcommittee, Senator Pryor from Arkansas.

I have asked them if they have any opening remarks or something they would like to say briefly before they may have to step out.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PRYOR

Senator PRYOR. I will just put a statement in the record.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Pryor follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR PRYOR

Thank you Chairman Landrieu.

First, I want to thank you and Ranking Member Stevens for holding this hearing. I appreciate the disaster recovery work this subcommittee has done. I think that the two of you have shed light on and helped to improve many important aspects of the disaster recover process.

I also appreciate the witnesses for being here today. I want to especially thank Dave Maxwell, the Director of Emergency Management for my home State of Arkansas. Arkansas has been dealt a tough hand in terms of natural disasters this year and Dave has done a tremendous job helping get Arkansas through it. I want to publicly thank him and his staff for that.

The southeast and mid-west have had an overly active severe weather season. We've seen storms, tornadoes and flooding at almost unprecedented levels. In Arkansas, 62 of our 75 counties have been included in disaster aid requests—and many of these counties have been included in more than one request. Twenty six people in Arkansas have lost their lives as a result of severe weather and over 13,000 people and households have applied for assistance. And I'm only referring to Arkansas here.

With disasters that are this devastating, this far-reaching, and this frequent, it's crucial that we take time to assess the response of the federal government. There

are undoubtedly some lessons learned here that can help with future disaster response and even help with the ongoing recovery efforts.

Today, I'm particularly interested in hearing about coordination between the Federal Government and State governments. I think a lack of communication and coordination has been a significant barrier to quick, effective response in the past.

I am also interested in hearing about disaster housing. With the exception of the loss of life, losing a home is one of the most devastating outcomes of severe weather. And we've seen a lot of that this year. I hope we have a practical and workable strategy in place to get victims in safe housing immediately after a storm strikes. Then we need to be sure that families have the necessary assistance to rebuild or repair their homes.

In terms of temporary housing units, I want to talk about a bill that I introduced that recently passed out of this committee with unanimous support. It is called the FEMA Accountability Act. It requires FEMA to do an assessment of the number of temporary housing units necessary to keep on hand for future use in disasters, come up with a plan to get rid of the excess units—by transferring, selling or dismantling, then implement that plan and report to Congress. I know that FEMA has self implemented much of this legislation. I hope you, Admiral Johnson, can give the subcommittee an update on that work.

If the witnesses have suggestions for Congress on how we can facilitate quicker, more effective disaster response, I am certainly interested in hearing those suggestions.

With that, I'll conclude my remarks. Again, I want to thank everyone for being here and thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for taking the lead on this important issue.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you, Senator.

Senator STEVENS. I, too, ask that my statement be put in the record. I am sorry to be late.

[The prepared statement of Senator Stevens follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR STEVENS

Thank you, Madam Chairman, for holding this hearing.

If we learned anything from the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina, it was that we were in desperate need of better planning and response capabilities for major disasters.

Alaska has more natural disasters than any other state, including earthquakes, volcanoes, floods and severe storms.

Alaska also has many villages on its coast eroding away at an astronomical rate due to severe storms.

We have seen many major disasters hit the United States in the years since Katrina. Tornadoes have swept through our country, and more recently, floods have destroyed homes and important farm land.

It is important that we take the time to look and see what improvements have been made to our disaster response systems so that we can be better prepared for future events.

I look forward to today's testimony and hope that significant improvements have already been made in FEMA's ability to respond to major disasters.

Senator LANDRIEU. Without objection, that will be done. Mr. Sellers.

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN SELLERS,[1] DEPUTY DIRECTOR, REGIONAL OPERATIONS DIVISION, CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr. SELLERS. Thank you, Chairman, Senator Stevens, and Senator Pryor.

I am Stephen Sellers, Deputy Director for Regional Operations in the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. I am here today to talk about our experience with FEMA and our response and recovery efforts due to the 2007 wildfires we experienced a few months ago.

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Sellers appears in the Appendix on page 39.

I would like to start out by saying, although we are a large State, very capable State, these firestorms, as the recent storms we are having, firestorms we are having now, greatly challenge us at the local, State, and Federal level, indeed.

We have a long history in California of strong emergency management systems. We invented the incident command system in California in the late 1970s. We instituted something called the standardized emergency management system after the 1991 Oakland Hills fire which defined fundamentally how all agencies can work together in a multi-jurisdiction response in the State and we certainly have strong mutual aid systems.

However, these fires required a great deal of support not only throughout the State from our local governments and our State agencies, but also nationally and internationally.

We had roughly 31 States assisting us either through the National Interagency Fire Center or through mission assignments through FEMA and we also had support from Canada and Mexico.

It was very much needed and very much appreciated and I think that certainly one of the things we are noticing is the emergency management assistance compact is certainly helping us to get the resources we need in a more coordinated way from our State friends across the country.

As you will see in the testimony, the fires themselves, there were 24 fires affecting seven counties in southern California in which over a half-million acres burned and some 10 fatalities and 2,776 residences were lost. It is hard to pin down, but we had roughly at least 300,000 to 500,000 evacuees in this disaster which put great pressure on the emergency management systems in terms of care and shelter operations which is not really normal and that is kind of a scale in a firestorm. We did not even get a 10th of a percent of that in these recent storms, for example.

In terms of recovery, we have had about $10 million in FEMA housing and $4 million in other needs assistance as a result of these fires coming to the State, $1 million in low interest loans from the Small Business Administration. Roughly about 7,700 housing inspections were conducted with just over 1,000 pre-placement interviews to try to find temporary housing solutions for the victims.

More than $141 million in public assistance grants representing 199 eligible requests for public assistance have been identified and this is one area that I echo my counterpart from Kansas is this whole process with project work sheets and reimbursement.

We have worked side by side with FEMA in this disaster to try to identify problems and minimize any kind of appeals post-disaster. So far we have actually obligated over $98 million in Federal funds to State and local agencies as a result of the process we established with FEMA in these firestorms.

I would add too that if you look at 2003 which was even worse for us in terms of the devastation and impact on our citizens in California that we were able locally at the State level through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funded through FEMA, a lot of local jurisdictions did take the responsibility to enact hazard mitigation efforts, changing business codes and practices, green belts and those sorts of activities.

The full story is not in yet, but we have certainly documented a number of cases where in these firestorms, those mitigation efforts proved very effective. So going forward with our $41 million as a result of these 2007 firestorms and hazard mitigation grant program, we are certainly going to be able to impact even greater the risk that we need to lower in the State in terms of our wildland-urban interface.

I would like to, since we have a challenge with time, just give you some major conclusions that we have in terms of what we have been asked to present today.

First of all, there was no discounting the fact that without strong local and State capabilities, no disaster can be well managed; and certainly, as we look forward to funding through things like the Emergency Management Performance Grant that local capability, all disasters are local but certainly need a lot of regional, State and Federal support. Without that, you really have a challenge getting in and making it work. So I want to say great job to some of our cities and counties in California for these firestorms.

If you look at Qualcomm, for example, that operation went on there which was really going to be an evacuation center, ended up more of a shelter site as well as the Del Mar Fairgrounds and our working with FEMA to get cots and blankets in there as quickly as possible. I think that local capability and certainly the systems we put in place were effective.

Strong leadership and staff capabilities at FEMA Region IX made a tremendous difference. I think the regional level of support, as you have heard already, is critical to success in a disaster.

The Federal coordinating officer's qualities, abilities, training and the team he put together was also a huge difference.

Going forward, I hope that the Federal coordinating officers who are part of all disasters are as strong as Mike Hall was in this one for us, a great partner.

The use of Incident Command System under NIMS was certainly a great plus for us. I think as FEMA goes forward with the Federal agencies in taking on the concepts and principles of the Incident Command System will be greatly benefited across the Nation.

The other part is establishment of joint task forces.

Senator LANDRIEU. Try to wrap it up.

Mr. SELLERS. Yes. We established housing, tribal and debris management task forces. We had problem areas where we brought a collection of State and Federal agencies together to focus on problem solving.

I think as you move forward in catastrophic planning, that kind of focus in a task force in a collaborative way is going to make a huge difference in how we manage disasters.

And finally, we are working with FEMA Region IX to do catastrophic planning around earthquakes. We have a Bay area plan in place that is just about ready to get out and work on. We hope to move that effort to Southern California.

But basically our major point to conclude is if this is the new FEMA and we hope it is, we really want a lot more of it.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you, Mr. Sellers. Mr. Maxwell.

STATEMENT OF DAVID MAXWELL,[1] DIRECTOR, ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr. MAXWELL. Chairman Landrieu, Senator Stevens, and Senator Pryor, thank you very much.

I am David Maxwell, Director and State Homeland Security Adviser for the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Subcommittee today.

I am here to discuss FEMA's response to the three Presidential declarations in my State following the tornadoes and flooding of February 5 and beyond, the tornadoes and flooding that occurred March 18–28 and the tornadoes and flooding that occurred on May 2 and May 10.

First, let me say I was very pleased with FEMA's response to the first two declarations. During these two disasters, I thought FEMA displayed a proactive response in addition to some creative out-of-the-box thinking. One example was the use of helicopters in conducting preliminary damage assessments which tremendously sped up the entire process.

However, this was not the case for the third disaster in which FEMA's response took much longer. For example, the date of the first request for assistance, individual assistance only, was May 6. While the second request for assistance, individual assistance and public assistance was made May 14, the Federal declaration did not occur until May 20, delaying Federal assistance by as much as 14 days from the first request.

We initially asked for only individual assistance to speed the process as we felt like the individual assistance request was certainly valid because we had over 250 homes either destroyed or with major damage. This is especially true when you consider that some of the counties impacted had been declared in both the previous disasters.

I think direct dialogue with the reviewers could ensure questions are answered and the process stays on track, averting such unnecessary delays in assistance.

Arkansas has State disaster programs for events that are within our capabilities to manage. When an event reaches a magnitude that warrants requesting a Presidential declaration and assistance is delayed in the declaration process, we face the difficult decision whether to implement the State disaster programs or not.

We feel like having the State program is the right thing to do. It is the important thing to do for our citizens. Yet sometimes we feel we are penalized for having those programs and we need to work on that and work through those issues.

In summary, FEMA's response to our disasters was much improved. We still feel there are some additional improvements that can be made and stand ready to assist Administrator Paulison in achieving the goals he has set forth for FEMA's response and recovery efforts.

We all understand we are working toward the same ultimate goal and that is to better serve disaster victims. As long as we keep that basic purpose in mind, we will be able to work together to

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Maxwell appears in the Appendix on page 56.

strengthen the system and work through problem areas as identified.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on this important subject.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you, Mr. Maxwell. Mr. Bassham.

STATEMENT OF JAMES BASSHAM,[1] DIRECTOR, TENNESSEE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. BASSHAM. Thank you, Madam Chairman, Senator Stevens, and Senator Pryor.

My name is Jim Bassham. I am the Director of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency.

I appreciate this opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee. Governor Phil Bredesen has asked that I convey his personal thanks for your interest in the State of Tennessee's perspective on FEMA's response to our disasters in Tennessee. On February 5, it took 33 lives.

I would like to brief you on the sequence of events that took place in Tennessee on February 5 and the resulting response and recovery efforts which officially ended for us on April, 25, 2008 when FEMA closed the Joint Field Office in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency has regional offices in Jackson, Tennessee, Nashville and Knoxville.

On that afternoon of February 5, conference calls were conducted with each of our three regional offices, the National Weather Service that serves each of those regions and the county emergency managers in those regions in each county to ensure that they were alerted to what was going on, the threat that was imminent and that they had taken whatever precautions that were necessary.

I would add that this is a routine practice for us in Tennessee when a threat appears imminent.

At 5:48 p.m. on February 5, our State Emergency Operations Center received confirmation from the Memphis/Shelby County Emergency Management Center that a tornado had, in fact, touched down in South Memphis.

Our State on-call officer notified me of the Shelby County weather event, and at 6:30 p.m., I ordered the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activated, and by Tennessee State law, the activation of that operations center declares a state of emergency in our State.

I responded to the operations center and notified Governor Bredesen's staff and Major General Gus Hargett, the Adjutant General. I then called Phil May, the FEMA Region IV Administrator in Atlanta. I briefed Mr. May on the weather conditions and alerted him that our operations center was activated at a Level Three.

Mr. May asked if I would like a FEMA liaison deployed, and one was in place within 2 hours. As it turned out, FEMA had a liaison representative that lived in Norcross, Tennessee. They almost beat me there to the SEOC.

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Bassham with an attachment appears in the Appendix on page 58.

FEMA also provided an incident response support team. That team responded immediately and they showed up in our operations center at 3 o'clock the next morning, out of Atlanta. They were immediately deployed to Macon County which was our hardest hit county up on the north of Nashville on the Kentucky border.

Over the next 48 hours, the State responded to the needs of the local jurisdictions through local mutual aid and State resources. No out of State assistance was required.

Senator Landrieu, I think that the distinction you make between a disaster and a catastrophe is probably the most important thing that we need to be thinking about right now because we did not really need any outside help; but if we had the New Madrid scenario, we will all need outside help and I want to speak to that again in just a second.

FEMA deployed a Federal coordinating officer to begin the process of setting up a Joint Field Office which was operational on February 11, which was about 5 days after the tornado, and I thought that was really pretty good. That was as soon as we needed anything. In fact, they got there a little before we were ready for them.

A preliminary damage assessment was far enough along that Governor Bredesen requested a presidential disaster to be declared. He requested this at 5:23 p.m. on February 7, and we were notified at 10 p.m. on that same evening that the President had declared five counties. This number would eventually increase to a total of 19 counties.

During the subsequent days, weeks and months, FEMA was a full partner with the State as we worked through the myriad of challenges associated with both public and individual assistance.

The Joint Field Office performed admirably under Gracia Szczech as the disaster field offices were set up to serve our citizens. As I mentioned, the Joint Field Office closed on April 25, 2008.

FEMA responded rapidly with appropriate assets and worked with the State and local officials to achieve the very best outcomes under the circumstances. I have no negatives to report on FEMA's response and recovery.

I will say that there was an issue with the manufactured housing that we had to bring, and it dealt with the formaldehyde levels in those units—and that became a little contest of wills between the Federal Government and the States with the insistence that the States set a level below which they would accept those units, and I believe that that is a Federal responsibility because they own those units.

My time is up, but I would like to say one other thing. I am also the chairman of the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC) which is a consortium of eight States that revolve around the New Madrid scenario, the New Madrid Seismic Zone in Arkansas. My friend here is from another one of those States.

FEMA has, for the last couple of years, been funding a Catastrophic Planning Initiative through CUSEC to the States for some important catastrophic planning around that scenario and I think it is really important that planning effort continue and we will be prepared. Tennessee will be prepared in about another month to provide you with a copy of a catastrophic plan if you want to see what a good one really looks like.

Senator LANDRIEU. We will absolutely look forward to receiving that and I am very happy to get that information and we look forward to working with your consortium as we build a better system.

As my colleagues were coming in, I wanted to just call again to their attention that it may be a surprise, Senators, but we had 169 major disasters declared since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and 250 Federal emergencies and fire emergencies declared.

This is just a sampling of some of them, but the scale of these really varies and that is what our Subcommittee is really charged with which is coming up with the right tools for the right size disasters so that we can improve it at every level.

So with that, I am going to just do a 5 minute round of questioning and I will begin and then turn it over to my colleagues.

General Bunting, in your testimony you said one area that FEMA could improve was with the public assistance program. You stated in your testimony "inconsistencies and policies and cost estimating formulas have created confusion on the part of local applicants in the State and in some instances disaster payments are being delayed until such matters are resolved."

Could you go into a little bit more explanation of what you meant, maybe give us a few examples.

General BUNTING. Yes, ma'am. We have several examples, a lot of them recently with ice storms, but in this particular case, a lot of times it centers around the insurance proceeds and just the difference of what is or is not going to be paid and the different estimates of the extended damage there.

Public assistance sometimes has a turnover in personnel; and when that happens, sometimes different people come in and take a different approach to things.

I think overall public assistance has gotten better, but there is still the challenge of lengthy debates about who is going to pay for what and as such the net result is work does not get done.

Senator LANDRIEU. Was the turnover on the State's end in this case or the turnover on FEMA's end?

General BUNTING. No. It is the turnover on FEMA's staff.

Senator LANDRIEU. We experienced that same problem significantly in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and we have been leaning very hard on FEMA to correct that. And in a completely different area, but just like in our child welfare system we are trying to get one judge per family instead of three different judges looking at the same family's case, try to move it through by keeping the same judge connected to that family.

That is the same kind of system we are hoping FEMA will set up that the first assessment person that shows up stays with that program until it is resolved because otherwise it just becomes a rotating case.

Since the storm, I think all of these disasters were the part where there was one unit of government, in this case the city of Greensburg that was virtually completely destroyed, a small city but nonetheless it was completely destroyed.

Can you explain a little bit more about how under current FEMA rules, the mayor of that town, with your help, is rebuilding a new city on either higher ground or better ground—new buildings? How are you using the current FEMA rules and regulations to actually

accomplish that because we are still having a great deal of difficulty?

General BUNTING. Yes, ma'am. It is also Kiowa County, Greensburg was the country seat, so we lost all government for the city of Greensburg and it also was Kiowa County so we lost everything in that county.

We are fortunate in that Greensburg is not in a flood plain and that can significantly complicate rebuilding because you cannot rebuild in an area that was a flood plain. We have that challenge right now in the City of Chapman, Kansas, which some of the homes that were destroyed have to be elevated. The criterion changes.

We think that the FEMA long-term recovery team, though, that came to town and only left 4 or 5 months ago is a great success. So that aspect of the new FEMA that brings that long-term recovery team in and works side by side with community has been very successful.

Senator LANDRIEU. And you say that because you were not in a flood plain it was easy to make some quick decisions about how to rebuild, and the schools did not have to rebuild on the same site. They could rebuild on different sites. You said you lost three schools?

General BUNTING. Yes. Now, it turns out in the long-term recovery plan, they may or may not rebuild on the same site. If there is a silver lining, it gives you an opportunity to rebuild your town and maybe relocate some things that you would not have otherwise because you would have had to have done the demolition on your own, but because there is no other significant environmental challenges for Greensburg versus other communities that are destroyed, I believe that was an advantage that we had for Greensburg.

Senator LANDRIEU. Mr. Sellers, it was reported that some California residents were forced to wait for months for mobile homes. According to an AP story on February 17, California wildfire victims waited for months there significantly because the manufactured homes were too difficult to move up winding roads to remote mountain tops.

How did you all deal with that? What was the outcome? And do you have a better suggestion for how we help house victims or disaster survivors on mountain tops in the future?

Mr. SELLERS. Yes, Senator. One of the task forces I mentioned we established was the housing task force and it quickly became an issue, first of all, because the travel trailers were taken off the table in the middle of our disaster because of the formaldehyde problem. Those would have worked in the situation you are talking about. It ended up being some 25 some odd individuals that we really had no solution for ultimately.

It was handled in a myriad of ways. Certainly in the tribal lands, a couple of the tribes that were severely affected who were not a part of that calculation, there was a donation made for other smaller units from another tribe.

What FEMA did, I think in their favor actually, was to try to add more money for site preparation, to get the sites capable of handling the larger units. The pads were too small. Some places, the

infrastructure was not there to begin with in terms of power or under-powered power as well as sewage.

They added, I forget the exact number, but extended like an extra $30,000 per site to try to get those sites available. But again, a lot of these larger units could not get up the road.

So ultimately they worked through that process and some individuals just basically are out of luck in that regard.

So what I would really urge focus on is if we have a catastrophic earthquake in a large metropolitan area, a one-size solution is not going to work. And so we really need to work forward, go forward with the Federal Government to talk about reasonable housing options when we do lose a significant level of our housing stock.

We did what we could in the situation to be adaptable and ultimately a few people did not get what they needed, and again, some donations and other means helped others out.

But I think in going forward, certainly if a New Madrid affects a sizable amount of housing stock in the Midwest or certainly in Southern California, the Bay area, we will be very challenged in the area of housing if we only have one solution.

Senator LANDRIEU. And I think it would make sense, as I conclude, to give people and communities choices that are cost-effective, common sense choices for housing and not try to provide just one solution, take it or leave it when it really depends if you live in a flood plain or not, if you live on the top of a mountain or not, if you live in a rural area or not, or if you live in an urban area. I mean, it seems to me that just common sense for us to provide cost-effective choices and options and I thank you for that testimony.

Senator Pryor.

Senator PRYOR. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Maxwell, thank you for being here today. I should have said this in the beginning, but you have been a great role model I think for all of the emergency folks around the country and you have had your hands full this year.

If you do not mind, just briefly tell the Subcommittee the various disasters we have had just this calendar year because I know we have had floods, tornados, you name it.

Just kind of give the general month and what you have gone through this year.

Mr. MAXWELL. Well, we have had the three disasters that I mentioned. It started in February, actually it started in January. We had a round of tornadoes that ended up being a State-declared disaster and unfortunately some of those counties have been impacted three, four, five times this year. So it has been a major challenge for our local governments.

The first round of tornadoes, one tornado stayed on the ground for 123 miles. That is almost unprecedented for us. I cannot find a record of one being on the ground that long and you have seen the damage so you are well aware of the impact of that tornado.

The flooding in March just continued and continued and continued. As rivers got up, they just would not go down. But it seems most of our damage was in the hill country that is flash flooding, that did tremendous amounts of road damage to county roads and

the recovery pace has been pretty slow in a lot of areas. Just assessing the amount of damage that has taken quite a while.

Senator PRYOR. Let me ask about your interaction with FEMA. I know that normally you probably deal with the FEMA regional staff. But have you ever had any dealings with the DC staff? Do they ever come to a State like Arkansas to see it for themselves?

Mr. MAXWELL. Administration Paulison has been to the State, I think twice, maybe three times this year. We talk on a fairly regular basis. I was here last week or the week before working on the integrated planning system that FEMA is working on. And so there is quite a bit of contact nationally as well as I cannot stress the importance of the regions and the good working relationship that we have with Region VI.

Senator PRYOR. What about besides the director of FEMA? I am glad he has come because he has been great this year, but what about the other decisionmakers in FEMA? Do they ever, as far as you know, get out of the Washington office?

Mr. MAXWELL. Not to my knowledge, and frankly, I think that is an important point. Even the people that are reviewing the declaration request, if they have not gotten out and met disaster victims, I do not think they have a feel for the importance of what they are doing. And getting people out of Washington, getting people to actually see victims, meet disaster victims is incredibly important. It is one of the things that I make sure we do with all of our staff.

All of my staff has been out working in these disasters and it gives me better employees back because they understand whether they are working on grants, whether they are working on disaster programs, it all boils down to working with disaster victims or for disaster victims.

Senator PRYOR. I agree with that. On a related topic, you mentioned this year we have had three Federal disasters in Arkansas plus some State disasters as well. Of these three that you are talking about you have been very pleased with FEMA with two but not on the third.

Could you tell us a little bit about the difference and what made the third one different?

Mr. MAXWELL. It was a surprise to me. I thought we had a very clear-cut case for an individual assistance declaration. We did a preliminary damage assessment and had over 250 homes either with major damage or destroyed.

I felt like that was a major disaster. If we had not had the two disasters—coming on the heels of the other two disasters, it really puzzled me when we got word that we needed to get the public assistance request in and those preliminary damage assessment figures along with the individual and ask for it all at once to make it a clear-cut case.

Senator PRYOR. All right. Let me ask one last question, if I may, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Maxwell, you have mentioned this in your testimony, but also, General Bunting, you did as well and so let me direct a question related to floods to you, General Bunting.

One of the things that we have been working on in the Subcommittee is this Predisaster Mitigation Program, the PDM pro-

gram, where right now, FEMA's position is that they do not utilize any of that money and any of those resources for flooding issues, before the rains come.

I think that they ought to reconsider that and they should make some of that Federal money available for non-Corps of Engineers flood control and levies.

In our State, and I do not know about Kansas, so this is what I would like to hear your thoughts on, but in our State, we have a lot of these little levy districts and little flood control districts. Some of them are cities and some of them are just out in the counties.

How is the levy system in your State? Is it in good shape? Do you think that there might be some benefit from some of the local people receiving some Federal grant money to help maintain the levies?

General BUNTING. Sir, I would agree with that totally. We have had several meetings on levies because the worst part of the floods is sometimes with 500-year floods people did not realize they were in a flood plain and so they get really hurt by that.

I think our levies are in decent shape, but any kind of help would be great because those communities have been hard pressed with all of our storms and it is hard to find out just who owned the levy, who built it initially. The maintenance of levies is very difficult for small communities. So I would fully support any initiative to improve those because it is a big issue.

In a flat State like Kansas, we have a lot of water and a lot of levies and some of them could use some improvement.

Senator PRYOR. And I assume for some of those communities, really flooding is the primary risk, is that right?

General BUNTING. In Kansas, other than tornadoes, the primary risk that we have is flooding, yes, sir.

Senator PRYOR. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Senator Stevens.

Senator STEVENS. Thank you very much.

I am sure you realize that our State is one that is just disaster prone in so many ways, it is so large.

How many times do you have disasters that are not recognized as national disasters in your States?

Mr. MAXWELL. For Arkansas, we probably do 10 to 12 governor-declared disasters for every presidential request.

Mr. SELLERS. California is certainly 10 to 20, at least.

General BUNTING. I say the same for Kansas.

Senator STEVENS. Do you differentiate under State law between meeting the disaster and recovering from it, do you have one team working with disaster-immediate assistance and another in terms of long-term recovery?

General BUNTING. It depends upon the disaster but yes, sir. It is always the same team that is going to go out from the State. The recovery is often times a different skill set so the response team is usually different than the long-term recovery team.

Mr. SELLERS. The same for California although they are all within the Office of Emergency Services.

Senator STEVENS. It is one office, right?

Mr. SELLERS. Yes, sir, it is.

Mr. BASSHAM. In Tennessee it is also.

Mr. MAXWELL. One office in Arkansas.

Senator STEVENS. What do you do in areas where they have had a prevalence of repeated disasters? Are you changing the boundaries for your flood zones? Are you re-proportioning warnings to the people in terms of rebuilding in areas where they have really a disaster-prone situation?

Mr. MAXWELL. I can speak as far as Arkansas is concerned. We have a State mitigation program. We utilize the Federal mitigation programs, but we also have a State mitigation program that we look very closely at repeat examples of flooding, the repetitive losses and try our best to do away with those situations.

Mr. BASSHAM. In Tennessee, I believe probably the best use we make of mitigation money, particularly on the Federal side, is flood mitigation.

Mr. SELLERS. We do that in California as well with our mitigation funding, although building decisions are local decisions and that has been a big challenge for us obviously.

Senator STEVENS. They are local?

Mr. SELLERS. Yes. So it is up to the local building officials and local political leadership to identify the risk and try to mitigate it. We can do the mitigation program and through the mitigation program affect changes broadly.

For example, we had 288 notices of interest for the hazard mitigation program as a result of the fires. Only 49 of those were for fires. Others were for things like flooding and so forth. So that can be helpful.

Senator STEVENS. What do you do, General?

General BUNTING. The same. Flood plain buy-out is a very common use of our hazard mitigation funds. I would just say that floods, I think, are the hardest disaster to do long term and those are very emotional when you do those buy-outs.

Senator STEVENS. Just sitting here, I would be interested that none of you have mentioned any concept of the insurance, impact of insurance in the areas of the disaster.

What is the situation with regard to the impact of insurance on recovery in the disasters in what we call the lower 48, what happens? Do your insurers limit the number of recovery for a second disaster in the same area? How does that work with your State law?

Mr. MAXWELL. Are you talking any disaster or flooding in particular?

Senator STEVENS. I am talking about any disaster. We have the normal concepts of flood plain, but we also have areas where really forest fires are very prevalent from natural conditions. We try to limit building in those areas.

Do you have State laws, city laws that applies to those areas and what do the insurers do about insuring in areas where there have been repeated disasters?

Mr. MAXWELL. We really do not have that problem because our repeat disasters are tornadoes, or floods or tornadoes, and they are going to be covered. Certainly we work with the jurisdictions to prevent repetitive loss on flooding. There is not a whole lot we can do about the tornado situation. They are going to hit where they are going to hit.

Mr. SELLERS. In California with wildfires especially, we are going through a process with our CAL FIRE office of identifying high-risk areas in the urban-wildlife interface.

I cannot speak for our insurance commissioner. He has the insurance programs for the State. We would expect that would effect ultimately the decisions by the insurers and how they rate the risk in those areas and what actions are taken to mitigate against them.

Senator STEVENS. Are they part of your recovery concept, the contribution of insurance? Do you take that into effect, into account as you deal with an area that has been hit by a flood or by fire?

Mr. SELLERS. It is a major component and it is always insurance first for the victims. So as you go through the FEMA process, they are discounting any kind of insurance levels that are applied as well as debris management. So when we try to remove debris from an affected area, those proceeds, depending on how you structure the debris removal process, are used for that as well.

Senator STEVENS. How much do you allow individual participation for individual initiative to rebuild on their own? We worked out some situations where we allow people who are going to get coverage from a disaster to go in and rebuild their own places and have self-help and increase and get their recoveries done faster. Do you do that? Do you allow people to do their own work rather than have to wait for bidding and whatnot through the general contracting process?

Mr. MAXWELL. We do, yes.

Mr. BASSHAM. Yes, sir.

General BUNTING. I think what is noteworthy too is that there is a lot of nonprofit organization support. The Mennonites, for example, come in a big way and Habitat for Humanity, for example. We do try to expedite the building code process locally, waive fees, and the governor can waive fees in certain areas that help with the rebuilding process and he typically does that after any disaster.

Senator STEVENS. Mr. Maxwell, you come from an area, from Senator Pryor's area that there was a James Lee Witt that worked out with us some far reaching processes to deal with sort of one stop coverage where people can go just to one agency and in effect have reference to all agencies and we worked out how people could, instead of getting rental allowances to go somewhere else, could actually bring rental trailers and bring them on their own property and start rebuilding immediately so they could beat the winter.

We really had a re-assessment of how to get recovery done on a short period of time and lessen the actual cost of the recovery over the long period of time. I would hope that we would find somebody to work that into Federal law.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you. We wish you well and a short trip to Fairbanks.

Thank you, Senator Stevens.

We are going to move to the next panel in just a minute, but I do have a few wrap-up questions.

One of the things that we tried to change after Hurricanes Rita and Katrina was the program that lent loans to public entities for their operating expenses.

Do you all have anything you want to share on the record about how that has been improved? Did your cities or counties get the loans necessary to keep their operations going? Are there repayments schedules reasonable? Do you have anything you want to share on community loan programs?

Mr. MAXWELL. We had no experience with it.

Mr. BASSHAM. We do not either but I would say that one thing that had not been mentioned much here today is the SBA small business.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you for bringing that up.

Mr. BASSHAM. The work that was done in Tennessee through the joint efforts of FEMA and TEMA to put together disaster field offices out to the public, some of them are mobile, some of them are fixed for a period of time, and SBA was a large player. They were represented in every one of these and they made themselves available and they really reached out. I would like to really plug those guys. They did good work out there.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you. And if you could submit, Mr. Bassham, if you do not mind, some more information about the SBA because we, after those two storms, really leaned hard for them to come up with a new response plan and we would like to have some information as to whether that is working or not.

Mr. BASSHAM. I can provide that.[1]

Senator LANDRIEU. We appreciate that.

Anything else about SBA or community loan program that anybody might want to mention or say, good or bad or otherwise?

General BUNTING. I would just echo. SBA has been successful for us and we can provide detail on that.

Mr. MAXWELL. I would echo that as well.

Mr. SELLERS. In California, also SBA has been effective in the past fires and present fires.

We do some of the advance funding for communities. We did some for debris removals, particularly for San Diego County and San Bernardino County and the City of San Diego. To get the debris removal process expedited was essential in forwarding that money to those communities.

Senator LANDRIEU. And just to be clear on the record, you all said and each of you I would like for you to say it again for the record, besides these storms that took place or floods or disasters that were declared either Federal emergencies or disasters, how many State-declared disasters did you have for every one of these approximately?

I think you all gave those numbers to Senator Stevens. Could you just repeat them for the record, just to get a relative number between Federally declared disasters in a year in your State and State-declared disasters, approximately what it would be?

General BUNTING. Approximately for Kansas it would be 10 to 12 disasters.

Senator LANDRIEU. Ten to 12 for every one Federal disaster?

General BUNTING. Yes.

Mr. SELLERS. I would say in California, I would estimate at least about 15.

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[1] The information provided by Mr. Bassham appears in the Appendix on page 97.

Mr. MAXWELL. Similar in Arkansas, 10 to 15.

Mr. BASSHAM. It is probably less in Tennessee. I would say five or six a year on an average, something like that.

Senator LANDRIEU. Do each of your States have any kind of emergency funding set aside to take care of State and Federal emergencies to do their part of the Federal emergency? Do they have rainy day funds or emergency funds? How does it work, Mr. Maxwell, in Arkansas?

Mr. MAXWELL. We have the governor's disaster funds. There is an amount set up for public assistance and an amount for individual assistance.

Senator LANDRIEU. And is there a requirement that that be a certain percentage of the budget?

Mr. MAXWELL. It is established in law. The amount, I think it is $4 million for public assistance, $3 million for individual assistance and $.7 million for mitigation right now.

Senator LANDRIEU. This has been an excellent panel. We almost certainly will keep the record open for any other comments that you all want to submit, but because our time is short, I would like to move now to Deputy Administrator Johnson.

Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Johnson, and congratulations on your confirmation and thank you for the attention you have given to our ongoing recovery in Louisiana and Mississippi along the Gulf Coast and we still have quite a ways to go, as you know, but we appreciate your help.

I do not think you need an introduction before this panel. You have been here several times before so why do we not just go right to your opening statement and then we will have a round of questions.

STATEMENT OF HARVEY E. JOHNSON, JR.,[1] DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Chairman Landrieu and Members of the Committee.

I am pleased to be here this afternoon. As you know, I am FEMA's Deputy Administrator and recently confirmed and I appreciate your support for that.

The change in FEMA, I think, is self-evident. It is not just from FEMA's view. In fact, this past Monday, an editorial appeared in two local Illinois newspapers that were entitled, "Disaster agencies got it right in Illinois."

The editorial notes that Federal, State, area, local and other disaster aid agency took a public beating in the wake of the New Orleans Hurricane Katrina catastrophe.

The impression of millions of Americans got of FEMA was a disaster. Now, we tend to regard all disaster aid agencies with a jaundice eye. We are pleased to say that the disaster aid agencies from the Federal Government on down have performed wonderfully in the aftermath of recent tornadoes, raging winds, and flooding.

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Johnson appears in the Appendix on page 75.

The article goes on to praise FEMA, State and local agencies. Emergency agencies worked in a recalibrated and a coordinated manner amid confusion.

The editorial appears in Illinois, but I feel confident it could just as well have appeared in Iowa, California, Arkansas, Kansas, Tennessee, Oklahoma, or any of the other communities where we have responded to disasters over the last 2 years. It summarizes the progress that we are here to review and to evaluate today. It also substantiates from a FEMA perspective the headline in another Illinois paper that read, flood victims say FEMA is doing a heck of a job.

The improved level of performance did not just happen by natural evolution. It is the product of experienced leaders at the Federal, State and local level. It is the investment in resources, renewed focus on partnerships at every level of government and the dedicated efforts of thousands of FEMA professional men and women.

The transformation in FEMA began in July 2006 with the confirmation of David Paulison as the Administrator of FEMA. He laid out a vision for a new FEMA and he committed to making FEMA the Nation's preeminent emergency management and preparedness agency. That vision contained two very important elements.

First, it put forward a new focus of leaning forward to provide more effective assistance to disaster victims and communities.

And second, it identified specific objectives to achieving the vision for FEMA and these goals included marshaling an effective national response, speed the recovery of communities, strengthen our partnership at the Federal level and with States and the private sector, and instill public confidence.

Over the past 24 months that vision driven by FEMA leadership in Washington and at every one of our regional offices has guided our plans and our actions.

We are building a new FEMA which is dedicated to delivering the support and the aid necessary without bureaucratic red tape to provide essential services.

We are focusing our partnerships across the Federal departments and agencies with States and local communities and non-government and volunteer agencies, with the private sector and with individual citizens, all to marshal by cooperation and collaboration more effective national response.

The national response framework released earlier this year has helped to established just how we all work together when disaster strikes. These efforts have accelerated the speed of recovery for individuals and communities. It is now common for us to have the needed supplies pre-positioned, for us to be able to register disaster victims immediately upon the President's declaration of disaster and to have the first assistance payment to an individual within 24 hours.

And by these consistent efforts, we believe that we are instilling public confidence in FEMA and the broader emergency management community.

In striving to achieve the vision for new FEMA, we are supported by President Bush and by Secretary Chertoff and by you, Madam Chairman, and your colleagues in Congress, all of who have seen

first hand the needs on the ground and those who have provided us with additional support and the resources which can better accomplish our missions.

The return on investment in FEMA has been to the benefit of the Nation in terms of more effective response and recovery to disasters. And actions speak louder than words so let me give you a few specific examples.

In May 2007 FEMA responded to the devastated community of Greensburg and set the bar for personal involvement by a FEMA regional administrator as the leadership of our on-the-ground forces in helping to coordinate the Federal response with our State and local partners.

FEMA went on further in October 2007 when California experienced severe wildfires. FEMA and California together signed a charter for the first time, committing to an effect recovery effort. And for the first time we established a series of State-led task forces on housing, on air quality, on debris and tribal issues.

I was particularly pleased to hear Senator Boxer comment the following: An important difference between FEMA during Katrina and now is that they have actually learned how to bring people together as a team.

We have been active in a series of events across Arkansas this year. Storms and tornados had struck over a period of weeks in early May, and FEMA responded by providing more than $2.5 million in aid just in the first 3 weeks after that disaster.

Similarly when storms and tornadoes struck in February in Tennessee, FEMA worked with State and local officials to reach out in relatively rural communities. Using mobile registration centers, online capabilities and expanded phone centers, we registered more than 3,000 households and distributed more than $3.6 million in assistance in just the first 2 weeks after those disasters.

In one of the largest events since Hurricane Katrina, FEMA is on the ground today responding to flooding across the Midwest. Beyond successful response efforts across five States, we are focused now on recovery and we are there to stay as communities begin to recover and rebuild. As of the first of this month, FEMA has already provided more than $181 million in financial aid to residents in these communities.

In addition, the national housing task force was established to support State needs and field operations as they work to provide temporary long-term housing.

As you can see, FEMA, with your help and that of the partners at the Federal, State and local level has made significant progress since Hurricane Katrina in building the emergency management system, an agency that America can rely on and be proud of.

That is not to say that we are not without challenges. Within FEMA we continue to strengthen our work force both in its numbers and its better training. With intent to provide better and more effective services to disaster victims, we are focused soon on beginning the process of regulatory and policy reform and across the Nation will bring a sharper focus on the direction we should take in the Nation with regard to disaster housing next week, as we release the national disaster housing strategy.

Amid success and challenges, FEMA remains committed to provide effective assistance to disaster victims and communities.

I am prepared to respond to your questions.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you. I do have several questions.

As you know, the Homeland Security Committees, both in the House and the Senate, right after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita passed a piece of reform legislation that provided new tools to FEMA. There are some of those tools that were not included in that legislation that I am continuing to work on, but there were some new authorities given to FEMA.

Can you testify right now what parts of that law were most helpful to you in building the new FEMA that you are beginning to describe? If one or two or three things come to mind now, you can share them; and if not, if you would have you or your staff give us in writing, let us say, the top 10 new authorities that you believe have helped you to become a new FEMA.

Mr. JOHNSON. The PKEMRA Act was a very important piece of legislation to FEMA and it helped to broaden and refine the mission of FEMA beyond just the response and recovery. It was particularly helpful to define our role in preparedness as it brought elements of the department of preparedness into FEMA.

So I think one of the strongest things that we are doing, and Mr. Maxwell talked about it just a few minutes ago, is the focus on preparedness. Mr. Maxwell is part of a working group that has represented State and local level members who are beginning to build, for the first time in our Nation, an integrated preparedness system, integrated planning system.

And so with the work and with the help of NEMA and IAM and other representatives, it will not be long before we will be able to plan for events in a common way across America from Maine to Florida to California. With the common terminology, common terms of reference, it will make it much easier at the region level to integrate Federal, State and local plans and be better prepared for disasters.

As you all know well, in Katrina in Louisiana and Mississippi, case management is a very important issue. As we talk about the national disaster housing strategy, an issue that you pointed out, is that it used to be OK just to provide a housing unit and that is not the success any more. It is those services that supports that disaster victim that become as important as providing a housing unit.

And so PKEMRA gave FEMA for the first time authorities to get into case management and beginning to work that and understand that better by working with the Department of Health and Human Services and also right now, Louisiana and Mississippi, as we refine a contract that they continue case management beyond that which expired about 2 months ago.

We have authorities inside FEMA. One of the comments that came up from Kansas is the talk about the FEMA member, our disaster reserve work force and how do we acquire the right numbers of people in FEMA; and when we have the right numbers, how do we really train them and professionally develop them in ways that we have not done previously before PKEMRA and before Mr.

Paulison's focus on improving the professional development of people inside FEMA.

And so you are going to see the benefit of that. It sometimes takes a while for it to provide results, but we are focusing more on how we hire people, select people and a number of authorities in that law gave us a greater range to be able to do that.

Senator LANDRIEU. I would like to follow up because General Bunting mentioned this again as still a problem, the turn over within FEMA's public assistance which was a real problem that showed itself in Hurricanes Rita and Katrina.

So could you elaborate again, for the record, what you all have done to stabilize your force to make sure that those professional full-time or part-time workers are familiar to the local officials that may or may not be dealing with and have we made any progress on the idea that some of us have had about a trained and ready reserve that could step in, in a catastrophic disaster that are familiar with the rules, understand the rules, familiar with the territory in which they are working and the people that are working with? Are we making any progress in that regard?

Mr. JOHNSON. I think we are, and of course, progress never comes at the pace you expect or that I do or that Mr. Paulison does. But let me mention a couple of things in particular.

As your charts show, the challenges in Hurricane Katrina were just catastrophic. The length, 3 years now into recovery from Hurricane Katrina and individual assistance and public assistance, initially that was very challenging for the FEMA work force to be deployed into that area that was still devastated and not even have good places for those people to stay as well.

So FEMA employees as much as contractors rotated through with far greater frequency than we were happy with. And as you know, Gil Jamison, who was our assistant administrator for Gulf Coast recovery at the time, worked both in Mississippi and Louisiana and we worked both with our contractors and at our own work force to lengthen the stays before they might rotate out of State.

We also increased the number of local hires, and as you know, we have a number of people at our transition recovery office in Louisiana that are Louisiana residents and themselves experienced in disasters having been a disaster victim and that has helped us to both understand better and relate better to those that we need to provide assistance to.

The second thing I mentioned is that we recently established for the first time in FEMA the office of disaster reserve work force; and Donna Daniels, who is a member of the senior executive service, 30 years experience in FEMA, heads that brand new office and she has been able to coalesce into a single office oversight of all of the hiring, the training and the development of all of our disaster assistance employees and that is an area of intense focus in FEMA as we try to do a much better job of training and developing those employees.

So I think across the board that we have recognized that as a key area. It is a challenge today in five States across the Midwest; and if we had a hurricane today to challenge to do that disaster as well as respond to a hurricane, we are focused on that issue and

I think we are on the right road. But it is a road that is going to take a while to achieve the successes that I think we are looking for.

Senator LANDRIEU. Mr. Maxwell from Arkansas raised this in his testimony, that in the three disasters that he spoke about, in the first two the response from the Federal Government was fairly immediate, but on the third, there was a 14-day delay.

Can you respond to the record about why that happened from your perspective and will it be corrected in the future or do you have an explanation as to why that happened?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, let me give you a couple thoughts just in recollection; and then if I may, for the record, I can provide, if I need to, to add some additional comments, I will do that.

We approach—in the declaration process when a disaster occurs, the question that we sometimes need to deal with is, what is the first resource to respond in a disaster? Is it the Federal dollar, the Federal resource or State and local?

All disasters are local, but at some level we need to determine whether this is, in fact, a disaster that merits a presidential declaration and we need to formulate a recommendation to the President to make that determination.

And in that process, there is often a need to look at what is the extent of damage in terms of houses damaged, destroyed; to what level they are damaged or destroyed; to look at public infrastructure where there is a formula in law about how we handle public assistance and make that determination.

Every disaster on its face needs to be evaluated individually. I think in Mr. Maxwell's case, as he acknowledged, I believe he testified that there were about 250 homes that were either destroyed or had major damage and that is about at the level that we really ask those questions about whether this is a disaster that merits a Presidential declaration or whether this is a disaster we believe is within the capabilities of the State.

I think that when we have that range of disasters, those questions come up and it is important to get the preliminary damage assessments and to validate the extent of damage.

Senator LANDRIEU. I want to pursue this for just a moment and I am going to ask the others to submit testimony in writing because I think this is one of the important keys.

I want us to develop a system where when a catastrophe happens whether it is 50 homes that are destroyed, or 100 homes that are destroyed, or 250 homes that are destroyed, or 250,000 which was our case, that there is a system that there is immediate action taken and the worries about who is going to reimburse who are settled later by the bureaucracy, but that no homeless person has to sleep three nights on the street or four nights or five nights or on our situation, 5 months, while the government is figuring that out.

And I am determined to get that figured out whether it is something like everything under x-number of houses there is an automatic understanding at the local level that they will be reimbursed by their State so there are no questions because I will tell you what happens or what I think is happening and I am learning a lot about it.

In a big State or a big county where there are resources, these things have sort of become automatic. The county realizes they have got a lot of assets.

But if you are a small community out in the middle of no-where or you are a community that has been completely destroyed, the mayor or the council leader or the local leader says, "I do not even have enough money to pay the light bill next week so where am I going to get the money now to pay my people to do this."

And those first early days, I think, are very important and I do not think that is worked out yet and I think this is an example of what we are still not working out which is important.

So our time is limited today, but I want to pursue this with the governors, with the mayors, with the county officials so that within 24 hours of this disaster, it becomes very clear to everybody whether it is a green disaster, a yellow disaster, or red disaster and then actions can start going.

The hesitation in the beginning is really very harmful and I think we need to get that straight. That is one of the things that I do not think is being done correctly at this point, but we will follow up.

Let me just check with my staff to see if there is anything else because we have to end this hearing.

The private section, the last question, understands that it must get feedback from customers to determine whether they are meeting their customers' expectations. I do not know if FEMA has a disaster survey routinely done, not just to your local counterparts but to the tax-paying citizens themselves who have been recipients on the other end.

So I understand that FEMA has finally begun a process of surveying individuals. Could you comment about that for the record and tell us what some of the feedback has been or how you are going about doing that, which I think is an excellent idea, by the way.

Mr. JOHNSON. Let me give you a general comment and then submit to the record the actual statistics. I do not think I have them with me.

But we have, at your suggestion and others, how do we know how well we are doing and why would we not ask questions of those who receive assistance from FEMA, and so we have, in fact, begun to ask several specific questions.

We ask these questions about 30 or 45 days after they register. So it is a time for them to register with FEMA, to receive services or not from FEMA, qualify or not, and go through our process. And while I do not have the number specifically, in general our numbers are very good.

We are receiving more than 80 percent positive responses. We have done this in several disasters since we began this survey process and I think that it has become useful information for us both in terms of refining our processes and understanding where some of our challenges are and also to convey that, as I think we have seen in these States who testified today and as I think you will find in Illinois and Iowa and Wisconsin and Missouri with the Midwest floods, as I have talked about these newspaper articles, people who

interface with FEMA today generally come away with a much more positive impression than they have had 2 years ago.

It is very difficult to make that transition for people who have just seen us and touched us in Hurricane Katrina. So I think we are going to learn a lot from these surveys and I will be glad to provide that detailed information to your staff.

Senator LANDRIEU. OK. And let us say the record will stay open for 14 days for anyone that wants to submit anything to the record and I will look forward to continuing to work with the first panel and others to continue to craft a better, more comprehensive response to catastrophic disasters, the scale of which would be something for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Northridge earthquakes. I mean, there are some catastrophes that have taken place in this country where the tools that we have discussed today are just wholly inadequate for what has to be redone. Rebuilding a major metropolitan area comes to mind.

There are serious threats that we are all too familiar with that could potentially happen. Earthquakes in certain areas, Category 4 or 5 hurricanes hitting certain metropolitan areas. And besides the housing strategy that has not yet been submitted, from what I understand it may be—how adequate it will be, I do not know—we have a lot of other work to do with coordinating Federal agencies like health, like mental-health, human services, HUD, etc., in that long-term rebuilding process that is still going on in the Gulf Coast and in some other areas of the country.

So we will leave this open for 14 days.

Do you have any closing comments, Mr. Johnson?

Mr. JOHNSON. I just want to thank you again for this hearing today, and I think the chance to hear from four States that I think are representative both in terms of things where things have gone well and where we continue to have challenges.

And just to say that from a FEMA perspective, we work with each of these gentlemen that you have heard from today and we value their opinions and we recognize where we need to make improvements and I believe we have got a track record doing that.

You have provided us an opportunity both to recognize the challenges and an opportunity that you have given recognition where we succeeded, and so I appreciate your support and your view on our performance.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:51 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

STATEMENT OF

MAJOR GENERAL TOD M. BUNTING
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL OF KANSAS
DIRECTOR, KANSAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY

On May 4, 2007, an EF-5 tornado estimated to be 2 miles wide with 205 mph winds struck the City of Greensburg and Kiowa County, Kansas. Twenty-two tornadoes were reported in Kansas on this night. The most extensive damage occurred in the city of Greensburg.

The storms resulted in 15 fatalities statewide, 12 of those occurring in Greensburg. 961 homes and 110 businesses were destroyed within the city of Greensburg. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the homes and businesses sustained major damage or were destroyed. With the exception of the Kiowa County Courthouse, all government owned facilities were destroyed including the city hall, the county hospital, police, fire and maintenance facilities and all three schools. In addition, 7 churches were destroyed. The near total destruction of government infrastructure would create major challenges for the recovery effort.

FEMA Region VII Administrator, Dick Hanjie, immediately recognized the catastrophic impacts of the tornado. Mr. Hanjie contacted me just minutes after being advised of the devastation to offer up the resources of the federal government. Mr. Hanjie continued his contact with me the following day and arrived in Greensburg with Federal Coordinating Officer, Mike Karl, less than 24 hours after the tornado leveled the town.

To augment on-station state recovery assets, two FEMA mobile disaster recovery vehicles along with an emergency response vehicle and several satellite communication vehicles arrived in Greensburg within 36 hours of the disaster.

A talented team of FEMA's logistics personnel quickly began creating temporary infrastructure, including communications systems and temporary facilities on behalf of the county and state. The state was advised of all cost-share expenditures upfront.

All federal partners worked in a unified command structure supporting the State. Resources needed were quickly identified by joint coordinated FEMA staff and State of Kansas staff.

The Small Business Administration (SBA), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the National Weather Service Office (NWS) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) brought valuable expertise and resources to the

community. Special recognition should be given to the Ameri-Corps for managing the thousands of volunteers within the community.

All federal agencies exhibited a willingness to provide whatever equipment and technical assistance the local jurisdiction or state requested.

A Joint Field Office (JFO) was established in Wichita, Kansas, located approximately 1 ½ hours east of Greensburg. Because of the severity and need for a federal/state presence within Kiowa County, FEMA established an Area Field Office (AFO) in Greensburg. FEMA allowed the city, county, and state to use their facilities for meetings, briefings, and office space until such time as temporary modular facilities could be procured through normal purchasing channels.

A large Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) was established at Haviland, eleven miles east of Greensburg. FEMA provided support in establishing phone service, internet service, and T-1 Internet capabilities. FEMA supported additional mobile disaster recovery centers in Greensburg and within the other 24 Kansas counties also included in the major declaration. Mr. Karl and his staff never lost sight of the recovery needs of the other counties included in the disaster declaration. Requests for amendments were quickly processed by Mr. Karl and his staff.

The US Forestry Service established a 300 person Base Camp in the city park to support disaster workers. The camp included lodging, meals, showers, toilet facilities, fueling, security, and laundry services. The Base Camp was fully operational May 8th.

FEMA Direct Housing Operations housed 84 families in travel trailers or mobile homes within 10 days from the declaration date thus eliminating the need for mass care.

Because rental housing was not available, and the majority of all housing had been destroyed, a FEMA group site was constructed just outside the city limits of Greensburg with 225 families occupying mobile homes. If Greensburg was to recover, it was critical to allow residents to remain close to home, instead of relocating to distant urban areas. Housing assistance allowed individuals and business owners to stay within their community, rebuild, attend school, and establish their businesses. To date, FEMA has provided over $8.1 million in

housing assistance and the Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved over $41 million in low-interest loans to businesses and residents. (Attachment 1)

Through the Public Assistance Program, a total of 430,000 cubic yards of debris were removed from the city of Greensburg. To date, FEMA has disbursed a total of $62.9 million with $31.1 million of this amount obligated to applicants in Kiowa County. These funds are for eligible debris removal, emergency protective measures, and damages to public buildings and utilities projects.

Area for improvement: Some inconsistencies exist within the Public Assistance Program. At times, inconsistencies in policies and cost estimating formulas have created confusion on the part of local applicants and the state. In some instances, disaster payments are being delayed until such matters are resolved. For example, the construction on the County Courthouse was delayed because the applicant was confused on how FEMA was applying insurance proceeds. The result is that construction just now being started on this facility. The inconsistencies appear to be a result of the continued turnover of FEMA field staff and personal interpretation of guidelines. I feel that an arbitration process needs to be incorporated into the Public Assistance Program to alleviate any concerns of bias on behalf of FEMA in the appeal process. Project worksheets over one million dollars require additional approvals and are often untimely.

FEMA activated the Long-term Community recovery program, which integrated assistance from the State of Kansas and federal agencies focusing on the community's long-range goals.

FEMA's Long-term community recovery program helped establish a community process and jump-start redevelopment. Together citizens, civic groups, businesses owners, local, state, and federal officials and the long-term recovery planning team developed a Sustainable Comprehensive Plan that serves as the vision for redevelopment and future development in Greensburg and Kiowa County. The plan is applicable to every project in Greensburg.

Area for improvement: In some recovery areas, progress was slowed because of lack of visibility of various federal programs. It is recommended that federal agencies having a role in recovery, such as US Departments of Commerce, Labor, and Agriculture be co-located in the Joint Field Office (JFO) or Area Field Office

(AFO) to provide guidance to state and local leaders. For instance, the state located a temporary facility to be used as a business incubator site but was unable to locate a mechanism or program to share the fiscal responsibility.

As another example, USDA has been a strong partner in the recovery effort funding portions of the city's water tower, courthouse and single family homes and eventually the business incubator building. As recovery efforts proceeded, these USDA partnerships were unknown to the State and we were not aware of the various programs available to the community and its residents. Perhaps if they were co-located in the JFO or AFO and attended the briefings information could have been more readily shared and coordination of benefits would have been more seamless.

In the last 18 months, Kansas has had five major disaster declarations, and our close relationship with Mr. Hanjie and his staff at FEMA Region VII has proven invaluable and they have served the citizens of Kansas well.

The devastation in Greensburg is one of the worst in Kansas history -- leveling an entire community. Extraordinary efforts were required not only to respond and save lives but also to rebuild ensuring that Greensburg survives.

I am pleased to report that FEMA and our federal partners responded quickly and with a positive "can-do" attitude. Certainly there remains much work to be done to rebuild an entire city. But the resiliency of the people of Greensburg coupled with the strong support of the State of Kansas and our federal partners has them well on their way to being a model—and in fact one of the nation's first 'Green' cities.

STATE OF KANSAS
MAY 2007
GREENSBURG/KIOWA COUNTY TORNADO*
FACT SHEET
DR-1699

Total Kansas Counties Declared
- Individual Assistance Programs: 24
- Public Assistance Programs: 45

Fatalities: 15 total
- Greensburg/Kiowa County: 12
- Stafford County : 1
- Pratt County: 1
- Ottawa County: 1

Greensburg/Kiowa County Statistics:
- Homes
  - Destroyed: 961
  - Major Damage: 105
  - Minor Damage: 67
  - Affected: 11
- Businesses
  - Major/Destroyed: 110
  - Minor Damage: 24
- Farmsteads
  - Destroyed: 30
- Churches
  - Destroyed: 7
- Debris
  - 430,000 cubic yards

Direct Federal Support
- Mission Assignments
  - $12.6 million
    - US Forest Service/US Army Corps of Engineers/General Services Administration/Environmental Protection Agency/Ameri-Corps

***see attached map for county information**

DR-1699-KS
Fact Sheet

Individual Assistance

- FEMA Housing Assistance
  - Total: $8.1 million
  - Kiowa County: $2.8 million
- FEMA Direct Housing Program
  - 225 mobile homes group site in Greensburg
  - 9 private sites

- State of Kansas Other Needs Assistance
  - Total all counties: $1.6 million
    - 825 households approved
  - Total Kiowa County: $972,250
    - 187 households approved

- Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loans
  - $42 million to residents and businesses
  - 585 approved

- Crisis Counseling program funds
  - $888,784

- Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits
  - $111,931

Public Assistance

FEMA approved project worksheets: 45*

- Greensburg: 17
- Kiowa County: 16
- Greensburg Schools: 6
- Kiowa County Memorial Hospital : 6

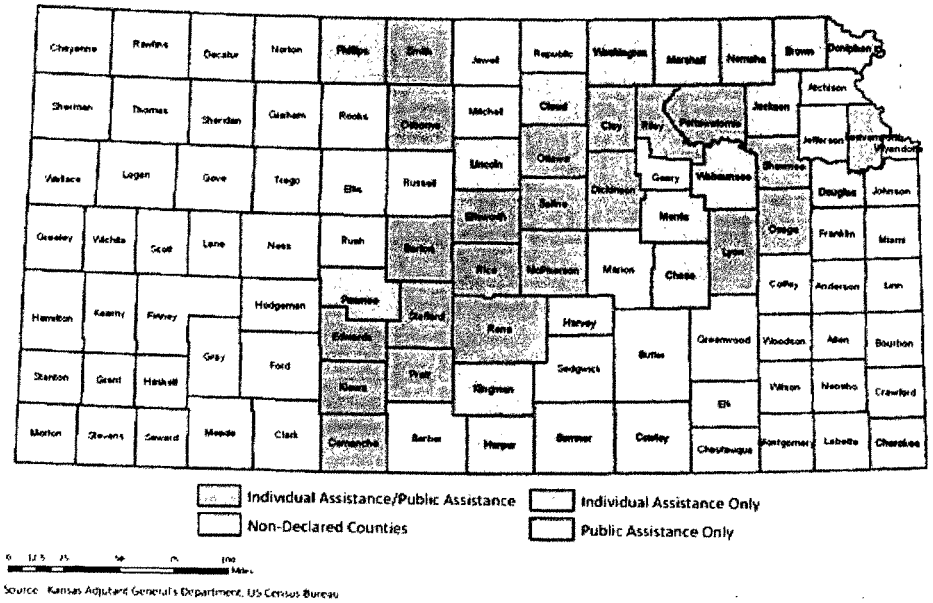
*Buildings only--does not include towers, parks, ball fields, water tower, etc.

FEMA dispersed more than $31.1M to pay for debris removal, emergency protective measures and damage to public buildings and utilities in Kiowa County.

View of Post-Tornado Destruction
Greensburg, Kansas

DR-1699-KS

Incident Period: May 4 (11:59 PM) - June 1, 2007



Testimony of
STEPHEN SELLERS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL OPERATIONS
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon Chairwoman Landrieu, Senator Stevens, and members of the committee. I am Stephen Sellers, Deputy Director for Regional Operations of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. Thank you for inviting me to be here today to discuss the Office of Emergency Services response and recovery efforts for the 2007 Southern California Wildfires in relation to our experience with the Federal Emergency Management Agency—FEMA.

The 2007 Southern California Wildfires strongly tested California's emergency management capabilities, systems, and resources, specifically in the areas of interagency coordination, wildfire suppression, mass evacuation, and mass care and sheltering. Overall, our evaluation indicates that the state's response to the event was very successful. California's long usage of the Incident Command System, our strong and established Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and our mutual aid systems---Fire, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Management--coupled with well organized and effective local government operations, proved vital to the success in responding to this event.

As in the 2003 wild fire event, we exceeded our capabilities which precipitated extensive federal support to minimize the impacts of the disaster. Indeed, through various missions from the National Interagency Fire Center and through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, support was secured from thirty-one states. We also received international assistance from Mexico and Canada. Clearly, this was a major event requiring the combined efforts of local, state and federal agencies.

Let me make it abundantly clear before discussing our experience with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, that **there is no substitute in any disaster for strong local capability.** As I am sure you have heard before, "all disasters are local". Without that first level of response capability and without local government working with their citizens and community groups through the recovery process, none of our disasters will be managed effectively. We have recognized that in California with the provision of Emergency Management Performance Grant and Homeland Security funding to enhance local preparedness and capabilities.

OUR EXPERIENCE WITH FEMA IN THE 2007 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

At the outset, I would like to state very firmly that the successful response and recovery to the event would have not been possible without the effective cooperation and support of the federal government; especially FEMA. From the beginning of the event to today, we have experienced a very collaborative and mission-focused attitude on the part of the federal agencies involved in the Southern California firestorms of 2007. FEMA in particular continues to be a strong partner as we proceed through what Governor Schwarzenegger has so aptly described as the marathon portion of a disaster event---disaster recovery.

Let me provide an overview of the October fires event:

With the control of the last fire for the event, the Corral Fire in Malibu, the Santa Ana winds and subsequent fire siege in Southern California included:

- **24** Fires affecting **7** counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura

522,168 Acres burned

10 Fatalities

147 Injuries

2,276 Residences Destroyed

1015 structures damaged including homes

Over **320,000** persons evacuated -- the largest evacuation in California's history

22,195 persons sheltered in **54** sites

Disaster Recovery:

- To date, just over $10 million in FEMA Housing and $4 million in Other Needs Assistance has been distributed to California homeowners and renters affected by the wildfires.
- **Over $91 million in low interest loans for homes and small businesses** has been approved by SBA.
- ***More than* 7,700** housing inspections completed
- **More than $141 million in Public Assistance Grants representing 199 eligible requests for public assistance has been identified as eligible for 75% federal funding (represents over $107 million in federal funding). So far over $98 million in federal funds have been obligated to state and local agencies.**
- **More than $41 million in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds have been made available to state and local governments throughout the state to reduce or eliminate future risk.**

With the Santa Ana wind event in Riverside County and the onset of the fires on October 21st, 2007, OES activated our Southern Region Emergency Operations Center in Los Alamitos and our State Operations Center in Sacramento to support local government and coordinate state response. These facilities remained in some level of operation through the containment of the Corral Fire in Malibu on November 24, 2007. This was one of the longest sustained operations of our operations centers in many years.

Governor Schwarzenegger proclaimed a State of Emergency for seven counties in Southern California on October 21, 2007, and requested that the President declare a Major Disaster Declaration for the impacted area. On October 22, 2007, the President issued an Emergency Declaration providing direct federal mission support to the fire response. Two days later, on October 24, 2007, the President issued a Major Disaster Declaration that opened up all Stafford Act assistance to the State.

Under the federal declaration, a Federal Coordinating Officer, Mike Hall, Director, FEMA Region X, was designated and he and his team, with the support of FEMA Region IX who maintains a field office in Pasadena, California, initiated the establishment of a Joint Field Office (JFO) to coordinate state and federal response and recovery efforts. At the time, I was designated as the Deputy State Coordinating Officer to work directly with Mr. Hall to ensure that State needs were effectively met. It is clear that the skills, abilities and leadership qualities demonstrated by this FCO and the team he put together made a tremendous difference in the outcome of the response and recovery to our event.

If there is a model of an FCO that needs to be institutionalized throughout FEMA, it is that of Mike Hall, Director, FEMA Region X. The fact that we have received very

few appeals of FEMA determinations under the Public Assistance program (33 as compared to hundreds in past disasters) is indicative of the FCO leadership and the close coordination and collaboration established between the state and FEMA.

Prior to the federal declaration and the identification of the FCO and throughout the response and recovery process, we had very strong and positive support from Nancy Ward, Director, FEMA Region IX and her staff from the onset of the disaster. FEMA Region IX provided a liaison to our SOC and we were in constant contact with them either directly or through their Regional Resource Coordination Center. Ms. Ward and her staff were a strong and positive presence at the JFO and have continued to be so to today. **Strong and effective leadership and staff professionalism at the FEMA regional level made a tremendous difference in California's ability to manage this disaster. It is our strong desire to ensure that the role of the FEMA regions remains strong and effective.**

THE JOINT FIELD OFFICE EXPERIENCE

As the FCO and I began our collaboration in the Joint field Office, JFO, the attitude of him and his staff was one of deference to our needs and due consideration of our practices. It was "our" disaster and the federal team was supportive of our needs. By utilizing the Incident Command System, we were able to, among other things; effectively establish mission tasking coordination as well as a regular action planning cycle. We paired up state and federal staff in key positions in the JFO to our Regional Operations Centers and the State Operations Center. **Simply put: FEMA's use of the Incident Command System allowed for very effective joint operations as the system has been in use in California since the late-1970s.**

One of the hallmarks of our system is flexibility and FEMA exhibited that quality as well. While standardization is critical for effective operations, a "one size fits all" approach can be too limiting when in the throes of a disaster. **In our experience, FEMA empowered their employees to undertake effective actions and worked with us to adjust to the way we do things in California.**

Let me give one example. Over the years, FEMA has gone from setting up Disaster Recovery Centers where disaster victims could go to receive direct federal assistance to teleregistration and providing disaster assistance information in Disaster Recovery Centers. Local and state agencies in many states use this model and locate their services there as well. In California, our model is to work with our local governments to establish Local Assistance Centers (LACs). For us, we think that the local focus of these centers is critical for disaster victims in the impacted communities especially as they will be working with their local entities throughout the recovery process. The State integrates our agencies into these centers so that they can provide a "one-stop shop" for victims needing local and state assistance. For example, many critical records that may have been lost are a state agency responsibility such as drivers licenses.

Rather than establish separate Disaster Recovery Centers, FEMA and other key federal agencies such as the Small Business Administration co-located with us and local agencies in the LACs. When the LACs demobilized, FEMA transitioned many of them to DRCs. Such flexibility is invaluable in response and recovery efforts.

While day-to-day operations centered on a typical planning cycle as utilized in California for years, it became clear early on that the nature of this disaster required focus on some key areas of interest for local and State government.

This included housing, debris removal and tribal concerns. Through the establishment of task forces, we were able to bring the relevant agencies together to focus on these critical areas. We also established a Multi-Agency Support Group or MASG to address post-fire concerns. As I will explain in a moment **the MASG was a major success of the 2007 Southern California Wildfires.** First let me highlight the housing and debris management task forces.

HOUSING TASK FORCE

As stated previously, 2,276 residences were destroyed and 1,015 structures were damaged in this event. This was a tremendous burden on individuals and families generally. The Housing Task force was established to bring key federal and state agencies together to focus on the problem of temporary housing as registrants worked through the placement process. While the overwhelming number of victims was accommodated in a very timely manner, there were few housing options for victims in rural areas. During our event, the formaldehyde concerns with the FEMA travel trailers took that option away for many of the victims that could have used it. As it was, we were left with a "one-size fits all" option of a large mobile home. This simply did not work for many homeowners given transportation, site and infrastructure challenges. FEMA did what it could to make sites feasible, but some simply did not work out. **As we move forward to identify housing options in future disasters such as a major earthquake in our urban areas, we need to work with the federal government to identify multiple and reasonable temporary housing options.**

It should also be mentioned that the level of funding for the Individuals and Households Program bears examining. Currently set at $28,800, many disaster victims are finding it

inadequate to meet their needs. California is interested in exploring increasing the allocation as has been expressed by legislation (S. 2386) introduced by Senator Feinstein.

DEBRIS MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

Post-fire debris management presents several challenges as we balance federal policies regarding the removal of debris on private property relative to conducting a comprehensive community debris removal program that protects public health and expedites community recovery. Following the devastating Angora Fire in Lake Tahoe that destroyed 254 homes, over 55 outbuildings, and posed a public health and environmental degradation problem in the area, California established a very aggressive and thorough debris management approach to effectively remove debris in the disaster area to include foundations. This was the context for our intended debris management efforts going in to the 2007 Southern California Wild Fires.

By establishing the Debris Management Task Force, we were able to collaborate on effective debris removal efforts in coordination with local government with the single goal of removing as much debris as possible and maximizing federal reimbursement. We did adapt our "Angora model" based on local needs, but the singular goal of efficiently removing debris to expedite rebuilding was attained. Indeed, we were able to remove debris on private property within established FEMA policies for the first time since the Oakland Hills Fire in 1991 (with the exception of San Bernardino County in 2003 that chose to use a bin program wherein the county provided the bins on local right of ways and homeowners arranged to have the debris brought to the bins for disposal). In this disaster, close coordination between Cal EPA, US EPA, FEMA, and

local governments via the Debris Task force made efficient and effective debris management possible.

An area of recommended improvement is for FEMA allow effected states to conduct minimal testing in order to demonstrate that post-fire debris is hazardous to the public. Time and money are wasted repeating testing and each time the results are the same: post-fire ash is hazardous where homes have been damaged or destroyed. California thinks that our EPAs determination should stand and requiring extensive testing in future fire events should be minimized or eliminated.

Additionally, insurance proceeds related to debris removal should be apportioned between the state and FEMA. As it stands, FEMA is allocated the total amount even though they are providing only 75% of the costs. Apportioning the allocation would be of great interest to California, and, I am sure, other states.

TRIBAL TASK FORCE

As the JFO expanded operations, the need for a Tribal Task Force was identified. On October 29, 2007, the Tribal Task Force was established. The mission of the Task Force was to deliver disaster response and recovery assistance directly to the Tribes. The Tribal Task Force was later reclassified to Division H in order to fit into the DR-1731-CA divisional structure. Division H was the designation used to identify the task force assigned to resolving tribal issues associated with response and recovery activities that were linked to the wildfires. OES deployed a Tribal Liaison to support operations and facilitate requests for State resources and program information. In addition to OES, Division H was comprised of representatives from FEMA, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, other federal agencies and various federal

Emergency Service Functions (ESFs). The base of operations was located in San Diego County at the Rincon Reservation.

All Tribal Nations within the declared counties were queried for fire related damages and resource needs. Only the Tribes within San Diego County were affected. Multiple Tribes were evacuated. Of the 18 Tribes in the county, a total of 11 Tribes sustained varying degrees of damage that included structure, land and economic loss. Two Tribes, the La Jolla and Rincon Tribes, sustained the most damage. The La Jolla Tribe lost over 92 percent of their tribal lands (reservation) to fire, including 44 homes on the reservation. The Rincon Tribe sustained an estimated $3 million in Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA) losses.

The Division H was fully staffed and operational during the late November-December 2007 Storms that caused additional damage to the burn areas. Due to the efforts of Division H, the needs of the Tribal communities were identified and responded to in a timely, efficient, appropriate manner. Division H was demobilized and absorbed into Division A (San Diego County) on December 21, 2007.

Burn Area MULTI-AGENCY SUPPORT GROUP

Following the 2003 Southern California Wildfires, we were faced with a tremendous challenge of identifying post-fire concern relative to erosion, flooding, debris flow, mud and landslides and implementing emergency protective measures in a coordinated fashion with federal, state and local agencies. At that time, we set up an inter-agency coordination group to attempt to address these issues affecting various watersheds. For the 2007 fires, we expanded upon this effort through the establishment of the Multi-Agency Support Group on October 29th, just 10 days following the onset of the fires.

Coordinated by the Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the joint State/Federal Multi-Agency Support Group (MASG) tasked five State Resources Agency departments (CAL FIRE, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Conservation (DOC) - California Geological Survey (CGS), the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)), CalEPA's Regional Water Quality Control Board, and ten federal agencies (the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the United States Forest Services (USFS), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the United States Bureau of Land Management (USBLM), the United States. Department of the Interior (USDOI), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the National Weather Service (NWS), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)) to support operation of the MASG and prepare post-fire assessments for the wildfires that burned approximately 522,000 acres (includes the Corral Fire) in late October and November 2007. In addition, local participants included Orange, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties, Long Beach Fire Department, CUEA and San Diego Gas and Electric. Following containment of the fires, burn area assessments were conducted by local, state and federal agencies to:

(1) identify on-site and downstream threats to public health or safety from land sliding, debris torrents, flooding, road hazards, and other post- fire related problems;
(2) identify threats to watersheds and other values at risk, including: water quality, wildlife, fisheries, botanical and cultural resources; and
(3) determine measures needed to prevent or mitigate identified threats.

In response to Governor Schwarzenegger's Executive Order (S-13-07), the State formed six State Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) teams to complement the work done by the USFS BAER teams and to produce reports that complemented the USFS BAER Reports. The State teams were comprised of engineering geologists, soil specialists, biologists, botanists, civil engineers, and GIS specialists. The State of California had not previously attempted this level of post fire assessment work.

State and federal BAER teams submitted draft reports to the MASG. The MASG staff reviewed the reports with local government agencies and posted the reports on the OES website.

To provide ongoing coordination of protection work identified in the BAER reports, the MASG created 3 Burned Area Response Task Forces (Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Orange, as well as San Diego regions) to track projects and interface with local governments to prioritize work on a risk basis. This was the first time that these type teams had been formed for which there is no federal equivalent. The teams consisted of individuals from OES, DFG, DWR and FEMA tasked with preparing reports evaluating the risk which were then distributed to 85 federal, state and local agencies.

The MASG BARTFs have developed Hazard Awareness Maps (HAMS) for Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino and LA counties that depict specific areas that face a potential higher risk flood and debris flows. In November, these HAMS were provided to County Flood Control and Emergency Services offices prior to the onset of winter precipitation events in affected Southern California areas. They were subsequently used by federal, state and local agencies to implement

measures to protect life and property. At least one of our impacted counties, Orange, utilized this information to install K-rails to effectively protect roads and homes from mudflows and during the winter to twice effect the evacuation of one canyon given the anticipated runoff from a storm event. In the second rain event, they did experience the level of runoff and mudflows predicted under the models.

One area of federal policy that did cause a challenge was funding of emergency protective measures utilizing the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Emergency Watershed Protection program. Typically, the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) evaluates threats posed by events that have a reasonable chance of occurring in the near future, such as a 5- or 10-year flooding event. The projects that may be funded under the NRCS Emergency Water Shed Program (EWP) are similar in nature to those emergency protective measures for which FEMA Public Assistance (PA) funding may be requested for "essential assistance" in accordance with Section 403 of the Stafford Act. In an effort to protect life and property, state and local agencies completed emergency erosion and flood control work in response to Flash Flood Warnings and Watches issued for the burn areas by the National Weather Service. However, erosion and flood control measures completed without prior authorization or approval from NRCS were not eligible under the EWP program. Per OMB, FEMA is prohibited from providing funds for work that falls under the authority of another Federal agency to prevent "duplication of benefit." However, eventually FEMA agreed to fund erosion control projects that were denied by NRCS that also met the FEMA PA eligibility requirement (i.e, the direct responsibility of the local agency and were necessary to save lives, protect public health and safety and improved property) but only those projects completed by December 31, 2007. In January winter storms began and FEMA required OES to request an amendment to the original

declaration to include mud and debris flows and flooding in the declared burned areas. Inclusion of these events was determined by FEMA on a case by case basis based upon significance of the damage (which was never defined and did not include cumulative impact). Eventually the request to include these costs were denied by FEMA (Amendment 2) so none of the emergency projective measures were that were completed after December 31 were deemed eligible (even though the incident period for the initial disaster declaration remained open through March 31). We have several applicants, including Los Angeles County, that have appealed these determinations.

As you may understand, this was very confusing for us and interestingly, under an amendment (Amendment #2 for two tribal governments) FEMA did approve the costs.

California believes that the critical projects identified by the NRCS should be funded when necessary to reduce immediate threats to live and property. If such funding cannot be secured in a disaster, FEMA should be granted the authority to reimburse local governments and state agencies under the Public Assistance Program to implement critical emergency protective measures.

Furthermore, California strongly believes that no duplication exists between FEMA and the NRCS since projects that fell under a similar category and description had been funded in past events as emergency protective measures under FEMA's PA Program in accordance with Section 403 of the Stafford Act. We believe FEMA has the authority to fund those projects that meet the eligibility requirements within the program, especially when there is no other federal funding available (NRCS was only able to fund 16 "exigent" projects out of the 383 MASG suggested emergency protective measures before they ran out of funding).

IN CONCLUSION

The response to the fires once again demonstrated the effectiveness of California's emergency management systems from the local government level to the State government. There is no substitute for effective local and state capability in quickly responding to and effectively recovering from natural disasters. The commitment of our local and state agency partners to emergency management is the foundation upon which this disaster was effectively managed.

Overall, FEMA's response to our Southern California Wildfires was overwhelmingly positive. This was due to:

Strong leadership and staff capabilities at FEMA Region IX made a tremendous difference during the initial response, ongoing operations and during disaster recovery. This strong relationship continues today as we are working with the Region IX staff on a Concept of Operations for more effective State/Federal integration and a catastrophic response plan for the massive Bay Area or Southern California earthquake that some day in the future we will experience.

The Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) demonstrated a high level of professionalism, put together an effective and collaborative team at the Joint Field Office and was able to exercise a great deal of authority in assisting us with our disaster. The attitude throughout was "what does the State need" with a tremendous responsiveness to fill those needs. It was clear that the FCO was given a great deal of authority to accomplish what needed to be done. The same professional qualities were exhibited by the federal team that assisted us at the JFO.

The use of Incident Command System concepts and principles by the federal staff in the JFO made our integration with FEMA and other federal agencies virtually seamless as we have utilized this system since the 1970s.

The establishment of task forces composed of key federal and state agency representatives proved to be an effective method of problem solving. Of the three—Housing, Debris Management, and Tribal—one of our biggest challenges was finding housing solutions for victims in rural areas. The travel trailers were not available due to the formaldehyde problem and the large mobile homes that were available were not feasible due to access, site and infrastructure challenges. Certainly, the loss of housing in a catastrophic earthquake in our urban areas will present a major challenge to us unless we explore reasonable housing solutions.

The support of post-fire evaluations and the implementation of emergency protective measures greatly ensured that the public and our resources were better protected following the disaster. However, there was a major challenge relative to the funding of erosion and flood control measures among federal agencies. It is our position that FEMA has the authority to implement emergency protective measures under Section 403 of the Stafford Act. They should implement these measures irrespective of the authority of other agencies such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service especially when such agencies lack the funding to do so. We also think that FEMA has the authority under Section 304 of the Stafford Act to fund actions of other federal agencies. Taken together, the exercise of these authorities would ensure a more enhanced level of protection to the public and our resources.

Put Simply: If this is the new FEMA, we want more of it.

This is not to say that we did not face any challenges, we did. Generally, however, the leadership and collaborative attitude demonstrated by FEMA and other staff from the federal agencies involved in our disaster made the difference in solving problems.

Of course, it is not enough to move forward without making the adjustments necessary to make the next disaster response even more effective. We are currently working with our FEMA Region IX office to finalize a Catastrophic Incident Base Plan Concept of Operations and a catastrophic earthquake plan for the Bay Area. We will be moving the catastrophic planning effort to Southern California in the very near future. This will ensure even more effective integration of our operations in future disasters. We trust that FEMA will utilize what we are doing to model what we have achieved across the nation. Our citizens and communities deserve nothing less. We also trust that the lessons learned by California and other states are not forgotten as the nation's emergency management systems continue to be improved before the next large-scale disaster. We cannot afford to be complacent.

Thank you for inviting me to testify before your committee. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Prepared Statement of David Maxwell, Director,
Arkansas Department of Emergency Management

Chairman Landrieu, members of the committee and other distinguished guests: I am David Maxwell, Director and State Homeland Security Adviser for the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today.

I am here to discuss FEMA's responses to the three Presidential Declarations in my state following the tornadoes and flooding of February 5 and beyond; the tornadoes and flooding that occurred March 18-28; and the tornadoes and flooding that occurred on May 2 and May 10.

First let me say I was very pleased with FEMA's response for the first two declarations. During these first two disasters, I thought FEMA displayed a proactive response in addition to some creative out-of-the-box thinking. One example was the use of helicopters in conducting preliminary damage assessments from the air, which certainly expedited the overall process.

However, this was not the case for the third disaster in which FEMA's response took much longer. For example, the date of the first request for assistance (Individual Assistance only) was May 6, while the second request for assistance (Individual Assistance and Public Assistance) was made May 14. The Federal Declaration did not occur until May 20, delaying Federal assistance by as much as 14 days from the first request. We initially asked only for Individual Assistance to speed the process as we felt that the Individual Assistance request

was certainly valid because there were over 250 homes either destroyed or with major damage. It was especially true when you consider that some of the counties with damage had been declared in both the previous disasters. Direct dialogue with the reviewers could ensure questions are answered and the process stays on track, averting such unnecessary delays in assistance.

Arkansas has state disaster programs for events that are within our capabilities to manage. When an event reaches a magnitude that warrants requesting a Presidential declaration and assistance is delayed in the declaration process, we face the difficult decision of whether to implement our state program or wait until we receive a response to the Presidential request. We feel that having a State program is the right thing to do, yet sometimes it seems we are penalized by having them. Having disaster assistance at the State level should not impact the Federal request.

In summary, FEMA's response to our disasters was much improved. We still feel there are some additional improvements that can be made and stand ready to assist Administrator Paulison in achieving the goals he has set forth for FEMA's response and recovery efforts. We all understand that we are working toward the same ultimate goal and that is to better serve disaster victims. As long as we keep that basic purpose in mind we will be able to work together to strengthen the system and work through problem areas we have identified. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important subject.

Testimony of James H. Bassham

Director, Tennessee Emergency Management Agency

before the

Senate Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery

Thursday, July 17, 2008

Madame Chairwoman and Distinguished Senators:

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery. Governor Phil Bredesen has asked that I convey his personal thanks for your interest in the State of Tennessee's perspective of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) performance during the Presidential Declared Disaster resulting from the series of tornadoes on February 5th of this year that took the lives of thirty-three Tennesseans.

I would like to brief you on the sequence of events that took place in Tennessee on the 5th of February and the resulting response and recovery efforts which officially ended on April 25th, 2008 when FEMA closed the Joint Field Office.

The morning of February 5th, 2008, I was testifying before our State's joint legislative subcommittee on state and local government. I ended my comments by telling the Committee that the State was most likely in for a very rough night of weather and that they should be prepared to "hunker" down. The Tennessee State Emergency Management Operations Center in Nashville had been monitoring the severe weather as the system moved across Texas and Oklahoma before moving into Arkansas and Louisiana. The forecast from the National Weather Service gave us every reason to believe that Tennessee would be affected. By the afternoon of the 5th, the system was in Arkansas and was tracking towards Tennessee and Mississippi while increasing in strength. The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency has regional offices in Jackson, Tenn., Nashville, and Knoxville. Conference calls were conducted with each region, the National Weather Service, and County Emergency Managers in the regions to insure that all were alerted to and discuss the weather threat. This is a routine practice for Tennessee when threats appear imminent. Our State Emergency Operations Center had increased staff to handle the expected weather related communications traffic, and the State on-call officer remained in Operations after the normal office hours in anticipation of the upcoming weather events.

At 5:48 p.m. the State Emergency Operations Center received confirmation from the Memphis/Shelby County Emergency Management Operations Center that a tornado had touched down in South Memphis. The state on-call officer notified me of the Shelby County weather event and at 6:30 p.m., I ordered the State Emergency Operations Center activated. In Tennessee, the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center declares a State of Emergency.

I responded to the Operations Center and notified Governor Bredesen's staff and Major General Gus Hargett, the Adjutant General. I then called Phil May, the FEMA Region IV Administrator in Atlanta, Ga., to brief him on the weather conditions and to alert him that the Operations Center was activated at a level three. Mr. May asked if I would like a FEMA liaison deployed, and one was in place within two hours. FEMA also provided a Federal Incident Response Support Team.

The Federal Incident Response Support Team arrived in Nashville on the 6th of February at 3:00 a.m., and they were immediately deployed to Macon County, our hardest hit county. Over the next forty-eight hours, the State responded to the needs of the local jurisdictions through local mutual aid and State resources. No out of State assistance was required. FEMA deployed a Federal Coordinating Official to begin the process of setting up a Joint Field Office, which was operational on the 11th of February. This was six days after the tornadoes. The preliminary damage assessment was far enough along that Governor Bredesen requested a Presidential Disaster be declared at 5:23 p.m. on February 7th, 2008. We were notified at 10:00 p.m. on February 7th that the President had declared five counties. This number would eventually increase to a total of 19 counties.

During the subsequent days, weeks and months, FEMA was a full partner with the State as we worked through the myriad of challenges associated with both public and individual assistance. The Joint Field Office performed admirably under Gracia Szczech as disaster field offices were set up to serve our citizens. The Joint Field Office closed on April 25th, 2008.

FEMA responded rapidly with appropriate assets and worked with the State and local officials to achieve the very best outcomes under the circumstances. I have no negatives to report on FEMA's response and recovery.

I will say that interim housing became a problem when rental property was not available and manufactured housing appeared to be the only available option. The issue of acceptable levels of formaldehyde in the housing units became a contest of wills as FEMA, the Center for Disease Control, the U.S. Department of Health, along with TEMA and the Tennessee Department of Health and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, were unable to agree on acceptable Formaldehyde levels in the mobile homes. Tennessee was forced to identify a threshold below which the State would accept the housing units. It was, and still is, Tennessee's view that acceptable formaldehyde levels should be a Federal responsibility as they own the housing units.

I have one other issue that I would like to surface for the benefit of the committee.

I am chairman of the Central United States Earthquake Consortium, which is comprised of the eight states primarily affected by the New Madrid Seismic Zone. These states are: Arkansas, Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. FEMA has been funding a Catastrophic Planning Initiative for the past two years. This effort revolves around the New Madrid Seismic Zone. It is a grass roots initiative starting with local jurisdictions, then state and finally regional planning. I want to stress that this catastrophic planning effort is valuable not just for earthquake preparation, but transfers to any catastrophic event. On behalf of the eight Consortium states, I urge continued funding for FEMA to continue this worthy project.

On the larger issue of FEMA Response and Recovery to the 5 February tornadoes in Tennessee, while we hope not to require their assistance anytime soon, FEMA is always a welcome partner to the Volunteer state.

This concludes my formal statement to the subcommittee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tennessee Catastrophic Event Annex

Based on the New Madrid Seismic Zone Catastrophic Earthquake Design Scenario

July 17, 2008

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TENNESSEE CATASTROPHIC EVENT ANNEX

The document provides a brief overview of the state's newly revised Catastrophic Event Annex to the Tennessee Emergency Management Plan (TEMP). The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) has managed the update of the state's catastrophic event annex over the years, as required by Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) 58-2-106. The planning process has been in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Central Untied States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC), and with the assistance from the 21 West Region counties. More than 400 emergency management representatives from local, state, and the federal government, and representatives from the private sector have participated in the catastrophic planning workshops. Their input has proved invaluable in the further refinement of this annex.

Although a number of key response and recovery concepts linked to the TEMP are included, a key objective of this annex was to develop a time sequenced response strategy for automatic deployment and activation to a "no-notice" catastrophic earthquake. In total, 43 primary response objectives[1] and 350 supporting tasks were identified. In the event of a catastrophic earthquake impacting Tennessee, these incident objectives will guide the state's successive response for a 30-day period.

Response strategies and resource requirement projections contained in the plan have been based in part on the scenario and loss estimates developed by the Center for Earthquake Research and Information (CERI) located at the University of Memphis; the Mid-America Earthquake Center located at the University of Illinois; and the Institute for Crisis, Disaster and Risk Management (ICDRM) located at George Washington. Scenario and loss estimates helped to estimate resource requirement projections that would closely match the actual disaster.

This annex assumes that it is better to form a quick picture of the potential scope of damage using a combination of actual street-level impact reporting (field reconnaissance) and pre-event impact modeling rather than waiting two to three days for confirmed impact information.

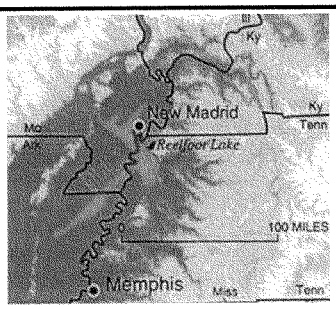
Other major annex components include Timelines, Senior Leadership Issues, Direction and Control Concepts, and Objectives and Tasks, including the transition to long-term sustained operations carrying some response activities well into what may be the recovery stage for other areas. Assumptions and response strategies for each critical Emergency Support Function (ESF) are included in the annex. In order to act quickly in meeting the needs of the response, these strategies provide a global operating platform for each Emergency Service Coordinator who would be operating at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).

[1] In the use of ICS, "Objectives" are general guidance statements for the selection of an appropriate strategy(s) and the tactical direction of resources.

The Tennessee Catastrophic Event Annex (192 pages) is supported by five appendices. These appendices include the (1) Scenario and Loss Estimates, (2) Personnel Deployment Guidelines, (3) Catastrophic Reconnaissance and Information Gathering, (4) Aircraft Use and Capability and (5) Working with the Military During Emergencies. One additional appendix covering acronyms and abbreviations is also included.

As this overview provides only a *snapshot* of the states catastrophic annex and its accompanying appendices, TEMA is available to provide further information upon request.

THE CHALLENGE IN NEW MADRID



The New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ) is a fault system in the Central U.S. that is located roughly between St. Louis, Missouri and Memphis, Tennessee. The geology in the Central U.S. is conducive to movement and potential damage is more widespread than other earthquake-prone areas of the U.S. The series of earthquakes with the greatest magnitude in the area was in 1811-12 (3 major quakes within 4 months, ranging from approximately 7.0 to 8.0 in magnitude.) Some scientists believe there is a 400-500 year cycle of earthquakes in the region. With this in mind, we are now at 196 years since the last significant series of earthquakes.

In terms of response, it has been reported that the probability of a repeat of the 1811–1812 earthquakes (magnitude 7.5–8.0) is from 7–10% and the probability of a magnitude 6.0 or larger is from 25–40%.[2] However, it is understood that a large magnitude event grows more probable with each passing day. A catastrophic seismic event on the NMSZ could directly impact more than 50% of the State's population and could trigger a national response on a larger scale than any recorded earthquake event in modern United States history.

Within Tennessee, there are 2,757,823[3] people residing in the 37 critical counties of the NMSZ. Of these, 911,438[4] reside in the Memphis/Shelby region. There are 1,846,385 other Tennesseans who reside in one of the other 36 critical counties. In total, there are approximately 44 million people living within the entire NMSZ.[5]

This annex recognizes that impacts to the national infrastructure will further compound the problem – getting supplies and relief to survivors will be exceptionally challenging. The Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC), the Mid-America

[2] United States Geological Survey Fact Sheet. http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/fs-131-02/fs-131-02.pdf.
[3] U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed November 5, 2007. http://factfinder.census.gov.
[4] U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed October 2, 2007. http://factfinder.census.gov.
[5] This number reflects the population that resides within the eight states and located in the NMSZ.

Earthquake Center (MAEC), the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center (NISAC), and FEMA have completed preliminary modeling of potential impacts of an earthquake in the NMSZ. The estimated total building loss alone in the area from one quake today could exceed $70 Billion.

For Tennessee, the following planning estimates provide a brief overview regarding the magnitude of the response and recovery problem.[6]

- 2,180 deaths and 36,575 injuries
- 115,589 structures totally destroyed
- 87,686 structures with major damage in the TEMA West Region
- 533 structures with major damage in the TEMA Middle Region
- 900 damaged bridges with 330 bridge collapses occurring in counties along the western border of Tennessee
- 256 fire stations with moderate damage
- 48 hospitals moderately damaged and are inoperable the day after the earthquake
- 404 schools collapsed and rendered unusable for evacuee shelter use

HAZUS EARTHQUAKE LOSS ESTIMATION TOOL

Earthquake loss estimates are forecasts of damage and human and economic impacts that may result from future earthquakes. These estimates are based on current scientific and engineering knowledge and ongoing studies.

The FEMA HAZUS Earthquake Loss Estimation Methodology is a software program that uses mathematical formulas and information about building stock, local geology and the location and size of potential earthquakes, economic data, and other information to estimate losses from a potential earthquake.[7] HAZUS uses ArcGIS[8] to map and display ground shaking, the pattern of building damage, and demographic information about a specific community or region. Once the location and size of a hypothetical earthquake is identified, HAZUS will estimate the violence of the following[9]:

- Ground shaking
- The number of buildings damaged
- The number of casualties
- The amount of damage to transportation systems

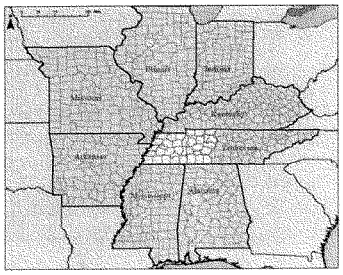
[6] Further HAZUS Loss Information can be obtained from the Tennessee Catastrophic Event Annex, Appendix A.
[7] Doug Bausch, FEMA Region VIII, Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 710, Denver, CO 80225. http://www.gisdevelopment.net/proceedings/gita/2003/disman/dism09pf.htm.
[8] ArcGIS is a system for authoring, serving, and using geographic information.
[9] Doug Bausch, FEMA Region VIII, Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 710, Denver, CO 80225. http://www.gisdevelopment.net/proceedings/gita/2003/disman/dism09pf.htm.

- Disruption to the electrical and water utilities
- The number of people displaced from their homes
- The estimated cost of repairing projected damage and other effects

As West Tennessee and portions of Middle Tennessee lie within the NMSZ, an estimate of loss from a future catastrophic earthquake was prepared and used during the planning process. This estimation of loss helped develop the operational aspects of the annex and assisted decision makers in structuring appropriate response and recovery objectives.

ANNEX DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

The Tennessee Catastrophic Event Annex provides management tools to senior State leadership executives and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), so they may operate more quickly and robustly to a no-notice catastrophic earthquake incident.



Historically, the NMSZ has presented a significant challenge to the citizens of Tennessee. Based on historical evidence, the possibility does exist for a catastrophic earthquake to occur in West Tennessee. Therefore, Governor Phil Bredesen and TEMA have long recognized the need to continually improve and upgrade the State's emergency response plans in order to enhance response and recovery capabilities.

The annex helps define the answer to the question, *"What will the State of Tennessee do if an earthquake should impact the western portion of the state tomorrow?"* It focuses on the major issues the State of Tennessee expects to encounter for a *no-notice* catastrophic earthquake incident, which includes:

- Coordinating Direction and Control activities
- Implementing "Automatic Activation and Response Procedures"
- Automatic trigger points for partial and full-scale response operations
- Quickly gaining situational awareness of damages and identifying locations with the most pressing needs
- Developing a Common Operational Picture (COP)

SCOPE AND INTENT

The annex used information gleaned from planning workshops, functional exercises, and lessons learned from recent tabletop reviews. It also reflects the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina.

The primary intent of the annex is to assist in accelerating the application and delivery of State and Federal resources to a catastrophic incident. Therefore, the annex defines the State's response to an earthquake that will occur in the NMSZ and applies to all State departments and agencies identified within the TEMP. It primarily focuses on response operations and short-term recovery-type operations activities (such as interim sheltering) directly linked in time and process to response operations.

Safeguarding the life and property of its citizens is an innate responsibly of the governing body of each political subdivision of the state.[10] Local police, fire, public health, EMS, and emergency management personnel are responsible for incident command and directing incident operations at the county/municipal level.[11] *However, even when a community is overwhelmed by an incident, there is still a core, sovereign responsibility to be exercised at this local level, with unique incident response obligations to coordinate with State, Federal, and private-sector support teams. Each organization or level of government, therefore, has an imperative to fund and execute its own core emergency management responsibilities.*[12]

The State of Tennessee and TEMA recognize that the overwhelming majority of emergency incidents are handled on a daily basis by a single jurisdiction at the local level in the above-mentioned manner. However, in the case of a catastrophic event that impacts multiple counties, municipalities, and State property, successful incident management operations will depend on the involvement of emergency responders from multiple jurisdictions, as well as personnel and equipment from other states and the Federal Government.[13]

Although the doctrine of handling incidents at the lowest level is an important component of the TEMP, a catastrophic earthquake will require all State departments and agencies, as well as the Federal Government to be ready to act decisively using a sound response strategy supported by clear objectives and operational tasks. *Therefore, for the purpose of the Catastrophic Event Annex, it is not necessary that each level of government become so overwhelmed, or be allowed to fail, prior to surging resources from the next appropriate level.*

[10] TCA 58-2-110, Emergency Management powers of political subdivisions.
[11] Appendix 5 to the TEMP Basic Plan, page 79, and Tennessee Executive Order 23, May 2, 2005.
[12] National Response Framework, page 5, January 2008.
[13] Appendix 5 to the TEMP Basic Plan, page 78, and Tennessee Executive Order 23, May 2, 2005.

THE MANAGEMENT OF RESPONSE EXPECTATIONS

Although the annex defines a coordinated operational response to a catastrophic earthquake, which has not occurred in recent times, it also helps clarify response outcomes over a planned "period-of time". Before reviewing the states catastrophic event annex in its entirety, it is important to have a clear understanding of a catastrophic disaster. A catastrophic disaster is defined as:

> *An incident that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the population, infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, and/or government functions. A catastrophic incident could result in sustained national impacts over a prolonged period of time; almost immediately exceed resources normally available to State, local, tribal, and private-sector authorities in the impacted area; and significantly interrupt governmental operations and emergency services to such an extent that national security could be threatened. All catastrophic incidents are Incidents of National Significance. These factors drive the urgency for coordinated national planning to ensure accelerated Federal/national assistance.*[14]

Based on this definition, a catastrophic earthquake occurring in the NMSZ, affecting multiple counties and several states,[15] will severely overload the response capability of the various local governments and State agencies.

In a catastrophic disaster, government agencies cannot meet every individual need at every individual's location upon immediate notice. This critical aspect of catastrophic disaster planning and response must be understood and embraced by all elected officials. Additionally, the public must also understand that due to the catastrophic nature of the event, help may not be immediately available. Therefore, it is critical that all parties work together in defining a response that can bring the disaster under control ***incrementally over time***, as well as through a system that ***prioritizes community needs*** using defined response objectives and operational work tasks that will meet those agreed upon priorities.

It is important to recognize that no truly catastrophic earthquake—that is, one that affects production facilities, economic markets, and distribution systems in any significant manner—has occurred in a major population center in the United States since the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.[16] Recognizing this, extraordinary response and recovery actions remain virtually untested in a modern day catastrophic earthquake event.

Therefore, the annex not only provides a planned response to a catastrophic earthquake event, but it also helps the public, their elected officials, emergency managers, and public

[14] National Response Framework, January 2008. http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/incidentannexes.htm.
[15] States that share a common border with Tennessee and could be affected by a catastrophic earthquake include Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, and Kentucky.
[16] The Economic Consequences of a Catastrophic Earthquake; Proceedings of a Forum. The National Academy of Sciences. 1992. http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=2027&page=159

safety officials understand how a catastrophic response may occur over time and how a logical and incremental catastrophic incident response is formulated.

TIME-SEQUENCED OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

A key component of the annex is the inclusion of pre-identified action-planning objectives and tasks. In total, 43 primary response objectives[17] and 350 supporting tasks are listed. Incident objectives are based on realistic expectations of what can be accomplished when all allocated resources have been effectively deployed.

PRIMARY PLAN DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS

The following general assumptions were used in the overall development of the annex. They are global in nature and are further supported by functional specific assumptions for each ESF.[18]

- The annex is based on a "no-notice" catastrophic earthquake. Modeling used is sufficiently representative of a worst-case scenario so that potential response shortfalls can be identified within the local and State levels of government.
- The resulting large number of casualties and damages to buildings, critical facilities, and critical infrastructure over a multi-county or multi-state area will overwhelm local response capabilities.
- The Director of TEMA will direct implementation of the Catastrophic Event Annex and will provide plan information to the various State departments and agencies.
- TEMA is the State agency responsible for working with local, State, and Federal agencies in the mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery from a catastrophic earthquake that may occur within Tennessee.
- There will be new earthquakes and/or aftershocks potentially as large or larger than the initial earthquake and they may occur for many months. Multiple incidents may occur simultaneously or sequentially in contiguous and/or noncontiguous areas.
- Secondary effects, such as fires and dam/levee breaches, will cause significant related damage, potentially compromise the safety of response and recovery personnel, and degrade the response effort in both time and scope.
- Response operations must be automatic and begin without the benefit of a detailed assessment of the situation, as full reconnaissance and situational assessments may not be immediately completed or available.

[17] In the use of ICS, "Objectives" are general guidance statements for the selection of an appropriate strategy(s) and the tactical direction of resources.
[18] For additional operational planning assumptions specific to each Emergency Support Function, refer to the Tennessee Catastrophic Event Annex.

- If air assets are available, reconnaissance via fixed wing and rotary aircraft must be considered early on. These early reconnaissance missions will be vital in developing full situational awareness.
- Federal support will be required and must be provided quickly to save lives, reduce human suffering, and reduce damage to property. This will require mobilizing and deploying teams and commodities before they are requested.
- As this event is anticipated to be catastrophic in nature, it brings unique management issues and response operations that will require plans to be flexible, easily adaptable to the situation, and effectively address emerging and unanticipated needs and requirements.
- Tennessee recognizes that a catastrophic earthquake in the NMSZ will affect other adjoining states and that an immediate Presidential Declaration will be required along with the establishment of a Joint Field Office (JFO).
- Other ongoing disasters/emergencies, combined with maintaining a reserve capability for potential subsequent events (e.g., aftershocks, weather-related events, terrorist events, or other types of man-made disasters), must be factored into State planning capabilities.

ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catastrophic Event Annex establishes the context and overarching strategy for implementing and coordinating an accelerated, proactive state response to a catastrophic earthquake occurring in the NMSZ.[19] In structuring this plan, maximum flexibility is considered to satisfy functional requirements.[20]

The primary design of the annex addresses a "no-notice" incident of catastrophic magnitude, where the need for immediate State and Federal assistance is obvious, where anticipatory planning and resource pre-positioning were precluded, and where the exact nature of resources and assets requirements is not known.

CATASTROPHIC DISASTER DECLARATION[21]

A catastrophic event results in an immediate activation of the SEOC and concurrent State Declaration of Emergency and will result in an immediate Federal Disaster Declaration or request for a Presidential Disaster Declaration. A Federal emergency occurs due to the national impacts and implications on national security. All catastrophic incidents are

[19] The purpose of this catastrophic event annex is consistent and complementary with the catastrophic event annex found within the National Response Framework.
http://www.learningservices.us/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrp_catastrophicincidentannex.pdf. It is also consistent and in compliance with the National Incident Management System.
[20] TEMP Basic Plan III. Concept of Operations C. 4. Execution Page 5.
[21] Information on the Tennessee Catastrophic Disaster Declaration Process was provided by Donnie K. Smith, Executive Administration Office, March 2008.

Incidents of National Significance.[22] Tennessee law specifies that a Declaration of Emergency occur automatically with the activation of the SEOC.

ASSET DEPLOYMENT

Based on the planning assumptions and scenarios developed for a catastrophic earthquake occurring in the NMSZ, it is recognized that local resources will be fully deployed and become immediately overwhelmed and that State and Federal assets will be required to support the local response effort in some or all of the response and recovery operations.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

It is the intent of the annex to mobilize and provide all necessary State resources to the affected counties in an expeditious and organized manner. Local requests for assistance will be automatically supported with lifesaving and life-sustaining resources to the affected areas. This automatic activation concept remains in effect until sufficient situational awareness is obtained by local incident commanders (ICs), emergency managers, and State emergency managers to allow for reverting back to conventional means of providing resources upon request. Critical Incident Objectives for response will be prioritized in this order:

- Saving and sustaining lives
- Protecting/preserving public health and safety
- Restoring critical infrastructure and critical public services
- Mitigating future property damage

Senior Leadership Issues

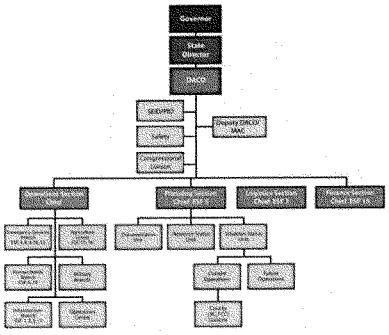
During the first few days of a response operation, senior leadership at the State level and that of TEMA will be confronted with a host of critical issues and decisions. The magnitude and location of the damages will require senior leadership to prioritize response objectives and to make critical logistical decisions. Some potential decisions/issues included in the annex are:

- Activation of the Catastrophic Event Annex and implementation of the movement of lifesaving commodities and needed supplies to the affected areas
- Declaration of a state disaster
- Emphasizing public information to the populations in the affected areas
- Early establishment of an Incident Management organization following the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Designation of a State Coordinating Officer (SCO) and the future coordination and location of the Joint Field Office (JFO)

[22] National Response Framework.
http://www.learningservices.us/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrp_catastrophicincidentannex.pdf.

- With significant aftershocks anticipated, decisions regarding "Force Protection" issues—the level of acceptable exposure of State responders in the affected areas—likely to occur
- Implementation of various contracts to meet critical needs for commodities and supplies
- Initiation of dialogue with the Director of FEMA and the President to ensure assistance of all Federal Government assets
- The Governor and TEMA Director giving assurance to the public that the State Government is doing everything possible to support the affected areas of the state

ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES



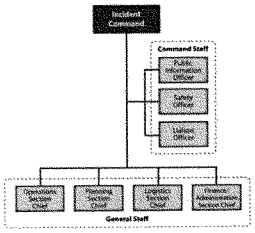
The annex establishes a coordinated strategy for accelerating the delivery and application of State resources and capabilities in support of a catastrophic earthquake. TCA, Title 58, Chapter 2; the TEMP; and NIMS, as adopted by the Governor of Tennessee, are principal documents that govern the organization and responsibilities for all State departments/agencies. They cooperate with the Director of TEMA by providing resources and personnel to support a catastrophic earthquake response. In so doing, they follow the structure and mechanisms established in the TEMP to conduct operational and policy-related activities.

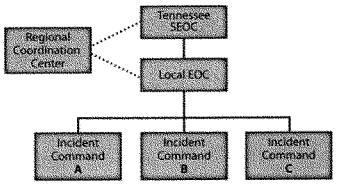
The TEMP, including the 16 Emergency Support Functions (ESF), various Department Operating Guidelines for each State agency, and the Catastrophic Event Annex governs the activation, operation, and organization for a catastrophic earthquake within the State of Tennessee. Each Emergency Service Coordinator (ESC) remains responsible for coordinating with and reporting to TEMA on emergency preparedness issues, preparing and maintaining emergency preparedness and post-disaster response operations, and coordinating appropriate training for agency personnel.[23]

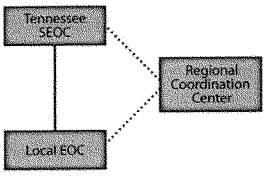
[23] TEMP Basic, page 37, TCA 58-2-108, Designation of Emergency Service Coordinators, (b) page 67.

DIRECTION, CONTROL, AND COORDINATION

The annex uses NIMS/ICS at all levels of the command structure. At the field (incident) level, the use of NIMS/ICS standardizes the response to emergencies involving multiple jurisdictions or multiple agencies. The features of ICS, which have special importance to the annex are the modular organization of ICS, Unified Command, and IAPs. ICS allows for a wide range of functions to be performed and provides an organizational structure to accommodate those functions. Due to the catastrophic nature of the earthquake, the ICS organization structure at the field level will expand. ICS allows for complete flexibility, as it is a modular system that allows positions to be added as deemed necessary. The basic role of a local government is to manage and coordinate the overall emergency response and recovery activities within its jurisdiction. Local government responsibilities and authorities are identified in TCA 58-2-110. The local government has various levels of responsibility when a catastrophic earthquake event strikes. These levels of responsibility identify the basis for Direction and Control at the local level:







When a local director determines that assistance from the state is needed contact is made to the SEOC. The SEOC notifies the appropriate Regional Director. Local government is also responsible for coordinating with the field IC(s). The Command and General Staff at the EOC maintains continuous support with the Command and General Staff in the field.

Building upon the Direction and Control activities of the field and local levels, the State's Direction and Control activities for a catastrophic earthquake are exercised by the Governor (or the Deputy to the Governor) through the TEMA Director.[24] The personnel, facilities, and equipment for decision-making and the initiation of appropriate response activities are located in the SEOC and within the offices of the various political subdivisions of the state.[25] A primary role of TEMA in emergency management is to supplement and facilitate local efforts before, during, and after incidents. The State provides direct and routine assistance to its local jurisdictions through emergency management program development, coordinating routinely in these efforts with Federal preparedness officials. With a catastrophic earthquake, local governments will be overwhelmed. Therefore, the State will rapidly commit and accelerate services and

[24] TEMP Basic Plan V. A. 1. Direction and Control Governor, Page 32.
[25] TEMP Basic Plan D. 1&2. SEOC Location, Page 32.

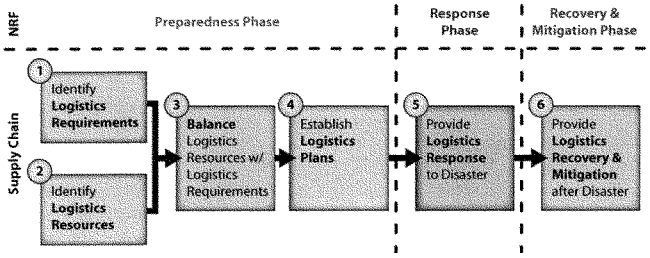
provide new services to local governments when their capabilities fall short of demands. This will require a strong and decisive Direction and Control operation.

LOGISTICS

Catastrophic Logistics and Resource Management (Resource Support) is a sub-function of the TEMP, ESF 7. There are three primary components of Logistics. These include:

- Management: The Logistics Operations Unit in the SEOC includes TEMA, General Services, the Military Department, the private sector/Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) A-Team members. Leadership of the team is the responsibility of TEMA.
- Procurement: The acquisition, i.e., purchasing or contracting, of commodities is the responsibility of General Services.
- Reception: The reception, distribution and tracking of commodities not being direct-deployed is the responsibility of the National Guard.

The lead agency for catastrophic logistics is the Tennessee National Guard. The Tennessee Emergency Response Plan (TERP)[26] is used as the basis for fulfilling the missions in this sub-function.



PRIMARY ESF RESPONSE ACTIONS AND ESTIMATED ORDER REQUESTS

Within the annex, primary response actions are organized by ESF with each ESC being responsible for coordinating specific elements of the functional response within his/her scope. The SEOC is responsible for overall coordination of emergency response operations in the State and each ESC is responsible for implementing specific objectives and tasks in order to support local agency tactical command and field units.

[26] TEMP ESF 7 Resource Support Page 7-24

SUMMARY

The revised annex represents significant "best practices" in planning for the challenges of a catastrophic earthquake within Tennessee. As new information becomes available, further research and work will occur and changes will be integrated into the annex.

The states planning efforts have paralleled a much larger effort in developing a series of coordinated response plans designed to interface with local plans, the Federal Government and that of the other seven New Madrid Seismic Zone States. Through the use of "worst case" design scenarios provided by the scientific community, the annex has been based on the axiom, *"Prepare for the worst; hope for the best"*.

The Scenario-Driven Catastrophic Response Plan Development Process has placed operators in the same room with planners. In other words, the people who respond to the disaster have been integrally involved in the development of the plan they may eventually be required to use. Representatives from the entire spectrum of emergency management, first responders from the local level, state emergency management officials, and the Federal responders that may staff the Joint Field Offices and other field offices have collaborated to develop the new annex.

Although no one can predict when a catastrophic earthquake will occur, Tennessee has recognized the need to properly plan, exercise and coordinate its response activities in order to meet the unknown challenge of a catastrophic earthquake occurring in the NMSZ.

STATEMENT OF

HARVEY E. JOHNSON
DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR AND
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER RESPONSE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

U.S. SENATE

July 17, 2008

ASSESSING FEMA'S PROGRESS IN IMPROVING ITS DISASTER RESPONSE

Good morning Chairman Landrieu, Ranking member Stevens, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) progress in responding to several recent natural disasters, particularly the October 2007 California Wildfires, the February 2008 tornadoes that affected the States of Tennessee and Arkansas, and the flooding that occurred in the States of Texas and Oklahoma in March of 2008.

The time since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast has been a period of reformation and change in disaster response and recovery not just for FEMA, but for the country and especially for those of us involved in emergency management. Based on the many lessons learned and statutory changes made, FEMA has instituted numerous reforms to improve its ability to respond to and recover from disasters. In addition to FEMA's internal transformation designed to improve the Agency, FEMA has worked closely with other components within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to implement the provisions in the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA).

The combination of FEMA's transformation and those changes enacted from PKEMRA has resulted in a new FEMA that is able and ready to carry out the core emergency management competencies necessary to assist States in supplementing their emergency needs following a disaster event.

I have been asked to testify with specifics on three recent disasters. However, it is worth noting that since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, FEMA has responded to 158 major disasters, as well as over 250 emergencies and fires. In particular,

- In October 2007, the State of California was affected by a series of wildfires across Southern California. Over 3,097 homes were destroyed and over 500,000 acres of land were burned from Santa Barbara County to the U.S.–Mexico border. At the height of the disaster, 23 active fires were burning in the region. Seven people died as a direct result of the fires and 124 others were injured, including firefighters. On October 24, 2007, President Bush issued a major disaster declaration for the State of California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts.

- In February 2008, flooding, severe thunderstorms, and tornadoes swept through several Mid-South states destroying homes and infrastructure. On February 7, 2008, President Bush declared a Public Assistance major disaster for the State of Arkansas. On February 8, 2008, Individual Assistance was added to this declaration to assist residents whose homes were damaged or destroyed. On February 7, 2008, President Bush issued a major disaster declaration for the State of Tennessee, making Individual Assistance available to affected individuals and households.

- The President has also made several disaster declarations for a series of storms that have struck the State of Oklahoma throughout the spring. Specifically, President Bush issued declaration number 1752 for severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding during the period of March 17-23, 2008. This declaration made federal funding available to State and eligible local governments for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the event.

Utilizing new tools, programs, and processes that we have implemented, FEMA responded to each of these disasters quickly and efficiently in partnership with the States, the Interagency, and the non-profit community to provide direct assistance to the impacted States and local governments, financial and direct housing assistance to residents affected by these events, and reimbursement to State and local governments for emergency response and the repair and replacement of damaged public facilities.

FEMA's primary mission is to reduce the loss of life and property, and to protect the Nation from all hazards, by developing a comprehensive, risk-based, emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) authorizes the President to issue an emergency or major disaster declaration and provide direct and financial assistance to individuals, families, State and local governments, and certain non-profit organizations.

Our program, process, and capability improvements over the past two years have resulted in a FEMA that is more agile, responsive, and pro-active with our State and local partners. In every disaster event, we proactively engage and coordinate with the impacted States and local jurisdictions and work hard to ensure that Federal assistance is delivered as quickly and as seamlessly as possible. As we move forward, we continue to work to fine tune our operational capabilities and incorporate feedback from all of our stakeholders to ensure that we have a strong working relationship with all States. These improvements can be seen in FEMA's response activities, recovery activities, as well as our logistics management.

Response: Life Saving and Life Sustaining Measures

Immediately following a major disaster or emergency that overwhelms communities and States, FEMA coordinates and provides the core Federal disaster response capability needed to save lives, reduce suffering, and protect property.

FEMA has made improvements to its network of operations centers that have improved our capability to maintain situational awareness of the disaster and its effect; obtain visibility of FEMA and other Federal support activities and interpret all of this into a common operating picture. These improvements facilitate information sharing between FEMA and non-FEMA entities; and provide internal and external stakeholders a consolidated, consistent, and accurate status of on-going incidents, responses or potential events. The key component to providing situational awareness is our National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) at FEMA Headquarters. All of these enhancements have contributed to an improved disaster response capability by FEMA and all our partners.

In addition, FEMA relies on our Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC), in all 10 regions, to perform a complementary role to the NRCC and provide situational awareness information, identify and coordinate response requirements, perform capabilities analysis, and report on the status of the Federal disaster response. Upgrades have been and are being made to the RRCCs to improve physical facilities, information technology and video teleconferencing capabilities. These upgrades also include such things as providing new computer hardware and software capabilities, encrypted radios, modular workstations, backup generators, mapping upgrades and physical facility upgrades.

The response to the 2007 California Wildfires provided an opportunity to implement and evaluate many of FEMA's new/enhanced operational capabilities as follows:

- The NRCC/RRCC upgrades increased operational capability by providing seamless connectivity with DHS National Operations Center (NOC) and California and other Interagency Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), which provided a forum to share situational awareness and common operating picture, and immediate decision-making.
- The NRCC also exhibited its new and improved ability to coordinate and exchange information. FEMA held regular/ongoing video teleconferences (VTCs) to facilitate synchronized efforts between the State of California, the Joint Field Office (JFO) and the NRCC. Approximately 25-30 organizations participated by video and 50 by audio in daily National VTCs, including substantial and direct involvement of DHS components and other interagency partners such as the U.S. Forest Service. Using U.S. Forest Service weather reports, a first for FEMA, proved to be invaluable in supporting response efforts.
- FEMA also demonstrated the flexible/scalable response capability of its Federal response teams. Emergency Response Team – National (ERT-N) members were deployed to staff the JFO; Federal Incident Response Team (FIRST) Atlanta provided real time situational awareness onsite (deployed to Qualcomm Stadium and then to Local Assistance Centers); FEMA had complete and full integration of FEMA and the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) operations at the JFO.
- The new Operational Planners also provided improved planning capability at FEMA Headquarters. The Planners worked in coordination with the NRCC Activation team and demonstrated their ability to rapidly identify critical issues; helped coordinate medical evacuation planning with the Defense Department, HHS and the JFO; and synchronized interagency planning with NORTHCOM and the DHS Incident Management Planning Team.
- There was a stronger unity of effort among Federal, State, and local partners. In support of the State's response, FEMA helped coordinate and lead several task forces including the Air Quality Task Force, JFO Tribal Task Force, JFO Housing Task Force, and the JFO Debris Task Force. Each task force consisted of numerous partners at all levels of government.

Recovery: Leveraging the Capabilities across all Sectors of Government to Assist Individuals in Recovering

One major shift in our business philosophy is that FEMA recognizes that response and recovery efforts often operate on a continuum. While some believe that there is a clear beginning and end to the response and recovery phases of a disaster, we have come to understand that successful recovery for individuals affected by disasters requires early collaboration between State and local governments, continued planning and evaluation of housing options and needs, and leveraging of a variety of services and programs to move applicants forward in their desire for self-sufficiency and sustainability following a major disaster.

An immediate challenge following a major disaster is ensuring that the emergency mass care needs of individuals are met. Since the revision of the National Response Framework (NRF), the Emergency Support Function (ESF) #6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services Annex has made many improvements, which are a direct result of PKEMRA. The Federal role in ESF #6 has been expanded, designating FEMA as the sole Primary Agency responsible for mass care and added additional authorities and responsibilities for evacuation; tracking and family relocation; pet rescue and shelter considerations; and medical and specialized accommodations for sheltering. In a large mass care operation requiring Federal support to a State, FEMA will direct and coordinate the provision of necessary support from Federal partner agencies, and others), as well as with our longstanding partner, the American Red Cross.

Reuniting families, coordinating donations, identifying housing options and resources, are all pieces of the recovery puzzle. Our efforts and improvements in service delivery of FEMA's recovery programs on behalf of disaster victims can be seen in the examples below:

DR- 1731-California

- **Housing Inspections** – Prior to the California declaration, housing inspectors were mobilized, and, as a result, inspectors arrived in CA immediately after the declaration and inspections were returned to FEMA as early as October 25, 2007, the day after the disaster was declared. There were 250 contract inspectors utilized to complete inspections in the six impacted counties. During the event, the inspectors completed 8,507 inspections with an overall average turn around time of 2 days, 15 hours. FEMA also deployed 250 Registration Assistants to QUALCOMM Stadium and 24 other shelter sites to take registrations from evacuees who were forced out of their homes. This effort allowed 2,900 applicants to register from these locations.

- **Fraud Controls** – The identity verification controls that FEMA has integrated into the Registration Intake process have proven quite effective. Since March 1, 2007, only 27 (.03%) of the 78,341 applicants who received IHP assistance do not show that the identity has been verified. A review of these kinds of cases indicates that the error was due to caseworker oversight.

- Identity verification controls in authenticated 99% of applicants in DR-1731 California at the time they registered for assistance.

- **Registration Intake** – Special Needs scenarios were added to FEMA's registration intake script beginning with DR-1731-California. The Special Needs questions are designed to obtain information from applicants about any loss of support required for mobility, sight, hearing or taking care of themselves or members of their household as a result of the disaster. The information about applicants' special needs is transmitted to the JFOs for appropriate follow-up.

- **National Processing Servicing Center (NPSC) Operations** – The NPSC expanded the hours of operation to 24/7 immediately following the California declaration. All inactive employees were recalled. All facilities were sufficiently staffed to meet the volume of calls and case processing activities.

- **Joint Housing Solutions Group and the Development of Comprehensive Housing Plan** - Following the California wildfires, the Joint Housing Solutions Group partnered with Federal, State and local governments, and voluntary agencies, to develop a comprehensive housing plan that includes identifying the most heavily impacted areas, on-the-spot registration of shelter populations, analyzing shelter and mass care operations, transitioning applicants to temporary housing, individual case management for applicants with major damage to their primary residences, identifying available rental resources, assessing and assisting special need populations, and working with local voluntary agencies to identify additional assistance resources available to residents.

- **National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRLS) and the National Emergency Child Locator Center (NECLC)** – Both systems were activated and 55 registrations were processed. As a result of the disaster, 51 children were displaced, and all were accounted for. This is the only disaster activation of the NEFRLS since its inception. The National Emergency Child Locator Center (NECLC) was activated. NECLC was established to help local and tribal governments and law enforcement agencies track and locate children who have become separated from their parents or guardians as a result of a Presidentially declared disaster. The Center's operations are managed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, with support from FEMA.

- **Mass Care Deployment to State Operations Center** – FEMA deployed a mass care staff member to the State Operations Center to promote situational awareness and enhance coordination with the American Red Cross and reporting of shelter statistics.

- Launched a national **multi-agency Disaster Housing Task force (NDHTF).** As members of the NDHTF, the agencies and organizations committed to fully supporting the Unified Recovery Strategy established by the California Housing Task Force. The NDHTF quickly responded to and filled requests for resources, staff, information; worked to de-conflict any policy, statutory or regulatory issues; and identified housing solutions to fill any gaps in available housing assistance.

- Deployed **mass care and donations management specialists** in support of State and local sheltering operations, implementation of the National Shelter System, donations management, and delivery of mass care services.

- Deployed the **FEMA Disabilities Coordinator** to provide technical assistance to the JFO. The Disabilities Coordinator has been invaluable advising mass care as well as DHOPs regarding unique issues and concerns facing those disaster victims with special needs. The Disabilities Coordinator was successful in working with donors to secure durable medical equipment for a number of evacuees.

- The State of California utilized the web-based volunteer and donations management application that was developed by **Aidmatrix** Foundation during the CA wildfires. This was the first major implementation of this new resource tool built to support State emergency management and FEMA's voluntary agency partners. The Aidmatrix system was activated for DR1731 and it was very instrumental in helping the Donations group acquire and disburse items.

- **Pets:** The JFO requested early the deployment of USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) personal to support the Animal Care Task Force within the Mass Care Unit. The APHIS team consisted of one JFO representative and five field veterinarians. The field veterinarians partnered with CA Department of agriculture to support pet and animal sheltering and care.

DR-1744-Arkansas

- **Housing Inspections** - The Housing Inspection Service Contractor deployed 12 inspectors to the disaster area, with the first inspections completed less than a day after the declaration on February 7, 2008. There were 1,057 inspections completed with an overall average turn around time of 2 days, 51 minutes.

- **Fraud Controls** – Identity verification controls in NEMIS authenticated 98% of applicants in this disaster at the time they registered for assistance. Of the 2% who did not meet the identity verification requirement, only those who sent in identity verifying documentation to the NPSCs were processed for disaster assistance after their case was reviewed by a caseworker.

- **Air Quality Testing for Temporary Housing Units** – Air quality tests were conducted on all temporary housing units prior to deployment.

DR-1745-Tennessee

- **Housing Inspections** - The HIS Contractor deployed 24 inspectors to the disaster area. The first completed inspection was returned to FEMA less than 24 hours after the declaration. There were 2,523 inspections completed with an overall average turn around time of 2 days, 3 hours.

- **Fraud Controls** – Identity verification controls in NEMIS authenticated 98.5% of applicants in this disaster at the time they registered for assistance. Of the 1.5% who did not meet the identity verification requirement, only those who sent in identity verifying documentation to the NPSCs were processed for disaster assistance after their case was reviewed by a caseworker.

While these processes show improvement in disaster recovery delivery, FEMA has also instituted a method of gauging applicant feedback in an effort to measure and improve our performance and delivery of the Individual Assistance programs. Below are the results of surveys taken following recent disasters from disaster applicants who received assistance. The surveys were completed approximately 30-45 days after the close of the application periods for DRs 1731, 1744 and 1745.

Survey responses from Applicants who received assistance:	FY 2008 to date	DR 1731 CA	DR 1744 AR	DR 1745 TN
Overall Satisfaction with information and support	92.59%	84.30%	94.40%	96.15%
Satisfaction with length of time to receive assistance	96.63%	91.30%	94.82%	94.73%
Satisfaction with Housing Assistance	83.47%	80.85%	94.82%	94.73%
Rating of FEMA's overall reputation in the community	91.26%	80.85%	98.50%	92.30%
Level of recovery: fully or somewhat	88.43%	78.43%	86.11%	84.61%
FEMA's helpfulness in their recovery	91.33%	82.35%	92.95%	96.15%

Data used for comparison purposes, "FY 2008 to date," is from October 1, 2008 through May 15, 2008

Not only has FEMA improved it's assistance to individuals, but we have also made improvements in our service delivery to States and local Governments through FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program.

FEMA's PA program has traditionally been a paper based operation, where a PA inspector meets with a local public works director and completes Project Worksheets that captures the damages noted and the application is manually entered into NEMIS. Since 2004, FEMA has worked to transition and develop a system to automate these activities, thereby reducing time, resources, and man-hours, and granting States web-based access to the system. In 2007, the Emergency Management Mission Integrated Environment (EMMIE) grants management function was launched. EMMIE PA allows FEMA staff, PA applicants and States to perform all PA grant management activities online and will be capable of supporting the use of state-of-the art technology such as wireless handheld devices in the future.

EMMIE has really enhanced customer service by allowing PA applicants to apply for grants, see the status of their projects, and manage their grants online. Using EMMIE, State PA Program

Managers can perform all PA grants management tasks to meet FEMA requirements from declaration to program closeout. Additionally, state grant management funding provided by FEMA will no longer be needed to be used to purchase online services for States to utilize NEMIS because EMMIE is web-based, creating cost savings for the Federal government.

The first version of the system was piloted in FEMA-1735-DR-Oklahoma and is currently being used for 17 Fire Management declarations in Texas and FEMA-1750-Georgia, FEMA-1759-DR-SD and FEMA-1761-DR-GA. Current plans are to use EMMIE PA for all newly declared disasters on or after July 1, 2008.

Additionally, the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act granted FEMA the authority to conduct a PA Pilot program to assess improvements in debris management and deliver of disaster assistance to States through estimating Project Worksheets. These pilot options are strictly voluntary. These programs were used following the February 2008 tornados in Tennessee and Arkansas, and the March 2008 floods in Texas and Oklahoma, The State of California opted not to participate in the pilot following the October 2007 California Wildfires.

Bearing in mind that, just as each disaster event is unique, the services provided and resources available must meet the needs of the State and residents affected by the disaster. FEMA has worked tirelessly with our State partners to ensure that every available recovery tool is examined and, when necessary, used to ensure the swift recovery of the community and its citizens. We believe that these efforts are paying off, and are evidenced by the responses of our State and individual customers.

Logistics Management: Leaning Forward to Support States' Needs for Emergency Assistance

A key element of FEMA's disaster response and recovery comes in the form of assisting States in meeting their emergency needs for commodities, services and goods.

In April, 2007, as part of the FEMA's reorganization, the Logistics Branch was elevated to Directorate level within the Agency. The Logistics Management Directorate (LMD) is FEMA's major program office responsible for policy, guidance, standards, execution and governance of logistics support, services and operations. Since that time, LMD has strengthened its business practices by enhancing its relationships with logistics partners for a more coordinated logistics response operation.

The responses to the California Wildfires have helped to validate the new business processes strategy and emboldened the "National Logistics Coordinator (NLC)" concept. For example, after the California Wildfires, FEMA Logistics reached out to our partners to assist in the response. Meals Ready to Eat were sourced and delivered by the Defense Logistics Agency from a local facility in California that was less than 12 hours away from the need. Cots and blankets were sourced and delivered by the General Services Administration. Water was sourced and delivered from an American Red Cross warehouse less than 2 hours away from the disaster. FEMA also delivered water from one of our warehouses to restock the American Red Cross

warehouse. These are examples of how the coordinated logistics response operation has become more efficient and expeditious.

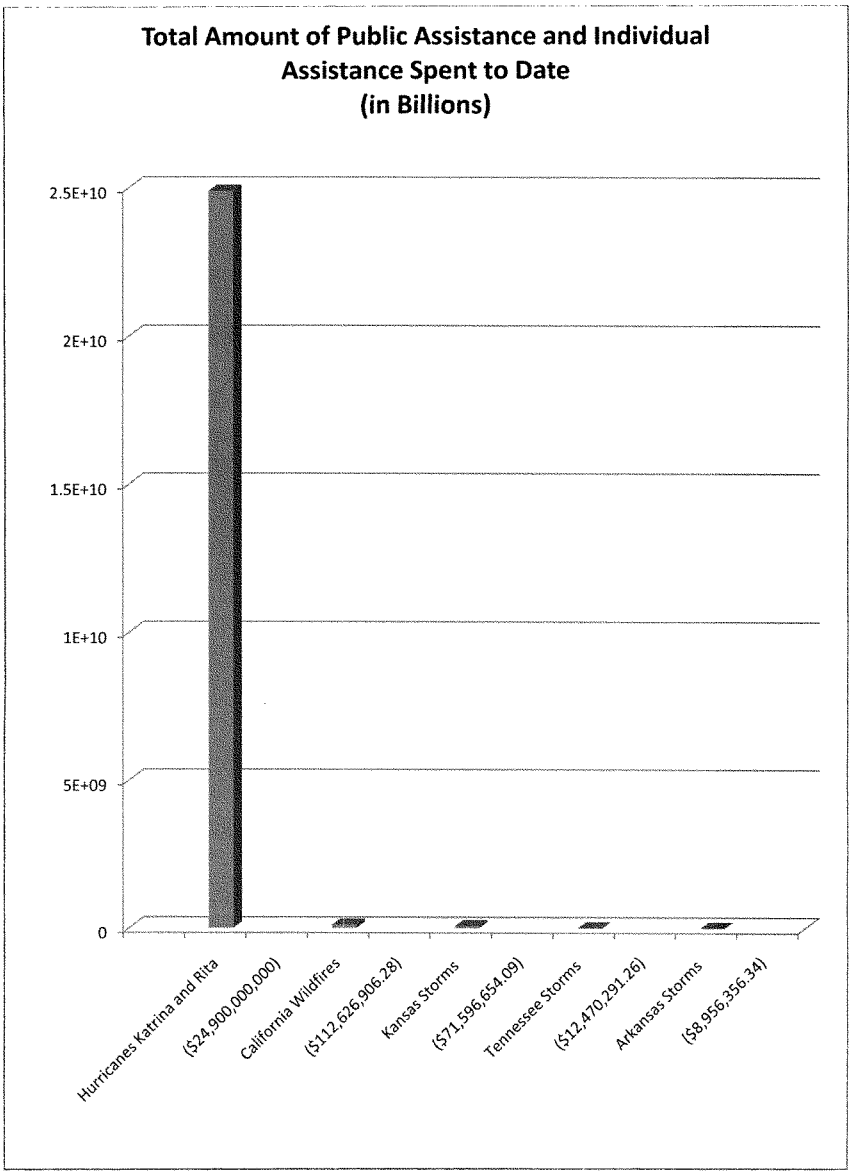
In September 2007, LMD established a Distribution Management Strategy Working Group with its Federal, private and non-governmental organizations logistics partners to conduct a comprehensive analysis and develop a comprehensive distribution and supply chain management strategy. Partners in this group include GSA, DOD (USNORTHCOM)/DLA, HHS, USACE, USDA USFS, and ARC. This group includes a Resource Management Group that will adjudicate and resource all disaster requests for Logistics resources.

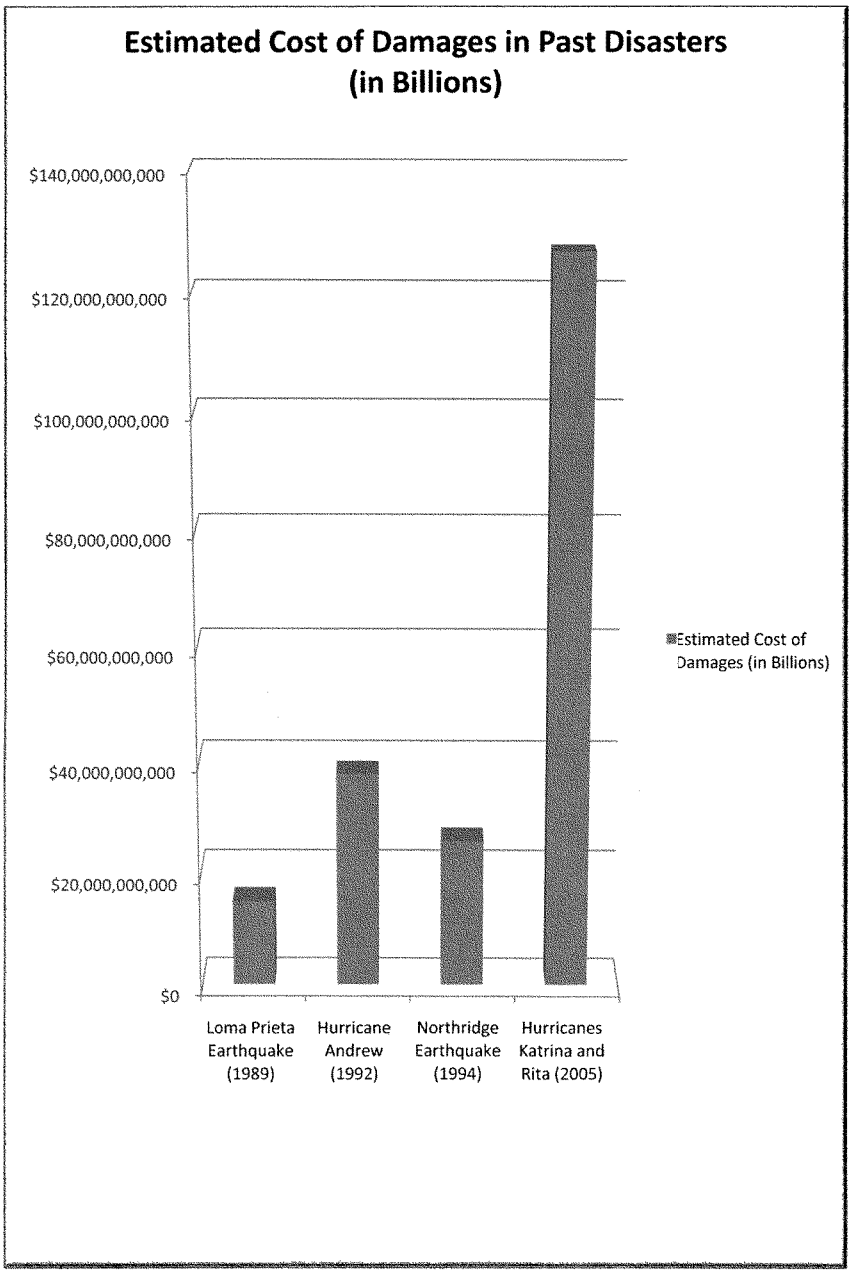
LMD has established contracts and Inter-agency Agreements (IAA) that provide an enhanced logistics readiness capability for contractor support (personnel/ organic drivers/ fleet management); vehicle maintenance contract (organic fleet) maintenance; supplies and services IAA / General Services Administration; transportation Services IAA/General Services Administration; national bus evacuation readiness; plastic sheeting (blue roof) blanket purchase agreement; supplies and services IAA / Defense Logistics Agency; asset visibility; Logistics Management Transformation Initiative (LMTI); and base camp support contract.

Overall, the Federal response to the recent disasters has been organized and effective.
The Federal coordination of these events has shown an unprecedented level of collaboration and cooperation between all partners – Federal, State, local, tribal, and voluntary organizations. From the time FEMA begins monitoring an event, activating Regional and the National Response Coordination Centers, hosting daily video teleconference calls with Federal and State interagency partners, reviewing and working with States in the formulation of Governors' requests for major disaster declarations, alerting our national response teams and pre-staging resources and commodities, and deploying our housing task force; every effort FEMA makes is strategic, proactive and aimed at anticipating needs of the States and local governments before they arise. In this way, FEMA is moving forward to become the preeminent emergency management agency the American public needs and deserves.

Our testimony has highlighted just a few examples of the effective collaborative Federal/State response to recent disasters. I am proud of the milestones FEMA has achieved in our efforts to improve the way we do business. That said, we still have much work to do and I look forward to continued close collaboration and cooperation with our Congressional, Federal, State, local and Tribal partners. Whether man-made or natural -- whenever an incident occurs, FEMA is committed to establishing a unified command with State emergency management offices, deploying staff, and positioning ourselves as rapidly as possible in response to or in anticipation of disasters and emergencies. By pressing forward in an engaged partnership with our States, FEMA can work to ensure that the American people get the help they need and deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.


Total Amount of Public Assistance and Individual Assistance Spent to Date (in Billions)
2.5E+10
2E+10
1.5E+10
1E+10
5E+09
0
Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ($24,900,000,000)
California Wildfires ($112,626,906.28)
Kansas Storms ($71,596,654.09)
Tennessee Storms ($12,470,291.26)
Arkansas Storms ($8,956,356.34)


Estimated Cost of Damages in Past Disasters (in Billions)
$140,000,000,000
$120,000,000,000
$100,000,000,000
$80,000,000,000
$60,000,000,000
$40,000,000,000
$20,000,000,000
$0
Loma Prieta Earthquake (1989)
Hurricane Andrew (1992)
Northridge Earthquake (1994)
Hurricanes Katrina and Rita (2005)
Estimated Cost of Damages (in Billions)

May 2007 Kansas Tornadoes (DR 1699)

Date of Declaration: May 6, 2007

Total Amount of Assistance Provided to Date:

Public Assistance (Federal Share Obligated): $61,751,501.87

Individual Assistance: $9,845,152.22

IA Stats:

Housing Assistance:

Assistance Code	Total Regs	Eligible Amount	Average
Eligible - Home Repairs	1,853	$5,408,378.82	$2,918.71
Eligible - Home Repair SBA Referral	3	$7,956.57	$2,652.19
Eligible – Home Repairs, Flood Insurance Required	135	$738,541.11	$5,470.67
Eligible - Recertification	10	$20,608.39	$1,539.65
Eligible - Rental Assistance	660	$340,553.00	$515.41
Eligible - Readily Fabricated Dwelling	265	$0.00	$0.00
Eligible - Inaccessible	1	$532.00	$532.00
Eligible - Replacement Housing	62	$1,649,789.46	$26,609.51
Eligible - Recertification Supplement	2	$1,339.00	$669.50
Eligible - Utilities Out	11	$4,706.00	$589.00
Eligible - Transient Housing	10	$5,334.56	$533.46
Total	**3,012**	**$8,177,738.91**	**$3,820.92**

*A Registrant may count more than once on this report due to multiple assistance codes

1731 - California

Total Amount of Assistance Provided to Date:

Public Assistance (Federal Share Obligated): $98,483,627.57

Individual Assistance: $14,143,278.71

IA Stats:

Housing Assistance:

Assistance Code	Total Regs	Eligible Amount	Average
Eligible - Accelerated Housing Assistance	1	$4,600.00	$4,600.00
Eligible - Home Repairs	186	$556,954.99	$1,942.34
Eligible - Home Repair SBA Referral	1	$4,553.26	$4,553.26
Eligible - Recertification	360	$1,357,803.12	$3,576.75
Eligible - Rental Assistance	1,198	$1,558,983.00	$1,294.06
Eligible - Readily Fabricated Dwelling	25	$0.00	$0.00
Eligible - Inaccessible	345	$440,067.00	$1,290.66
Eligible - Replacement Housing	233	$5,989,890.04	$26,728.92
Eligible - Recertification Supplement	14	$18,892.00	$740.93
Eligible - Utilities Out	101	$135,544.77	$1,353.98
Eligible - Transient Housing	109	$63,095.08	$537.30
Total	**2,573**	**$10,130,383.26**	**$4,238.02**

*A Registrant may count more than once on this report due to multiple assistance codes

Other Needs Assistance:

Category	Regs	Eligible	Amount	Ineligible	Withdrawn	Pending
Dental	217	2	$1,066.00	191	24	0
Funeral	13	6	$18,644.25	7	0	0
Medical	2,066	27	$51,082.96	1,948	90	1
Moving/Storage	26	0	$0.00	23	3	0
Other	2,710	77	$27,650.56	1,997	635	1
Personal Property	3,225	757	$3,749,517.00	2,148	318	2
Transportation	788	66	$164,934.68	668	50	4
Total	**9,045**	**935**	**$4,012,895.45**	**6,982**	**1,120**	**8**

1744 - Arkansas

Total Amount of Assistance Provided to Date:

Public Assistance (Federal Share Obligated): $4,767,129.47

Individual Assistance: $4,189,226.87

IA Stats:

Housing Assistance:

Assistance Code	Total Regs	Eligible Amount	Average
Eligible - Home Repairs	177	$779,510.09	$4,404.01
Eligible - Recertification	40	$23,637.00	$605.63
Eligible - Rental Assistance	255	$252,468.00	$988.69
Eligible - Readily Fabricated Dwelling	21	$0.00	$0.00
Eligible - Replacement Housing	85	$2,188,150.24	$25,742.94
Eligible - Recertification Supplement	1	$414.00	$414.00
Eligible - Utilities Out	1	$390.00	$390.00
Eligible - Transient Housing	6	$2,643.50	$352.35
Total	**586**	**$3,247,212.83**	**$2,903.69**

*A Registrant may count more than once on this report due to multiple assistance codes

Other Needs Assistance:

Category	Regs	Eligible	Amount	Ineligible	Withdrawn	Pending
Dental	29	0	$0.00	28	1	0
Funeral	15	15	$72,702.72	0	0	0
Medical	176	13	$77,970.92	161	1	1
Moving/Storage	48	3	$282.30	45	0	0
Other	293	68	$38,745.15	196	29	0
Personal Property	395	160	$629,653.79	217	18	0
Transportation	245	61	$122,659.16	180	4	0
Total	**1,201**	**320**	**$942,014.04**	**827**	**53**	**1**

1745 - Tennessee

Total Amount of Assistance Provided to Date:

Public Assistance (Federal Share Obligated): $8,520,773.22

Individual Assistance: $3,949,518.04

IA Stats:

Housing Assistance:

Assistance Code	Total Regs	Eligible Amount	Average
Eligible - Created Resources	1	$519.00	$519.00
Eligible - Home Repairs	185	$741,967.95	$4,010.64
Eligible - Recertification	62	$53,478.00	$804.15
Eligible - Rental Assistance	332	$397,639.00	$1,182.16
Eligible - Readily Fabricated Dwelling	38	$0.00	$0.00
Eligible - Replacement Housing	57	$1,485,326.91	$26,058.37
Eligible - Recertification Supplement	2	$897.00	$448.50
Eligible - Utilities Out	1	$990.00	$990.00
Eligible - Transient Housing	9	$4,256.24	$465.45
Total	**687**	**$2,685,074.10**	**$2,669.89**

*A Registrant may count more than once on this report due to multiple assistance codes

Other Needs Assistance:

Category	Regs	Eligible	Amount	Ineligible	Withdrawn	Pending
Dental	63	3	$4,731.00	59	1	0
Funeral	28	22	$131,648.87	6	0	0
Medical	289	17	$143,308.51	264	7	1
Moving/Storage	32	6	$1,041.91	26	0	0
Other	463	41	$15,782.29	374	48	0
Personal Property	1,046	246	$671,787.94	713	86	1
Transportation	567	99	$296,143.42	434	33	1
Total	**2,488**	**434**	**1,264,443.94**	**1,876**	**175**	**3**

FEMA NATIONAL DISASTER HOUSING STRATEGY

THE LAW..... October 4, 2006

"Not later than 270 days after October 4, 2006, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing in detail the National Disaster Housing Strategy including programs directed to meeting the needs of special needs populations." 6 U.S.C. § 772, Pub. L. 109-295, title VI, Sec. 683, Oct. 4, 2006 **That date is July 1, 2007**

START OF SECOND HURRICANE SEASON SINCE KATRINA AND RITA.....June 1, 2007

DAY FEMA FIRST VIOLATED THE LAW.....July 1, 2007

FIRST PROMISE AFTER FEMA VIOLATED LAW .....December 21, 2007

Response Letter to Senators Stevens and Landrieu

"The National Disaster Housing Strategy will be completed this winter. This document required the concurrence of partner agencies and entities, and is currently under final review by FEMA"-R. David Paulison, Administrator FEMA

SECOND PROMISE AFTER FEMA VIOLATED LAW.....March 4, 2008

March 4, 2008 Hearing, "Is Housing Too Much to Hope For?"

"We do appreciate the tasking from Congress to prepare the National Disaster Housing Strategy...it really causes us and brings us to confront a number of key issues ...what is our strategy to learn lessons from Katrina and Rita? How do we assess responsibilities at the Federal level and State level? How do we recognize and acknowledge the differences between a catastrophic event a lesser event?...I would indicate to you that I believe we can try to get this report to you by the 1st of April."- Admiral Harvey Johnson, Deputy Administrator, FEMA

THIRD PROMISE AFTER FEMA VIOLATED LAW.....April 3, 2008

April 3, 2008 Hearing, "The New FEMA"

"We have the draft done...but that has got to be circulated among our stakeholders, and I want to do that so that they have got a piece of that. And also, according to the Katrina Reform Act, we have to make sure that the National Advisory Council that was created reviews that and has input into that also...It will be in place before June 1st"- R. David Paulison, Administrator FEMA

START OF THIRD HURRICANE SEASON SINCE KATRINA AND RITA.....June 1, 2008

DAY FEMA DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY WAS PROVIDED TO SUBCOMMITTEE INVESTIGATORS PURSUANT TO FORMAL DOCUMENT REQUEST.....July 8, 2008

WHO COMPLIED WITH REQUEST.....NOT FEMA

DAY SUBCOMMITTEE INFORMED FEMA OF HEARING ON HOUSING STRATEGY.....July 17, 2008

DAY FEMA ANNOUNCED DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY IN PRESS.....July 21, 2008

Disaster Housing Response Planning
Delegated to Task Force

FEMA Calls for Nonexistent "Task Force" to Assume over A Dozen Housing Planning Duties, Including:

1. **Catastrophic Disaster Housing Plan**
2. **Overall Post-Disaster Operational Plan**
3. **Emergency Shelter Specific Action Plan**
4. **Interim Housing Specific Action Plan**
5. **Permanent Housing Specific Action Plan**
6. **Assignment and Coordination of Responder's Roles and Responsibilities**
7. **Identification of Funding Needs**
8. **Special Needs and Disability Housing**
9. **Planning for Group Housing Sites**
10. **Objectives, Actions, Milestones and Timetables for Housing Responders**
11. **Define, Build, Integrate and Standardize Housing Capacities**
12. **Create and Implement Disaster Housing Planning Exercises**
13. **Identify Personnel, Technology and Data Sharing for Housing Assistance**
14. **Develop On-Line Disaster Housing Resource Center**
15. **Improve Tracking of Citizens who Register for Assistance**
16. **Institute a National Case Management Program**

A REAL PLAN - "UNDER DEVELOPMENT"

THE LAW: *"The Administrator, in coordination with representatives of the Federal agencies...shall develop, coordinate, and maintain a National Disaster Housing Strategy [that]...shall" -*

"(1) outline the most efficient and cost effective Federal programs that will best meet the short-term and long-term housing needs of individuals and households affected by a major disaster..."
FEMA'S DRAFT ANSWER:
Annex 1: Overview of Disaster Housing Programs for Federal, State, Tribal, and Local Government and Nongovernmental Organizations.....**"UNDER DEVELOPMENT"**

"(4) consider methods through which housing assistance can be provided to individuals and households where employment and other resources for living are available"
FEMA'S DRAFT ANSWER:
Annex 2: Methods to House Disaster Victims Where Employment and the Resources They Need for Living Are Available.....**"UNDER DEVELOPMENT"**

"(5) describe programs directed to meet the needs of special needs and low-income populations and ensure that a sufficient number of housing units are provided for individuals with disabilities"
FEMA'S DRAFT ANSWER:
Annex 3: Summary of Programs for Special Needs and Low-Income Populations, Including Provision of Housing Units for Individuals with Disabilities.....**"UNDER DEVELOPMENT"**

"(6) describe plans for the operation of clusters of housing provided to individuals and households..."
FEMA'S DRAFT ANSWER:
Annex 4: Disaster Housing Group Site Operations..... **"UNDER DEVELOPMENT"**

"(7) describe plans for promoting the repair or rehabilitation of existing rental housing....."
FEMA'S DRAFT ANSWER:
Annex 5: Programs to Promote the Repair or Rehabilitation of Existing Rental Housing..... **"UNDER DEVELOPMENT"**

"(8)...describe any additional authorities necessary to carry out any portion of the strategy."
FEMA'S DRAFT ANSWER:
Annex 6: Additional Authorities Necessary to Carry Out the *Strategy*..... ***"UNDER DEVELOPMENT"***

"(c) The Administrator should develop and make publicly available guidance on (1) types of housing assistance available under [the Stafford ACT]..., (2) eligibility for such assistance...and (3) application procedures for such assistance."
FEMA'S DRAFT ANSWER:
Annex 7: Summary of Guidance on Disaster Housing Assistance Available under the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, including Eligibility Criteria, and Application Procedures.....**"UNDER DEVELOPMENT"**

-Sources-(Pub. L. 109-295, title VI, Sec. 683, Oct. 4, 2006, 120 Stat.1446.) and FEMA National Disaster Housing Strategy Working Draft: July 17, 2008, 12:00pm

(2) ANNEXES

FOR: ADMIRAL JOHNSON (FEMA): You held a meeting for congressional staff on July 21, after you spent the morning speaking to the press in which you stated that the current draft you were releasing including 7 blank pages with 7 Annexes that say they are "under development" were the places that your strategy would eventually use to address the legal requirements set out in PKEMRA, isn't this correct?

These 7 blank pages are eventually supposed to address:

- housing programs
- methods of housing victims
- programs to meet the needs of low income and special needs populations
- group site housing
- programs to rehabilitate and provide for adequate rental housing
- authorities needed to carry out these obligations... and
- explanation of eligibility requirements and application procedures for receiving assistance

These seven areas mirror almost to the very word, Sections 772 (b)(1),(4),(5), (6),(7),(8), and (c) of the law requiring your strategy, correct?

You provided an 88 page document with 7 pages that actually address the legal requirements encompassing what the Strategy must include.

And these seven pages are blank, correct?

These are the very requirements that Congress enumerated in writing the law and that the President obligated you to adhere to when he signed that law.

Maybe it never occurred to you, but the reasons these requirements appear in the law are because Congress studied, spoke to , labored over, drafted and then voted this bill into law because these words mattered. They were what real people on the ground determined was needed to save us from FEMA in the event of another Catastrophe and 2 years later you have effectively told Congress and the President exactly what to do with this law.... That is unacceptable.

What FEMA Left Out of its "Strategy"

FEMA's Strategy either leaves out or postpones development of these policies:

No Catastrophic Disaster Housing Plan

No Operational Housing Response Plan

No Emergency Shelter Action Plan

No Interim Housing Action Plan

No Rental Repair Plan

No Disability Housing Plan

No Low Income Housing Plan

No Stafford Act Reform

No Trailer Replacement Plan

No Federal Interagency Coordination Plan

No Federal/State Coordination Plan

No Attached Description of Legally Required Programs

Post-Hearing Question and Answer for the Record
Submitted to David Maxwell,
Director, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management

Question

What are the regional planning efforts to deal with an earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone?

Response

The NMSZ Catastrophic Planning Initiative is designed to provide ground level planning including local, state, tribal and federal partners. The planning efforts utilize a scenario-based planning model, which combines the planning and exercise phases of traditional planning, fostering the participation of operational personnel in the planning process. The NMSZ planning effort includes multiple levels of participant based workshops including: initial functional area-specific, state level area-specific, State/FEMA integration, geographic regions, and federal integration workshops that build on the lessons learned and planning priorities identified at each level of the planning process. The initiative is funded for all the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC) states by FEMA. The CUSEC states are Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky.

Hearing before the Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery
"Major Disaster Recovery: Assessing FEMA's Performance since Katrina"
July 17, 2008

Questions for the Record for James Bassham

From Senator Mary Landrieu

1. What are the regional planning efforts to deal with an earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone?

The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) and other members of the state emergency management team have been working extensively for two years on regional planning in the event of a potential earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ).

Planning on and updating of the Catastrophic Annex to the Tennessee Emergency Management Plan (TEMP), an Operations Plan signed by the Governor which, when activated, becomes an order, began in earnest in xxx 2006 when TEMA, in partnership with IAEM, Incorporated, a FEMA contractor, utilized an earthquake planner of high quality, Mr. Larry Webb. Mr. Webb was a former fire chief from California with extensive experience in emergency management. His capabilities in gathering information and converting the material to a computer-based plan were essential in initiating what became the first major catastrophic plan for Tennessee that is national in effect.

In February 2007 TEMA instituted a tabletop exercise called TNCAT-07, for Tennessee Catastrophic Exercise, a brief training period and participation in a June 2007 U.S. Coast Guard exercise, SONS-07, for Spills of National Significance. The state and local jurisdictions participated in both exercises concurrently three days and then two more days in the state exercise. The scenario opened with an NMSZ earthquake which caused an oil spill on the Mississippi River and the state exercise continued with cascading incidents. Tennessee incorporated one cascade event of catastrophic proportion in the latter part of TNCAT-07 caused by the successive NMSZ earthquakes, the failure of a damaged TVA dam, the Wolf Creek Dam in Kentucky. This exercise advanced our understanding of cascade events and opened our eyes to potentials previously unrecognized.

The November 2007 the first of two conferences was held which included TEMA, FEMA and all West Tennessee counties potentially affected by NMSZ at Paris Landing State Park near Paris, TN. This three day event took the response functions by emergency management function, examined them and created a set of recommendations or improvements into the Catastrophic Annex ("Cat Annex").

A second major planning conference involving the same stakeholders potentially affected by NMSZ was held in Memphis, TN in March 2008. This three day event took the remaining emergency management functions, mostly recovery, and completed the examination of impacts and incorporated recommendations into the Cat Annex.

In April 2008 TEMA used the NMSZ scenario to further the development of the Catastrophic Annex during a National Guard Bureau exercise called VIGILANT GUARD-08. During this exercise, logistics support utilizing National Guard capability enhanced catastrophic planning development and preparedness of the state through detailed steps and sequences down to the staging area level. The significant vetting and correcting of issues involving all levels of government has made this concept plan a valuable and viable one for the State of Tennessee.

The contract for IAEM, Inc. concluded in September 2008 with briefing of the results and copies of the annex provided to local emergency management members at the Emergency Management Association of Tennessee annual conference in Chattanooga, TN on October 6-8, 2008. The Cat Annex will continue to be updated periodically in future exercises as elements fine tune their technical areas.

Enclosed is a statement that establishes the threat to the NMSZ as presented by the staff of the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC), a compact of eight states from the NMSZ area and the Cat Annex. This plan is currently classified by state law as confidential due to the identification of potential weaknesses to terrorist elements.

Sincerely,
JAMES H. BASSHAM
Director

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Jhb:Mm

Regional Earthquake Planning Efforts

Background:

The initial impact of a major earthquake in the Central United States (CUS) in or near the New Madrid Seismic Zone is anticipated to be catastrophic in its potential to cause human injury and death, as well as wide spread property destruction.

Experts at USGS and other leading research organizations believe that catastrophic earthquakes -- earthquakes whose effects are so severe that they cause unacceptable levels of damage to buildings and infrastructure, economic loss, mortality, morbidity, and adversely affect the environment, production facilities, economic markets, and distribution systems--are inevitable in the central United States. They believe that it is only a matter of time before the CUS (Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee) experiences such an event.

On the basis of hazard and built environment analogs, along with preliminary loss modeling, it is well known that earthquakes leave an indelible mark on individuals, businesses, communities, infrastructure, insurers, and the Nation. They adversely affect the environment, and they overwhelm production facilities, distribution systems, and economic markets, jeopardizing the financial stability of business, communities, and the Nation. Experts believe that a catastrophic earthquake occurring today in the CUS will result in economic losses in the range of $ 100 -$200 billion. The physical effects of such an earthquake would damage, destroy, and disrupt the normal functions of government, community safe havens, essential facilities, critical facilities, and business; along with local and regional infrastructure; leave tens of thousands dead, injured, homeless, and jobless; divert tourism, reduce the tax base; divert resources planned for health care, education, and other social programs; and deplete insurance and financial resources.

When compared with California, Alaska, or the Puget Sound area, the central U.S. faces an unprecedented catastrophe because of its unique hazard environment (i.e., the geologic, geophysical, and geotechnical setting of the region that controls where, why, and how frequently earthquakes occur, how big they are, and the severity of their effects) and the vulnerability or fragility of its built environment (i.e., the buildings and infrastructure in urban centers at risk). Although the CUS is far away from the geologically young and unstable seismogenic belts along the west coast in California, the Puget Sound area, and Alaska or the mid-Atlantic ridge in the Atlantic Ocean marking, respectively, the western and eastern boundaries of the North American plate, damaging earthquakes are inevitable in this area. The most likely locations include: a) the New Madrid seismic zone where magnitude 6.5-6.8 earthquakes occurred near Memphis in 1843 and near St. Louis in 1895, and three to four mid upper magnitude 7 earthquakes and scores of moderate-to-large-magnitude aftershocks occurred in the winter of 1811-1812, and b) the Wabash Valley area northeast of the New Madrid seismic zone where damaging moderate earthquakes have occurred.

Against this backdrop the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee with funding support provided by FEMA, established the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC) in 1983. Authority for CUSEC is vested in the Board of Directors, which is composed of the Directors of emergency management in each Member State.

The Board's role is to govern the organization while providing leadership on the critical "regional" aspects of the hazard each of the member states collectively face. The actions of CUSEC are carried out as a critical link to the National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program (NEHRP) as well as the Catastrophic Planning Initiative under the National Response Framework.

Regional Planning

The purpose of the New Madrid Catastrophic Planning Initiative is to improve response capabilities for a catastrophic earthquake event and related hazards in the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ) at the local, state, regional and national levels of government.

The planning initiative is based on the scenario-driven catastrophic response plan development process, which puts *Response Operations Personnel* and *Emergency Planners* in the same room to develop plans based on scientifically generated scenario data that:

- Combines the planning and exercise phases of plan development
- Produces functional plans ready to use immediately post-workshop
- Promotes communication and builds strong relationships between Federal, State, local, and volunteer agencies
- Multi-year federal funding from FEMA
- Partners FEMA, CUSEC, states, universities, business, volunteer organizations, local government
- Three metropolitan areas, four regional, and one overall integration workshop planned for 2009
- Continued focus, planning, and exercises will greatly enhance our preparedness for earthquakes; help mitigate their impacts; and foster the level of local, regional, and national cooperation required to survive and recover.

Driving the planning effort is a set of regional priorities which were established by the CUSEC Board, those are:
--Multi-State Coordination
--Communications
--Search and Rescue
--Emergency Medical
--Transportation
--Public Information and Education
--Multi-State Clearinghouse (Secondary Priority)

A regional Multi-State Coordination Annex which will enhance each of the member states operational plans is currently under development by CUSEC with direct input by the program specialist within each of the states.

The purpose of the annex is to increase cooperation, communications, and coordination among CUSEC and neighboring states during exercises and earthquake response/recovery operations.

Based on the CUSEC Board's Multi-State Priorities, the Annex will:

- Provide visibility of shared issues and a snapshot of the current status of each state's earthquake program
- Have an appendix for each priority with vital related information from each state
- Format and content of each appendix to be developed by the functional CUSEC working group responsible (made up of functional experts from each CUSEC state)
- Ensure regional cooperation in advance on key post-earthquake issues (i.e., emergency routes, mass care, alternate communications, etc.), response and recovery.
- Be an annex to state earthquake or emergency operations plan, could stand alone, and could also be posted on a web site.

Regional Planning to Coordinate Research Response with Emergency Management Functions

An area of concern is the lack of coordination between traditional emergency response planning and response planning by the research community. It is clear that the historical aspects of a damaging earthquake in the central US will cause researchers globally to descend on the central US. CUSEC is working in partnership with the USGS and the Association of CUSEC State Geologists to develop the "Multi-State Technical Information Clearinghouse Plan" (MSTICP)

The purpose is to address the interaction between and among the various state research coordination points that will be established following an earthquake.

> Following a significant earthquake, post-earthquake technical information clearinghouses (PETIC) will be set up by several or all CUSEC member states which have significant damage.

To effectively manage an operation of this scale, a process is needed to help coordinate between state clearinghouses and the regional Multi-State Clearinghouse (MSC).

- This plan helps organize, coordinate, and facilitate the activities of the geo-science and engineering communities working in the various clearinghouses.
    - -- With prior planning, the region should be able to implement the plan so that researchers aid rather than encumber response and recovery in the affected areas.

- -- Will ensure coherent, methodical investigations of the physical impacts of an earthquake, timely gathering of perishable data, and central tracking of investigations.
- -- Serving as a single point of contact, the MSC will provide for effective exchange of information among emergency managers, researchers, practitioners and State and Federal Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) and/or Joint Field Offices (JFO).
- -- Includes advance consideration of researcher security and credentialing; compatibility, integration, and analysis of research data from multiple sources; and will result in a broader research focus and reduced duplication of effort.

Regional Planning Concerns

Integration of state planning efforts with the yet to be developed federal level NMSZ catastrophic plan are on hold until FEMA provides supplemental funding to rehire full-time New Madrid Regional Planners which were placed in the 4 FEMA Regions (IV, V, VI, and VII). The FEMA Disaster Operations Directorate has indicated that funding for the NMSZ planning will be restored effective October 1, 2008.

It is important to point out that in FY 2007 and FY 2006, the funding levels for the New Madrid Seismic Zone planning in the Disaster Operations Directorate were reported to be $10.5 to $11 million per year. In FY 2008, funding levels were reduced to $7.25 million. We do not know why funding was reduced in FY 2008. We are expecting that when FEMA restores funding NMSZ resources, that restoration will be back at the FY 2006 and FY 2007 level of at least $10.5 million to restore the progress we were making on planning at the local, State and Regional level. Without restoration of the funding dedicated to the program at the FY 2006 and FY 2007 level, the significant progress we have made to date on planning for this catastrophic disaster the States is in jeopardy. Putting this important planning effort on hold is not in the best interest of the citizens of our States and the nation.

Conclusion of the initial planning phase is set in the form of a large regional exercise which will test local, state, regional, and national level plans in the spring of 2011. Without the exercise there is no positive way, short of an actual earthquake, to test the plans. As was seen with Hurricane Katrina, failure to test and make necessary adjustments in newly developed plans is a disaster waiting to happen.

Question#:	1
Topic:	travel
Hearing:	Major Disaster Recovery: Assessing FEMA's Performance since Katrina
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Post-Hearing Questions and Answers for the Record
Submitted to Harvey E. Johnson, Jr.
Deputy Administrator, U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency

Question: First, I want to thank FEMA employees for their response to the Arkansas storms, tornados and floods this year. I've spoken with many people in the state and they are pleased overall with the agency's response. I know that Director Paulison has been to Arkansas at least twice this spring. I appreciate that very much. What other senior level FEMA staff, yourself included, have visited Arkansas or other storm ravaged states? How often is that that senior staff from FEMA's headquarters in Washington visit these devastated areas first hand?

Answer: The number and times that senior staff from FEMA Headquarters visits a disaster depends on the size and scope of the disaster.

Among those from DHS/FEMA who have visited Arkansas or other storm ravaged areas are:

- Michael Chertoff - DHS Secretary
- R. David Paulison – FEMA Administrator
- Ted Monette – Director of FCO Operations
- William Peterson – Regional Administrator Region VI
- Gary Jones – Deputy Regional Administrator Region VI
- Tony Robinson, Response & Recovery Director Region VI
- Berl Jones – FEMA HQ Director for Individual Assistance
- Jonathan Thompson – FEMA HQ External Affairs
- Ken Riley – Arkansas Designated FCO, Region VI
- Sandy Coachman – FCO Region VI
- Albie Lewis – FCO Region I
- Phil Parr – FCO Region VI

Question#:	2
Topic:	transition
Hearing:	Major Disaster Recovery: Assessing FEMA's Performance since Katrina
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: In less than 6 months, this Administration will end and new FEMA leadership will take over the agency. In terms of disaster recovery and response, how are you preparing for that transition? Will you and your staff leave reports about ongoing issues or manuals with best practices and lessons learned? What actions are you taking to facilitate a smooth transition from your end?

Response: FEMA has developed, and is currently implementing, a robust Administration Transition Project Plan to ensure a seamless transition from the current administration to the new administration. This plan encompasses five major streams of work: knowledge transfer, succession planning, communications and outreach, readiness, and management and administration. Please note that of the 3,500 FEMA full-time employees, less than one percent are appointed political employees. In addition FEMA is an active participant in the DHS-wide Presidential Transition planning efforts. FEMA has Senior and Deputy Transition Officers serving as liaisons to this intradepartmental body which under the leadership of RADM John Acton coordinates transition planning efforts across the Department.

In order to facilitate the transition to a new administration, Administrator Paulison has named Nancy Ward, Regional Administrator for FEMA Region IX, as the Career Transition Senior Official. In this role, Mrs. Ward will serve as an advisor to the new administration on FEMA related issues. To further ensure continuity of FEMA operations, the Agency has undergone extensive succession planning for key positions. Career individuals have been identified to serve in an acting capacity for all political appointees within FEMA.

To support both career staff who will be serving in acting capacities and new political leadership, FEMA is developing a transition briefing binder that provides detailed information on important topics including lessons learned, the National Response Framework, stakeholder coordination, management and budget processes, critical mission overviews, and key improvements to FEMA operations. In addition, a series of workshops is being developed to facilitate the integration of new leadership with current career FEMA staff. A key component of these workshops will be development of 90-day transition plans that can serve as guides for career individuals in an acting capacity and the incoming leadership. Finally, FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate is supporting the Department by tailoring the National Exercise Program and training resources to help acclimate the new administration to current risks and emergency management capabilities.

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