

**MISSION POSSIBLE: FEMA'S FUTURE
PREPAREDNESS PLANNING**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, LOCAL,
AND PRIVATE SECTOR PREPAREDNESS
AND INTEGRATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

U.S. SENATE,
AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, LOCAL, AND
PRIVATE SECTOR PREPAREDNESS AND INTEGRATION,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m., in room SD-342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Mark L. Pryor, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senator Pryor.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PRYOR

Senator PRYOR. I will go ahead and call us to order. Thank you, everyone, for being here, and certainly the staff and the Members who are coming. I appreciate the work that got us here today.

I want to welcome our panelists and our other guests to the Subcommittee today to hear about FEMA's future preparedness efforts. I appreciate you all taking time to be here today.

The purpose of this hearing is to assess FEMA's preparedness and continuity of operations over the next 12 to 18 months. As we all know, the next year-and-a-half will see changes in leadership in all the Federal agencies. Many of our State and local partners will also undergo changes in their leadership levels. My goal in holding this hearing is to assess our ability to respond to a catastrophic incident during this time of transition—not just for the Presidential race, but for the next year or year-and-a-half of transition as people get acclimated and get a new Administration up and running. We need to make sure that nothing falls through the cracks.

I always feel like the period of transition is critical. For example, here in Washington, we are seeing the winding down of one Administration, and whether it is a Democrat or a Republican who wins in November, we will see a new Administration with a lot of new people, and a lot of times in that time of flux and transition, it can be a vulnerable time for our people.

We are in the process of tying up loose ends. I know FEMA has a lot of loose ends that need to be tied up—staffing up agencies, defining roles and responsibilities, and evaluating our capacity. History indicates that terrorists try to capitalize on moments where there seem to be instability or uncertainty, and if this hurricane season is any indication, we cannot count on Mother Nature to cut us any slack, either.

It is my hope that this hearing will shed some light on our Nation's emergency management and response capabilities and also identify areas where we can strengthen that. Some of my concerns include ongoing policy initiatives, like the establishment of a target capabilities list and an inventory of Federal response capabilities. I am also interested in planning efforts to wrap up or hand off projects like the National Disaster Housing Strategy, National Response Framework, pandemic flu preparedness, and the continuing flooding and hurricane recovery efforts. It is critical that we focus on gaps in preparedness and response capabilities now rather than later.

In my experience, homeland security and emergency management issues have crossed the partisan divide, which I think is a good thing and I hope that they continue to do that. This Administration and previous Administrations offer valuable emergency response and planning experience and our State, local, and private sector partners must also be brought to the table as we identify the best practices in remaining prepared over the next 12 to 18 months.

Again, I appreciate everyone's time and attention to this issue and thanks again for being here. Now what I would like to do is introduce our panel.

Mr. Bourne, I will let you go first. Marko Bourne is the Director of Policy and Program Analysis at FEMA. I appreciate you testifying before this Subcommittee again. I think he held the distinction of being on our Subcommittee's first panel and now on our last panel before the end of this Congress. So Mr. Bourne, go ahead.

TESTIMONY OF MARKO BOURNE,¹ DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. BOURNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is once again a pleasure to be here before the Subcommittee. I have certainly enjoyed the times that we have been able to chat in the past.

As you said, my name is Marko Bourne and I am the Director of Policy and Program Analysis at FEMA in the Department of Homeland Security and I am pleased to be here for a number of reasons. This Subcommittee has been a tremendous supporter of FEMA and its development and operational readiness over the last several years and it has been my task, among my responsibilities in managing the policy, strategic planning, and transformation process to also have overseen many of the specific developments following PKEMRA and the merger of the Preparedness Directorate into FEMA and many of the reorganization efforts that we have been undertaking along the way.

The current operational tempo we are in right now certainly lends itself as a perfect backdrop to the discussion that we are here to have today and I would like to use that as a way of highlighting the progress that we have made to date and the challenges that remain.

When, in 2006, Administrator Paulison actually announced his vision for what became known as New FEMA, the major goal was

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Bourne appears in the Appendix on page 31.

to regain the trust and confidence of the American people by transforming FEMA back into the Nation's preeminent emergency management and preparedness agency, and part of that challenge was to release this past spring FEMA's strategic plan, which is not just for this year, it is not for next year, it is designed to be a strategic plan to build for the next 5 years, and it had significant goals in the plan.

Those goals include strengthening our core capabilities and competencies and our capacity to build on the National Emergency Management System, not just on FEMA's Emergency Management System.

Our second goal was to build strong regions. The idea that the region is the essential field echelon of FEMA. It is the direct day-to-day connection with our State and local partners, and we are undertaking efforts which I will talk a little bit more in detail in a moment. Strengthening our partnership with the States, which involves more than just providing disaster assistance after the fact, but to plan, train, and exercise in advance.

Professionalize the emergency management system by providing additional training opportunities, supporting EMI and the other training institutions that are now part of FEMA, and to build on an effective planning effort that is not only synchronized at the Federal level, but also synchronize through our regions with our State and local partners, and we have made a significant amount of progress in building not only that partnership, which is an ongoing development, as well as FEMA's own internal capacity to deal with these events.

We had to focus in many respects on expanding our internal capabilities and strengthening our organization. Part of the challenges that we faced in the post-Katrina environment included the ability to better coordinate with State and Federal agencies, and with Federal agencies, we developed over 200 Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments that help us in advance of disasters facilitate the actions of other Federal agencies. Prior to this year, there were less than 30 of those and we have now 223 with 31 different Federal agencies.

On the ground, with the support of the Congress and this Subcommittee, we developed Incident Management Assistance Teams. There are two National Incident Management Assistance Teams and three regional ones and more will be coming on board in the next year. They are our ground troops. They are the folks that go out there that have extensive experience in emergency management and disaster response. They provide situational awareness. And they make that early linkage with our State partners and ultimately with our local partners in areas that are most affected.

Our Logistics Management Directorate, which used to be buried about three tiers down in the Operations Directorate, is now a stand-alone and we have revamped the way FEMA looks at logistics and we learn lessons every day about how to better track resources, provide those resources to the State, and when called upon, deliver those resources to the American public.

FEMA now has over 60 Mobile Disaster Registration Centers where we can actually roll into areas that do not have power, do not have life support. The ability for folks to apply not just by

phone but to apply online, and current activity with regards to applications for disaster assistance in the wake of Hurricane Ike, over 71 percent of those disaster applications have come online now as opposed to calling the 1-800 number, which allows for a tremendous increase in our capacity to register victims for disaster help.

We have looked at robust systems for evacuation planning. We learned from Hurricane Katrina that there are those that cannot evacuate themselves. State and local governments have taken great pains to begin to look at how they can support the evacuation of their local population. But what we have done on the Gulf Coast was to look and work with them to develop a comprehensive evacuation plan that involves also Federal support to that when called upon by the State. It is not something that is put together on the fly, but is determined in advance how many people need to be there, what kind of movement needs to happen, and what are the mechanisms to move people to.

All of that is part of our preparedness culture and our planning culture, which is slowly growing. We are in the process now of vetting with State and local governments the new Integrated Planning System, and the idea behind IPS is to find a way to not only synchronize Federal planning, but how does that translate to State and local planning. And the IPS document along with the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101 has been vetted with the States and is in its final review period now before publishing.

We have strengthened our regions. We are almost doubling the size of our regions both this year and next year, and all of that planning is in place to provide them not only with more training folks, but planning folks as well as emergency response.

Hurricanes Gustav and Ike allowed us an opportunity to essentially dry run many of these activities. They have allowed us to determine where there are strengths and weaknesses in our current planning process and how we can improve coordination between all levels of the State, local, and Federal Government. I think it is fair to say that in any disaster, the plan is the first thing that needs to be changed because no disaster respects a plan on paper, and we have tried to be extremely versatile in addressing those challenges as they have come up.

We do have a long way to go to continue the rest of the planning that we are doing this year, to finish hiring all of the staff that we have in the queue. There are over 500 that are going to be hired and on board within the next 30 days, which will get us to the 95 percent goal that we set for this year. And we have asked in 2009 for additional support and staff and we look forward to the budget and the appropriations bill so that we can begin to embark on hiring those folks, as well.

I thank you and the Subcommittee for your continued support. I will end my remarks here by saying that we continue to build on the foundation. We are building an organization that has the opportunity to move forward aggressively with the support of our State and local partners and we will continue to support the American people in their ability to respond, recover, and mitigate against future disasters. I will be happy to take any questions you might have.

Senator PRYOR. Thank you. I will save my questions until we have the whole panel testify, but thank you very much.

Nancy Dragani is the President of the National Emergency Management Association. She is also Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. Please go ahead, Ms. Dragani.

TESTIMONY OF NANCY DRAGANI,¹ PRESIDENT, NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OHIO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. DRAGANI. Thank you, Chairman Pryor, and thank you for the invitation to come here and say a few remarks about FEMA's preparedness. FEMA's readiness as we look at the transition in 2009 is a critical issue that Congress and the next Administration must explore and explore carefully.

As you well know, in the past 5 years, FEMA has weathered two significant reorganizations. First, FEMA was reorganized into the Department of Homeland Security in the years following September 11, 2001. FEMA was reorganized again through the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina, which brought back into FEMA some very critical functions and allowed it to provide a more robust and stronger support to its State and local partners.

In March 2008, NEMA's members drafted a white paper that outlined recommendations for an effective emergency management system. There were several top emergency management issues that were identified. The first was a focus on all-hazards emergency preparedness. We have seen the pendulum shift from a focus on natural hazards, then post-September 11, 2001, to almost exclusively terrorism, back to catastrophic natural hazards post-Katrina. We need to balance that focus and recognize that if we are prepared for all hazards, then we will be able to respond whether it is a pandemic or a hurricane or a tornado in the Midwest.

Emergency management must be owned and supported by elected officials at all levels of government as a critical government service. This isn't just FEMA's job. It isn't just the States' job. It is local government, as well, and we must work together and be adequately resourced to perform our mission.

The Nation requires an emergency management system which recognizes the integration of local, State, Tribal, regional, and Federal organizations so that when we need a single management structure following a catastrophic event, that structure is understood and in place.

And finally, our citizens and businesses must understand and act on their personal responsibilities, and we have to develop a culture where everyone understands that, ultimately, response happens in the home. The first responder is mom and dad taking care of themselves and their families.

I want to talk just a little bit about a revelation that I had a couple weeks ago when I was in Portland at our National Emergency Management Association conference. Several of our members were not there because they were focused on Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

¹The prepared statement of Ms. Dragani appears in the Appendix on page 38.

I realized then it was very apparent that we no longer have single-State disasters. We have disasters that involve multiple States and require a national response.

One of the ways that we effectively do that is through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. That compact has proved its value over and over again since Hurricane Katrina and it really requires at this point the establishment of a permanent funding authorization so that the compact can be maintained and the intent can be improved.

FEMA regions, and I will echo something that Marko said, I certainly support the development of FEMA regions and FEMA regional coordination capabilities. They are more important now than ever before. The regions need to be fully staffed. They need to have stockpiles, resources pre-positioned, and continue the development of those regional assets.

And finally, Emergency Management Performance Grants. We talk about EMPG often because it is the single Federal all-hazards emergency preparedness program that supports the building of capability at the State and local level. It must be maintained as a separate all-hazards program with adequate funding and flexibility to address the specific needs of States and local governments.

While Ohio is not prone to hurricanes, thank goodness, and we are not very prone to earthquakes, we are prone to devastating floods, both flash and riverine, tornadoes, and winter storms. Over the past several years, we have been fortunate in having a long-standing and very productive and positive relationship with our Federal partners, particularly FEMA Region V and Ed Buikema and his staff. We have an equally strong and supportive relationship with our 88 county Emergency Management Directors that represent our local partners. This relationship both up and down is critical as we build effective national emergency management systems, and it requires trust and confidence in all your partners, whether they are Federal, State, or local partners.

That partnership was again evident last summer when we had devastating floods in Central Ohio and just last week when we had nearly two million customers without power for days on end.

We do have a few recommendations for FEMA, DHS, and the Administration. The first is that the FEMA Administrator must continue to serve as a primary advisor to the President on emergency management issues, and FEMA as an organization must be adequately staffed and given the authority to provide both the resources federally, but the resources to its State and local partners, as well.

Second, State, local, and private stakeholders should be involved in the full lifecycle of any strategy, policy, or plan development related to national preparedness efforts because ultimately, if it is national, it brings in State and local partners. And I do want to applaud FEMA for the efforts they have done to date in the last several months to bring us in early as policies are being developed rather than waiting until after the fact.

Finally, the Federal interagency preparedness activities must be coordinated at the Federal level prior to implementation. The effort that FEMA is undertaking through the Integrated Planning System to coordinate Federal planning activities is critical and pre-

vents both duplication and confusion at the Federal level that translates down to local relationships.

With that, I want to thank you again for allowing me to come and share a few thoughts with you and I will be happy to answer any questions when we are done. Thank you.

Senator PRYOR. Thank you.

Larry Gispert is the President of the International Association of Emergency Managers. He is also Director of Emergency Management for Hillsborough County, Florida, which I understand that you have about 1.5 million people?

Mr. GISPERT. One-point-two, but who is quibbling.

Senator PRYOR. One-point-two, and growing?

Mr. GISPERT. Yes, sir.

Senator PRYOR. Go ahead. Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF LARRY GISPERT,¹ PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS, AND DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

Mr. GISPERT. Good afternoon, Chairman Pryor. Thank you for allowing me to present testimony on this critically important topic. I am Larry Gispert. I am the Director of Emergency Management for Hillsborough County, Florida. Hillsborough County, including the major city of Tampa, is on the West Coast of Florida. The county's population is approximately 1.2 million. I currently serve as the President of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), and am testifying on their behalf today. I have 28 years' experience in emergency management with the last 15 years as the Hillsborough County Director. I have also served as the President of the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association.

IAEM has over 4,000 members, including emergency management professionals at the State and local government level, Tribal Nations, the military, colleges and universities, private and non-profit sectors, and members in 58 other countries. Most of our members are U.S. city and county emergency managers. We believe that the high potential for disasters and crises in our country demand that we maintain an effective national system of emergency management. This national system needs to consist of strong partners at the Federal, State, and local levels. Yet it is our belief that this mission is most easily realized through making FEMA once again an independent agency reporting directly to the President. In the absence of this structural change, we believe success is not impossible, but will certainly require more effort coupled with a very vigilant Congress.

After Hurricane Katrina, IAEM endorsed a number of critical elements for achieving a strong FEMA. They are: Maximum amount of access of the FEMA Director to the White House; FEMA clearly responsible for coordination of the Federal response to disasters; adequate funding, resources, and personnel for FEMA; experienced, qualified, and knowledgeable leadership in all key FEMA positions; the Principal Federal Official position abolished; FEMA regions strengthened; inclusion of local emergency managers in pol-

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Gispert appears in the Appendix on page 43.

icy development; insist on an all-hazards approach to emergency management; and the entire preparedness mission returned to FEMA.

IAEM supports hiring qualified and experienced emergency managers in the senior leadership roles at FEMA. The next Administration should continue FEMA's recent noteworthy efforts to involve State and local emergency managers in policy development. Not too long ago, I gently reminded our partners in FEMA that if they wanted us to be there at the crash landing, we should be in on the take-off. I am pleased to say that recently, there appear to be few crash landings.

Our written testimony contains several examples of collaboration. We particularly appreciate the inclusion of State and local emergency managers on the National Advisory Council and several of the Regional Advisory Councils. We urge FEMA to recognize that one size does not fit all by giving more flexible guidance on their many grants.

We urge the new Administration to keep the focus on all hazards, of which terrorism is only one. While terrorism is an incident to which we are all vulnerable, it is certainly not the most likely disaster to occur. All our communities are vulnerable on a daily basis to Mother Nature.

We hope that the new Administration quickly chooses a highly-qualified Administrator with actual emergency management experience to run FEMA. Strong State and local emergency managers are a critical element to the future success of a National Emergency Management System.

In order to enhance the capacity of this profession, there are a number of critical elements that the new Administration should embrace and promote. They are: Ensure emergency management policies are consistent with the principles of emergency management initiative; return the Emergency Management Institute to the forefront of preparing our profession's future leaders; support individual certification, Certified Emergency Manager (CEM), and program accreditation, the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAT).

We need FEMA's assistance in promoting community preparedness. We need to jointly work together in making our citizens survivors instead of victims. Some citizens are not able to help themselves, but the general population is more than capable of doing so. A survivor never asks, "Where is my assistance?" Instead, a survivor asks, "How can I help fix the problems?" Survivors act as force multipliers; victims become a liability.

In conclusion, we hope that the new Administration will consider the critical elements IAEM has adopted. We believe a strong and independent FEMA with clear authority, direct access to the White House, and highly-qualified leadership is essential. We urge Congress to insist on full implementation of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. We urge continued involvement of State and local emergency management in policy discussions. We do not want any more crash landings. We stand ready to assist in any way we can. Thank you.

Senator PRYOR. Thank you.

Our fourth and last panelist is Jane Bullock. She was Chief of Staff of FEMA when it was led by the legendary James Lee Witt and she is now an adjunct professor at GW's Center for Crisis, Disaster, and Risk Management. Thank you, and go ahead.

TESTIMONY OF JANE BULLOCK,¹ PRINCIPAL, BULLOCK AND HADDOW, LLC, AND FORMER CHIEF OF STAFF, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, AND MEMBER OF THE ADJUNCT FACULTY, CENTER OF CRISIS, DISASTER, AND RISK MANAGEMENT, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Ms. BULLOCK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity you have given me today to talk about something that is very important to me, to my peers on the panel, to the Congress, and most critically to the American people, and that is how we can better serve them during times of crisis.

I believe I bring a unique perspective to this hearing. I had the privilege of working as a career civil servant in FEMA for 21 years, culminating in my position as Chief of Staff to FEMA Director James Lee Witt. In my career at FEMA, I worked in earthquake preparedness, radiological emergency preparedness, flood insurance. I was the Director of the Office of Regional Operations and the Director of Public Affairs. And as a career civil servant, I served on the internal FEMA transition teams for Administration transitions in 1988, 1992, and led the transition team in 2000. Throughout this time, I worked alongside the most dedicated and talented civil servants in the Federal Government, who from 1992 to 2000 successfully responded to over 300 major disasters, including the 1993 floods, the Northridge Earthquake, Hurricanes Floyd and Fran, and the Oklahoma City bombing.

FEMA is a unique agency in that its entire mission is focused on helping American people to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of disasters, and when a disaster strikes, to provide support to individuals, families, and communities to effectively respond and recover. However, we always recognize that FEMA cannot achieve its mission on its own. Our ability to succeed was always dependent upon a working partnership with State and local governments, other Federal agencies, NGOs, nonprofits, and the private sector.

All disasters are local and FEMA has been most effective when it has had the authority and resources to coordinate and direct the Federal Government's efforts to support State and local officials before, during, and after a disaster. Unfortunately, I believe the current Administration and the current political leadership at the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA do not understand this mission and do not know how best to achieve it. We saw this first in Hurricane Katrina and now, 3 years later, after the promise of reform and the talk of a FEMA renewal, we are seeing it again in the recovery to Hurricane Ike.

As we look forward to the next 12 months, as you said, Mr. Chairman, change will be coming to Washington and to the Federal Government. During this period, we could experience any number of disasters—a major earthquake in California, which unfortu-

¹The prepared statement of Ms. Bullock appears in the Appendix on page 50.

nately is long overdue, severe storms, a flu outbreak, or a domestic terrorism event.

What can be done in the coming months to ensure that should a major event occur, FEMA and the Federal Government will be prepared? What should the vision for the future FEMA in a new Administration be?

FEMA needs to be returned to its former status as the world's best emergency management organization. In my written testimony, I lay out long-term goals. Now, I would like to briefly mention those, but focus on short-term activities that will support a heightened level of preparedness as we begin.

To improve our preparedness long-term, we must: Make FEMA an independent agency and the Director a member of the President's cabinet; rebuild FEMA's partnership with State and local emergency management organizations; support risk-based all-hazards preparedness, mitigation, and response; invest in FEMA's career civil servants and strengthen the role FEMA's regional staff can play as the first line of defense; rebuild the Federal Response Plan; invest in hazard mitigation and support community disaster resiliency; and embrace the private sector, the NGOs, and the CBOs as full partners in our Nation's emergency management system.

Obviously, all of this cannot be accomplished in the next few months, but there are some practical actions that can be taken now. There are three areas I would like to focus on: Rebuilding the State and local partnership; improving coordination at the Federal level; and taking a thoughtful and careful approach to personnel actions during the transition.

First, I would suggest that the career leadership of each of the FEMA regions meet together with their State directors and local emergency directors to talk about what can be expected from FEMA during this period and how they will work together specifically to respond to a large event.

As you have heard from the earlier panelists, FEMA has reached out to State and local partners, but if these meetings were to occur in each region, there would be an ability to look at what capabilities do exist. There are varying capabilities at the State and local level. An open and honest dialogue of what States can expect from the Federal Government and what FEMA can count on from State and local governments will go a long way towards managing the response and managing expectations of our citizens that may be impacted by a large event.

At the same time, I would strongly encourage our regions to make the same effort to reach out to CBOs and NGOs and the private sector. There are many organizations that are now very active in response and preparedness as a result of the government failure in Hurricane Katrina. We will need their support in a major disaster, but it is important, as with State and locals to understand what assets they have and how they can be utilized.

Second, I would encourage the senior career leadership at FEMA to convene meetings with their counterparts in the Federal departments and agencies to make sure that not just the mission assignments are done, but that the relationships exist and that they can

provide a coordinated and effective Federal response. Relationships are what make disasters work.

Under the new Federal Response Framework, the roles and responsibilities of the Federal partnership have been blurred and DHS and FEMA has tried to do it all by assuming more lead roles. I think this is a major mistake because DHS and FEMA simply do not have the expertise to do it all. The most effective Federal response mechanism evidenced in the 1990s was based on utilizing the expertise of the other Federal agencies, and this worked because FEMA provided the overall coordination and because we reimbursed them through the Disaster Relief Fund.

I think an immediate step would be to meet with the Federal partners and establish simple short-term operating agreements as to the roles and responsibilities in the event of a large event. To be absolutely honest, I believe that in the event of a disaster, we will see a more effective Federal response because the senior career leadership in FEMA know what needs to be done and know how to do it. It will execute without being second guessed, without being restricted by indecision, cost, or political philosophy, as we have seen happen under the current Administration.

Third, I would like to focus on personnel issues that are relevant to our ability to be prepared, and this is based on experience that I have had in going through transitions. I know there is concern over the numbers of positions at FEMA that remain unfilled. I would like to introduce a note of caution in rushing to fill these positions. In the rush to fill these positions, we are seeing individuals being selected who may be qualified on paper, but lack an understanding of what it takes to run a successful emergency management organization. We are seeing individuals hired who are ex-military or ex-Coast Guard who have good credentials but their disciplines are Federal-centered. Their background and training is about calling the shots, being in charge, acting independently. Collaboration and coordination is often foreign to them. But those are the essentials for an effective preparedness and response structure.

In addition, these disciplines often don't have a lot of experience working with State and local governments, don't recognize the importance of listening to our partners, listening to their ideas, their concerns, and their needs. As you know, the Constitution assigns public health and safety to the States. The Disaster Relief Act makes it clear that the Federal Government is called on when State and local capacities are overwhelmed. A strong effective system, national system of emergency management, must be built on this partnership.

During a time of change, another major concern is to ensure that career positions are not filled by former political appointees from throughout the government who have very limited experience in FEMA. During the 2000 transition, all Federal agencies were required to inform Congress when a former political employee was chosen to fill a career position. I would urge Congress to request the same notification as we proceed through the next months. FEMA is a small agency with a very big mission and as such must be careful to hire only the best and most qualified.

Finally, another issue has arisen relative to the FEMA Regional Directors. There has been significant discussion of converting the

Regional Director position to career civil service and DHS and FEMA have said that they intend to do so as these positions are vacated. I believe this is a major mistake. As a former Director of FEMA's Office of Regional Operations, I have worked closely with FEMA's regions and their staff. The FEMA regional structure has always been built around a strong career Deputy Regional Director, and a political Regional Director who can be that critical interface with the political community of governors, local elected officials, and Members of Congress.

In the 1990s, we found that FEMA's most effective Regional Directors were those political appointees who had the skills and experience to work in the political world dealing with the political issues while the career staff managed and carried out the necessary preparedness and response actions. These Regional Directors developed a level of trust with their career employees that allowed everyone to do their job.

One final note on personnel in times of anxiety—in times of transition. Transitions are times of anxiety for career civil servants. The more the transition process can be open, transparent, and involve career employees, the unions, and the organizations that represent the civil service, the smoother the transition and the inevitable reorganizations will be. I would encourage and hope the Subcommittee, through its oversight responsibilities, could encourage the new Administration to endorse such an approach.

In conclusion, I think it is time to take action to correct the mistakes we have made. During my 21-year career at FEMA, the agency was most successful when the President and the Congress made it clear that the Federal Government has a critical role in supporting State and local governments in disasters. FEMA was most successful when the FEMA Director had a strong relationship and direct access to the President and worked closely in concert with FEMA's dedicated career employees.

We have the opportunity to restore FEMA and our Nation's emergency management system to the former status as the best in the world and to restore the confidence of the American people that their government will be there to help them when the next disaster strikes. Thank you very much.

Senator PRYOR. Thank you, and let me just start with you, Mr. Bourne, and put you on the hot seat first and ask you some questions. Some of these are follow-ups from some of the things that the other witnesses have said today, and obviously people have their different perspectives and all that, but I would like to get FEMA's perspective on several items.

FEMA has been through a series of leadership changes in the last 7½ years and some structural changes, but this election and this new Administration will be the first time that there really is a full-scale change of Administrations for FEMA. I guess the first question is, do you feel that FEMA is preparing for that transition, and if they are, how are they?

Mr. BOURNE. FEMA is preparing for it and we are very well prepared, and obviously that is an ongoing process that is going to happen for months to come. To give you an idea just in broad outline, with the exception of one position, which will be filled within the next 60 days, all the senior executive career positions in FEMA

are filled. The one that is not yet filled and will be filled in the next 60 days is the Deputy U.S. Fire Administrator.

All of the senior positions throughout the agency, GS-15 and above, predominately are filled. The vacancies that exist on the books right now are from our rapid expansion of converting the 4-year corps to career, which are happening now. Those are the cadre of on-call reserve, our temporary workers which the Congress has allowed us to do over the last fiscal year, this fiscal year, and our request for the next fiscal year.

FEMA has roughly doubled in size. We went from 2,000 full-time equivalent personnel to well over 4,000 now. We are at, I believe it is 3,600 in our hiring at this point and we continue to have about 500 in the queue that are going to be hired over the next several weeks. Now, that is not a rush. That has been an ongoing effort for, quite frankly, more than a year and a half, to build the competency level of the folks in FEMA.

Our transition planning efforts are underway and have been actually underway since before the beginning of the calendar year this year, based on these basic areas: Knowledge transfer; the succession planning that we have done within each of our directorates and offices; communications outreach, not only which has begun with our employees, but they are actually in the process now of developing 60-, 90-day plans for the immediate days after the election takes place and the inauguration happens so that the critical path issues are identified, ready to be teed up and addressed; our readiness, which has increased over the last several years.

We are leading the effort to develop the Federal Interagency Con Plan for the period of heightened alert, which is ongoing, being managed through our planners in the Disaster Operations Directorate, along with other Federal agencies. We are in the process of also making sure that our management and administrative practices are not only fully documented and up to date, but that we are providing a guidebook that—essentially how FEMA operates, so that whether—whoever comes in the door after January 20, and whoever is part of that transition post-election is going to have a very in-depth knowledge to draw from.

Also, that transition binder, which is in the process of being developed now, is not going to be made just available to the new Administration when they are identified, but it is actually going to be provided to every single FEMA employee, and the purpose of that is it is the first comprehensive mission and function guidebook that the agency has had and it is rather what I will call a fairly extensive yet easy to read digest of every program, of what each directorate does, its relationship to the other directorates.

So the planning process has been well underway and we are at this point updating parts to it as opposed to trying to develop it while we are in the middle of hurricane season.

Senator PRYOR. So it sounds like from your response, which was a detailed response, you share my concern about the fact that gaps sometimes are created during a transition period and it sounds like you are doing, at least from your perspective, everything you can to make sure those gaps don't exist, is that right?

Mr. BOURNE. We are doing a lot. Exactly. We are trying to find as many of the gaps, fill as many of those as we can. Where there

are gaps that cannot be addressed in the time we have remaining, we have put together options for remediation that we will pass on certainly to the folks that follow us.

The Administrator is very concerned to make sure that there is not a single dropped disaster or a crash landing, as my friend from Florida would say, but to try to make sure that it is a seamless transition for the agency. The career SES staff in FEMA are intimately involved with this process and it has been a collaborative process right from the beginning.

Senator PRYOR. Great. Let me follow up on one thing you said a few minutes ago. You talked about how all but one of your senior career positions have been filled. Were those positions filled with career people or were they filled with political people that were moving into career positions?

Mr. BOURNE. They have been filled with career folks. We have not moved political people into SES slots. There has only been, I believe, one political in the whole agency that successfully competed for a GS-14 slot in preparedness. He was a Schedule C, he was not a SES. That went through the OPM process for review, so it was vetted fully, and I believe that has also been made available as per Congressional requirement as part of the notification process.

Now, we have talked many times about who are the political folks in FEMA and how were they hired and what experience they have. The Administrator has only hired political leadership in FEMA that has extensive emergency management and public safety experience. Our seven regional administrators that are political all have more than 20-plus years in this business, Ed Buikema being one in Region V, as well as many of the others. The three career regional administrators come also with extensive both political and what I will call career experience—Nancy Ward in Region IX, which is California, Phil May, who goes back many years in FEMA, both as a former Regional Director, also has extensive experience, and John Sarubbi, who came to us out of the Coast Guard has extensive emergency experience from his days, as well.

So there is not just a hiring of a political person for political sake. It is actually people that come with experience and we hope that would continue regardless of what positions are political in the future in FEMA or not.

Senator PRYOR. All right. I do want to talk a little bit more about some of those personnel matters in a minute, but first, let me ask about the National Response Framework, which is the document that sets out the lines of authority and decisionmaking in a disaster. The document itself is out, but the annexes that support State, local, and private sector entities, the so-called partner guides, as well as the catastrophic index, have not been completed. So my question to you is when will they be completed and is this something that you are going to leave to the next Administration to clean up?

Mr. BOURNE. No. Actually, those are well on the way towards completion. They have been in the process of being vetted, not only by the organizations in the private sector or the State and local sector that are part of that, but they are in the process also of being finalized so that they can be published prior to the end of

this calendar year. Those partner guides were designed to provide additional support to State and local, private sector, and NGOs, and they are being written with those folks not only in mind, but also with those folks involved, and that process should be completing and being wrapped up over the next month or so.

Senator PRYOR. OK, because honestly, in different contexts within FEMA, we have asked for things in the past. This has been a frustration on the Committee and the Subcommittee. We have asked for things in the past and receive excuses such as, "Oh, we are going to do that next week, next month," whatever, and sometimes it takes entirely too long to get—

Mr. BOURNE. It does, and that is something that we have concern about, as well. Not to make an excuse for it, but FEMA had over 275 specific taskings in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act—

Senator PRYOR. Yes.

Mr. BOURNE [continuing]. That we have had to address, work through while trying to also obtain additional staff in order to beef up our ability to respond as well as plan. And so it has kind of been a bit of a juggling act at times for us, but we have gotten a significant amount of help from our State and local partners and others to try to make it successful, and we don't relish the idea of missing deadlines, but we are certainly pressing forward as expeditiously as we can.

Senator PRYOR. All right. Let me change gears on you again here and talk about the National Strategy for Pandemic Flu Implementation Plan. It has not clearly addressed the roles of DHS, FEMA, versus HHS. It also does not address how FEMA and HHS will work together on sheltering a recovery over a long period of time. To me, it seems that it should address these two matters. Do you think that it should, and what kind of guidance would you like to see from FEMA over the long term?

Mr. BOURNE. That is actually a very good question and an interesting one on several levels. We have been working closely with not only HHS, but the Office of Health Affairs in the Department and Admiral Crea, who is leading the departmental effort on the pandemic plan with HHS. Certainly, FEMA has got a role to play, not necessarily as a primary coordinator of activity, but to support the larger Federal response.

Some of our regional administrators and our Federal Coordinating Officers have already been pre-designated for various regional planning efforts and they are intimately involved with that. Our Disaster Operations Directorate is also involved with the more detailed planning, which is going on now to address the issues that you have brought up.

Certainly in a pandemic, the sheltering issue and the recovering issue is one that this country has not faced in about 90 years or so, and there was not at that time the ability to move not only people, but also material and support like we have today. The vast majority of these issues that are going to be raised in pandemic may require sheltering in place and supporting that and we are working with HHS to determine what we can bring to the table to support State and local efforts to address those problems because that is going to be probably the trickiest part of the entire oper-

ation, beyond the fact of getting the Strategic National Stockpile deployed and delivered, doing the additional prophylaxis that needs to be done to prevent additional folks from getting whatever it is the pandemic is being caused by.

So our folks are actively engaged in that. I don't have all the details of that planning at my fingertips, but I would be happy to share that planning with the Subcommittee.

Senator PRYOR. Great. I am not going to ask all my questions to you, Mr. Bourne, but I do have a few more. I just want to cover some of these subjects since this will be the last hearing of the Subcommittee for the year and it will be the last one we have before the Presidential race and until we get back in January.

I want to ask about the National Disaster Housing Strategy. I understand that the comment period for the draft strategy was just extended to, I think, September 29. How is the comment collection process going? In other words, when I hear you have an extension, that makes me wonder, are you getting a lot of comments or not enough comments? I would like to know how that is going and how FEMA plans to incorporate these final comments into the strategy?

Mr. BOURNE. So far, I believe—and I don't have the exact numbers in front of me—as of the other day, there were 16 specific commentors with over 80 specific comments so far. Many of those came from one or two commentors. We have extended it in order to provide additional opportunity for folks who have been certainly listening to the hearings of the last 2 days to get a better understanding of what their thoughts are. We continue to encourage them. We will continue to take comments really after the comment period is over anyway. If they are filed with FEMA through the docket, we will continue to incorporate those.

All of the comments will be responded to. All of the comments will be addressed within the revised and final strategy. There will not be a comment left out of the process. Each commentor will learn what the adjudication of their comment was and what the rationale for either accepting it, modifying it, or not accepting it was.

Senator PRYOR. And when do you think we will see the final strategy?

Mr. BOURNE. Our goal is to get it done before the holidays.

Senator PRYOR. Before the end of the year?

Mr. BOURNE. Well before the end of the year.

Senator PRYOR. And there has also been a National Disaster Housing Task Force. Basically, I think, a lot of these decisions have really been ceded to the task force. Has that been established yet? Is it up and running yet?

Mr. BOURNE. Well, I do want to correct one misimpression that folks may have. The task force is not—the responsibility for the other piece is—the annexes which folks have been talking about has not been ceded to the task force. That is actually—those annexes are well underway and being drafted by FEMA staff and other folks within the Federal interagency, to include the Red Cross, HUD, and a number of others. Those annexes, six of which are nearing the point where they can begin a review process. The seventh of them, which is the final one, is really kind of a conglomeration of issues that we think need to be addressed by future Con-

gresses and that one won't be completed until the rest of the annexes have fleshed out their requirements and their needs.

Senator PRYOR. Is the task force up and running?

Mr. BOURNE. The task force is up and running. It is being temporarily led by Susan Reinertson, who is our Region X Administrator. She has come in to help stand it up while we hire full-time staff to support that effort. The Red Cross, HUD—I want to say two or three other agencies that are escaping me right now have also not only lent support to it, but they have actually provided staff support to help that task force stand up.

Senator PRYOR. Will the task force have continuity over the next year or so through the transition?

Mr. BOURNE. Yes. As a matter of fact, it is all career people and that continuity will continue, and their mission and mandate is to not only continue to support the final effort to finish the strategy in general, but also to take the strategy and begin to develop ideas on better implementation of not only FEMA's housing role, but to work with State and local folks to determine how housing can be handled in the future and what new ideas are available within the marketplace or what needs to be developed to address unique challenges.

Senator PRYOR. All right. Let me change gears on you again. FEMA, by its nature, always has some matters that are still open. One of those would be right now, the Hurricane Katrina recovery effort is still ongoing. FEMA is still involved there. Obviously with Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the same thing. I mean, you are still very much involved in those matters. They are still open.

Do you have any specific plan on turning these open cases over to the next Administration, or is your hope that they will just continue along as they are doing, most of the career people? How does that work?

Mr. BOURNE. They actually are—most of FEMA's workforce, quite frankly, an overwhelming percentage, somewhere in the 90 to 99 percent range, are the career folks. They manage the disasters. They are the ones populating the Joint Field Offices. They are the ones that manage the effort with regards to the temporary or the Transitional Regional Offices that are out there in the Gulf.

Quite frankly, we still have an open office and open projects from the Northridge Earthquake in 1994. There are a number of disasters that span many years because some of these projects, quite frankly, going on for many years. So that is something that transfers from one Administration to the other routinely throughout the course of FEMA's history and we don't see any change in that transfer happening that would upset the progress being made.

Senator PRYOR. Well, let me just ask for a little point of clarification. I have a note here that says FEMA has the highest percentage of political appointments among operational DHS components. Thirty-four percent of FEMA executives are non-career appointees. Are you saying the overall workforce is 90 percent—

Mr. BOURNE. I don't know the exact percentage, but out of 4,000 authorized FTE, there are only 16 non-career SES appointments. There are only four or five Schedule C appointments. And there are five Senate-confirmed positions.

Senator PRYOR. So you are saying you only have 25 or 30 political—

Mr. BOURNE. That is correct.

Senator PRYOR [continuing]. Appointees and—

Mr. BOURNE. Yes, and as a matter of fact, there are fewer Senate-confirmed positions in FEMA now than there were back in the 1990s or the 1980s.

Senator PRYOR. OK. Let me again change gears here for a moment. FEMA has initiated a Catastrophic Disaster Response Planning Initiative, and could you give us a little more detail about the initiative and is it adequate and what lessons have you learned from it that you think are important to carry forward for the next year or two?

Mr. BOURNE. Well, there are actually two parts to the catastrophic planning we are doing. One, we would support a Congress-provided catastrophic planning grants to, I believe, five major urban areas in the country to address catastrophic events in those major urban areas. But we have also been doing catastrophic planning on very specific disasters, South Florida specifically, Lake Okeechobee, and the planning in Miami-Dade and that region. In California, the Sacramento area with regards to the levees that surround the Sacramento Valley and what would happen if an earthquake undermined those levees and what would happen with salt water seepage into that region. We are also looking at the New Madrid Earthquake Seismic Zone.

All of these efforts have been underway for a couple of years now and they are essentially bottom-up planning efforts. They are a combination of local officials, geological folks, depending on the type of hazard being faced, Army Corps of Engineers and our self and our regions are very much involved in that planning process and we expect those to continue, not only into the next year, but into the next several years.

Senator PRYOR. Yes. The New Madrid Fault issue is important to us in our State because it is just immediately to the north of us and really runs down through Arkansas, the Eastern part of the State—the extreme Northeast part of the State. It is one of those areas, when they talk about earthquakes, that is often overlooked. People think about the West Coast, but geologists tell us that a New Madrid earthquake could be much worse than what you see on the West Coast, given the nature of the soil and the various conditions. So I am glad to know that planning is moving forward.

Is that something that has a target date where you are trying to get all the planning complete and you are going to have that wrapped up by a certain point, or is that just an open-ended—

Mr. BOURNE. It is somewhat open-ended because obviously as science provides us with more tools and understanding and as the built environment changes within those communities—New Madrid earthquake, for example, is a process that started a couple of years ago and I believe the planning process is built out through the next two fiscal years, at least, before there is what we will call—I don't want to say a hard stop, but a soft stop at that point to determine that all the planning from bottom up has been completed.

There are a number of exercises that are planned over the next couple of years to address various aspects of the plan. So it is kind

of an ongoing effort, but the bulk of the majority of the planning will be done over the next year or two.

Senator PRYOR. I think that is great. Let me also ask about how FEMA is doing in finding ways to measure progress on preparedness. I know this has been a challenge, where you, I guess you can call them metrics. You are really looking for ways to measure what you are doing and how prepared you actually are. As I understand it, there is currently no inventory of Federal capabilities even though one is required in the Hurricane Katrina law that we passed. And so if there is not a good inventory of Federal capabilities, it is kind of hard for us to figure out how to distribute grant monies and which local entities should get what. Do you have any comments on that, or is there any progress on that?

Mr. BOURNE. There is. Part of it is what is available within the Federal Government to support capabilities in the field, to support State and local. There actually is an ongoing development and an ongoing inventory of Federal assets that are available to FEMA. Our Disaster Operations Directorate has begun that process. It is being assisted by the National Preparedness Directorate.

Senator PRYOR. When will that be completed, do you know?

Mr. BOURNE. It is constantly evolving and being added to. There is already a base amount that is available to us and we do it through what is called the ESFLG, which is the Emergency Service Function Leadership Group, which is made up of all the Federal agencies that support FEMA in disasters. They have been working that project for a number of years.

What we don't have yet is what we will call the assessment of State and local capabilities which is under development in two ways. One, through the Federal preparedness reporting that the National Preparedness Directorate has been working with the States and locals to develop. The idea is what questions should we be asking State and locals about their capabilities?

A Target Capabilities List, which already exists, is going through a bit of a transformation because one of the challenges of the original TCL project was it was very voluminous, very difficult for State and locals and first responders to understand what their capability should be, and the TCL Redevelopment Project that has been going on for the last 7 months or so is looking at each TCL. We have been going out within the regions, bringing together stakeholders of hazardous materials experts, State emergency managers, local emergency managers, experts in the field to change the way the TCLs are presented, understand what they really mean so State and locals can make decisions about what capability they wish to build. When that project is completed, there will be a better way to inventory what is required.

Second, we are taking a look through what is called the Cost of Capabilities Project in our grant shop. Grants is taking a look at what have we spent money on going back as far as we possibly can, given the records of early grants up to the grants now, and trying to make a determination as to what has been accomplished so far using the eight preparedness elements in the National Preparedness Goal as kind of a benchmark. And the idea is to say, what have we spent money on? What capabilities have potentially been

built with that spending? And what capabilities remain to be realized because not all of the money may have been spent yet?

And that effort is already underway. We expect some preliminary results in the next 6 months, and then it will become an ongoing part of the process. Grants feed a portion of preparedness. Training feeds a portion of preparedness, exercises, etc., and the National Preparedness Directorate is pulling together that umbrella that pulls all those things in so we will have a much better management picture.

Senator PRYOR. Well, it turns out we have a couple of experts on State and local matters here, so let me ask them, Ms. Dragani and Mr. Gispert. On the State and local level, is it difficult to assess what your capabilities are and how is it working with FEMA? Is that being coordinated?

Mr. GISPERT. Ladies first.

Ms. DRAGANI. Thank you, Mr. Gispert. On a State level, it has proved challenging to assess our capabilities because we are not sure what capabilities yet we need to build. So I think as the Target Capabilities List becomes more fleshed out, easier to understand and easier to translate, with clearer guidance and clearer risk analysis, then it is easier for States to identify what capabilities they need.

Senator PRYOR. And are you waiting on FEMA for that?

Ms. DRAGANI. No, we are not waiting on FEMA for that. I think that there is a point where it is the responsibility of State and local government to move forward, because ultimately, we are responsible for our citizens. So I think most States and governments are moving forward. They are analyzing their risk. They are developing the capabilities that they think they need based on the risks they know they have.

Senator PRYOR. OK.

Mr. GISPERT. Mr. Chairman, it is not that we have not assessed ourselves. We have assessed ourselves to death. Since the implementation of the Homeland Security Grant Program, every year, the focus has changed and we have always shifted off counting different widgets for different budget years.

Senator PRYOR. Give us an example of that.

Mr. GISPERT. Originally, when the Homeland Security Grant Program came out, it was absolutely forbidden to buy anything that could be used for anything other than a response to a terrorism event. We kept hammering back, all hazards. Why can't we buy a device that can be used in a hurricane as well as a terrorism event? Eventually, DHS and FEMA relented and we have been able to do that the last couple of years.

We went under what was called the National Plan Review, sir, after almost an 8-year Administration, we were suffering being assessed by idiots. I have been in this business 28 years. These people had no clue what we did at the local level and they came down and said, "Thou shalt do it this way," and we said, "No, we won't. We have spent the last 30 years planning from here to here to here." The response was, "No, you will do it."

I will have to tell you, mostly it was our friends in the Department of Defense who wanted to implement a defense planning strategy on the local levels. We are civilians. We at the local level

have command and control of nothing. We coordinate and cooperate. We ask people to do things. We don't command them to do it. And you cannot plan a pure structured response to a scenario under the command and control structure if you don't have that ability to command people.

So what we do at the local level is if we need dump trucks, we ask who has them? Are you willing to give them? Yes? OK, you are in the plan. And we go around and we look for whatever needs to be done, and we have done that for years and years.

I will say in defense of the current FEMA Administration, that reaching out to locals improved after they initially issued the National Response Framework (NRF). We raised hell about the NRF because it was totally different from what we have ever had. They withdrew it. They asked for our comments, and they came out with a document that we all could live with. They have been reaching out to us. But sir, that is 1 year in an 8-year Administration.

What we are saying in our comments here is not that they are bad people now, but the question is what happens after January 20th? Do we continue this collaboration or do we go back to the Federal "Thou shalt do this"? We tell you that we are at the local level. We are where the rubber meets the road. We have to have a partner. We don't need a commander, we need a partner. And when you have certain assets at the Federal level that we don't have at the local level and we ask for them and we need them, we need them now.

So once again, what we are hoping is that the outreach that the FEMA people have done over this last year will continue in the new Administration, and I think we will get there. And some of those loose-ended projects, Congress asked for will get completed. In their defense, they got pulled 30 different ways. You gave them, you will do a National Housing Strategy and do it in 30 days or whatever it is. The next thing you know, they are doing this, and they can only do one thing at a time.

Senator PRYOR. Right.

Mr. GISPERT. So those are my comments, sir. I am sorry.

Senator PRYOR. No, that is good. You both have said it is sometimes difficult to assess your capacities to do certain things. I know that a lot of people who have looked at this say that in spite of us spending \$4 billion with HHS that has gone to State and local hospitals for preparedness, many folks believe that our hospital system and emergency management community is just unable to handle a prolonged bioterrorism or flu-type epidemic, some sort of pandemic. In your experience in your local and State areas, do you feel like your hospitals are capable of handling a long-term challenge like that?

Mr. GISPERT. Define long, please. How long are you talking about, 30 days? Sixty days?

Senator PRYOR. Well, or longer, like a flu pandemic.

Mr. GISPERT. The answer is, no, we cannot do it.

Senator PRYOR. Yes.

Mr. GISPERT. In Florida, our hospital capacities are at 95-plus percent all the time. That means they don't have very many spare beds. So when we have a catastrophe, they start putting people in the hallways and those kind of things.

They couldn't do it for a long period of time.

Senator PRYOR. Do you know if your hospitals have collaboration agreements with other hospitals in the region—

Mr. GISPERT. Yes, sir.

Senator PRYOR [continuing]. And in the State and have they worked on those contingency plans?

Mr. GISPERT. Yes, they have. The hospitals are different because that is where the private for-profit scenario comes in and sometimes government has very little decree over a private for-profit hospital. But they have collectively planned with us at the community level. They know that they are going to be a part of the emergency response. I have 14 active hospitals in my community and we plan on a yearly basis and have what we call a mass casualty drill—

Senator PRYOR. Right.

Mr. GISPERT [continuing]. Which is at least 200 patients and what have you. It has always been the agreement between local, State, and Federal Government that the locals hold the fort until the cavalry comes.

Senator PRYOR. Right.

Mr. GISPERT. Now, you can define that as 3 days, 4 days, but we can't go extended periods of time. And then the State comes in with the resources from the other surrounding counties, and when they get exceeded, here comes the Federal Government. That is the theory behind all this. So the locals are only supposed to hold the fort for a short period of time while the cavalry is mustering and coming to our help.

Senator PRYOR. Ms. Dragani, did you have any comments on that?

Ms. DRAGANI. I do. I think that hospitals don't have the capacity to handle mass casualties on any broad scale. However, building the system with public health, with acute care centers that can take those non-critical patients and provide them with the resources, the IVs and the fluids and those types of non-critical care support will free up hospitals to continue to provide the critical care.

But I would also say, if I may, Senator, you commented early on about pandemic. There is no other organization, I would submit, in the Nation that is more capable or qualified to pull together a pandemic response than the emergency management community because we are collaborators. It is about sheltering or providing food, caring for people, pulling together information and intelligence. It may not be a typical disaster, but it absolutely will be a crippling disaster, and I think the emergency management community, whether it is State, local, or Federal, is the right organization to pull that response together.

Senator PRYOR. OK, great. Ms. Bullock, you mentioned something in your statement about, as I understand it, you think it is important to have political appointees out in these regional offices. Could you elaborate on that? As I understand what you said, it is because the political appointees do well in dealing with local political people. Is that what you said?

Ms. BULLOCK. We all know that disasters are political with a small "p" and it becomes an important issue for a governor, for a

local elected official, for Members of Congress when they are back in their districts to be able to talk about some of the political issues with an equivalent, to be able to talk about some of the political issues with someone who can get a connection back to the political head of FEMA.

The career staff often get intimidated in terms of dealing—and this is what we saw throughout the 1980s and 1990s—often get intimidated in those circumstances and also often don't think about the politics of disasters. And the structure—and we had a lot of that—back in the 1980s when I was running the Office of Regional Operations, there was a lot of discussion about making the Regional Directors career. In some regions, we had to depend on career deputies to fill in. But it is very clearly important that when we look at how FEMA delivers a response, we use the career people to do what they do best, but it is very important that there is a political entity in that regional office.

Senator PRYOR. So you think it would be a mistake for FEMA to fill all those positions with career people?

Ms. BULLOCK. I absolutely do, and I think it is a mistake that they have already filled three of them.

Senator PRYOR. Well, let me ask Mr. Bourne from FEMA, because you mentioned this in some of the early questionings and maybe even your opening statement, about these positions, these regional offices, and I think you said there are now three career civil service people in those, what, out of nine—

Mr. BOURNE. Out of ten.

Senator PRYOR. Out of ten positions? Let me hear your thoughts on why you think it is important that we put career people there.

Mr. BOURNE. Well, one, kind of an overarching point, being a political person within FEMA should not necessarily equal to incompetence, which some people like to believe that is the case. It may have been in the past, but the idea is that folks with political acumen can exist both in a political job as well as a career job. We have a long history in FEMA that goes back throughout its entire history of the former regional directors, now regional administrators, the political slots being vacant for extended periods of time where the deputy regional directors, regional administrators, were essentially filling both roles for 18 months, a year, 2 years at a clip.

One of the challenges that Administrator Paulison had to face when he first got the job was not only making sure that the positions were filled, whether they be political or otherwise, and at the time they were all political positions, but also to make sure that they were filled with people who understood the business of emergency management and emergency response, and that is why he was able to actually pick and hire these folks without any kind of interference or what I will call the political side of the equation overly influencing the selection of the candidate who ultimately was in the job.

Now, there was a reason that we picked those three regions to be the ones that are career. One, they are regions that have had vacancies in the political leadership before for extended periods.

Two, they are three of the busiest regions of all the FEMA regions, and quite frankly, we filled them with executives who not only understand how to do emergency management and collabora-

tion, but they also have a background that allows them to understand the politics of working with a State and local government. Their connection is to governors, to chiefs of staff, to the Emergency Management Directors in those States, and to all of those folks, and we have encouraged all of our regional administrators, whether they are career or political, to make those connections and to build those relationships regardless of who is sitting on the other side of the phone or the table.

So when we talk about, should they all be career, we have never said they should all be career. We don't know whether or not they should all be career. We have thought about how many should be or shouldn't be and we have wrestled with this, as well. And that is why there has been no movement beyond the three that were chosen. Nancy Ward has an extensive background that I think anyone at this table would recognize, as does Phil May and others. So I think it is a question of if I could convert a political today, there are a number of current regional administrators who are political that are far more capable than many of staying on in those roles, but that is not what we are doing. We believe the new Administration has to have an opportunity to weigh in on that.

Senator PRYOR. All right. If there are vacancies in these remaining seven positions between now and January 20, which is 4 months from now, is FEMA's plan to fill those with career people or just leave those vacant?

Mr. BOURNE. No, they will remain vacant and they will be—the deputy administrators within those regions that may become vacant will take over, as they are trained to do and designed to do, to act as the interim until the new Administration determines how it wishes to fill those positions.

Senator PRYOR. Ms. Bullock, did you have any comment?

Ms. BULLOCK. Mr. Chairman, yes, if I could make a comment. One thing that I failed to mention was the FEMA regional directors are unique in that when we have large disasters and we have multiple disasters, they are basically the President's representative at that disaster. When the Director of FEMA can't be at 22 different States, the regional director represents the President and it is very important that the regional director and the FEMA Director have the confidence of the President.

And as I said before, why we do this is so the deputy regional director, the career people, can count on running that disaster, doing the nuts and bolts that need to be done day to day on that disaster, and the political regional director can be looking out for the best interests of the citizens, be looking out to make sure that the President and the Director of FEMA's desires are being taken care of.

Senator PRYOR. OK. Let me ask this of our three non-FEMA witnesses because I know what FEMA is going to say on this. There has been a little bit of a controversy in the Subcommittee for the last, 4 or 5 years about whether FEMA should remain part of Homeland Security or be a separate entity like it was under the previous Administration. A couple of you have already voiced your concerns and I would like to hear just a little bit more on where each of the three of you are on how you think FEMA should be structured in the next Administration.

So Ms. Dragani, let me start with you. I don't think you mentioned it in your statement. If you did, I missed it, but I know the other two did. Go ahead.

Ms. DRAGANI. All right. I did not, Mr. Chairman, mention it in my statement. It is at this point more important to the National Emergency Management Association and our members that wherever FEMA is, in or out of DHS, the FEMA Administrator has direct access to the President and the organization is adequately resourced, trained, prepared, and ready to respond to our needs. So at this point, we don't have a formal position, in or out.

Senator PRYOR. Do you have a personal view?

Ms. DRAGANI. I would like to go back and think about it a little longer. It is a position that—it is a decision that obviously will have extraordinary impacts on both my profession and the Nation as a whole.

Senator PRYOR. Mr. Gispert, you mentioned in your testimony that your organization is for breaking FEMA away from Homeland Security. Could you elaborate on that a little bit more?

Mr. GISPERT. Once again, I represent local emergency managers where the rubber meets the road. A large majority of our members would prefer a stand-alone FEMA. It comes from a long history that when we were originally taught emergency management, we were taught that emergency management performs best when the emergency manager reports directly to the CEO, whatever you may call that CEO. You may call him the president, you may call him the chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, you may call him the mayor. You do not need interloping people in between that person and the CEO.

Regardless of the personalities involved, if somebody reported to me when the sun was shining, I would want to be involved when the proverbial hits the fan. It is kind of hard to back away and say, you report to me on a daily basis, but when all hell is breaking loose, you report to the President.

So we think for a most efficient form—it has its problems, also, but for the most efficient mechanisms of delivering the programs of FEMA, FEMA needs to stand alone. It needs to report directly to the President, however that is couched, whether it is a cabinet level or however. It needs to be a stand-alone agency. FEMA does not need anybody standing between them and the President.

Senator PRYOR. Ms. Bullock, when you were at FEMA, you were there for 21 years?

Ms. BULLOCK. Twenty-one years, yes.

Senator PRYOR. And so you saw a lot of different directors there and a lot of changes in that agency over time, both a lot of personalities involved but also administration philosophy impacting FEMA. Give us your thoughts on whether FEMA should be taken out of Homeland Security.

Ms. BULLOCK. Well, there is no issue that I feel more passionate about. The mission of FEMA, to a degree, is inconsistent with the mission of the Department of Homeland Security. The Department of Homeland Security prevents accidents from the skies. It prevents immigration over the borders. The mission of FEMA is to protect our people and to work with them to prepare and respond and mitigate disasters.

The necessity for the Director of FEMA to represent the President during a disaster is unquestionable. When we had disasters during the Clinton Administration and James Lee was the Director, every single other Federal agency knew that if James Lee needed something, he could get on the phone and the Secretary of the Army would pick up the phone—excuse me, the Secretary of Defense, DOD, would pick up the phone and say, “James Lee, if you need it, we will get it there.”

We saw none of that happening in Hurricane Katrina because the head of FEMA didn’t have the connections and relationships with their equivalents in the cabinet, and Secretary Chertoff was busy with other things. What would have happened if during Hurricane Ike we had a major terrorism event? Where would Secretary Chertoff have been? The Director of FEMA would have been handling Hurricane Ike, but then when the consequences of that terrorism event were realized, after it became not the crime scene, FEMA would be there.

I cannot explain how strongly I feel that FEMA being moved into DHS saw a diminishing of its resources. It saw a diminishing of an incredible career staff. And it saw a diminishing of its ability to carry out what the President needs to have carried out during a disaster.

Senator PRYOR. Before the Clinton Administration, was FEMA a separate stand-alone agency?

Ms. BULLOCK. FEMA has always been a separate stand-alone agency. It was not until the Clinton Administration, however, that the Director of FEMA—

Senator PRYOR. Became cabinet—

Ms. BULLOCK [continuing]. Became a member of the cabinet. The agency is not cabinet level and I would not be recommending that. But it is very important for it to be stand-alone.

Senator PRYOR. You do not recommend it be cabinet level?

Ms. BULLOCK. Not at this point. I think that would have to be more carefully studied. But I do believe the Director of FEMA must be a member of the cabinet, similar to how the SBA is not cabinet level, but the SBA Director is a member of the cabinet.

Senator PRYOR. And also, is it fair to say—I am not trying to put words in your mouth—is it fair to say that, given your 21 years at FEMA, the best model that you saw was the Clinton Administration model for FEMA?

Ms. BULLOCK. Absolutely, and the reason it was the best model was, we had a director who knew the President and could count on his support. We had a President who understood that during time of need, the American public expected their government to be there and we were there. And we had people in the director’s office who listened to the career people, who understood what needed to be done.

We were extremely lucky in the fact that James Lee Witt was one of the State Emergency Managers. Prior to James Lee, FEMA had a series of directors who had limited disaster experience and look what happened. We had Hurricane Hugo. We had the Loma Prieta Earthquake. We had Hurricane Iniki, and then finally Hurricane Andrew, where the agency was going to actually be abolished. There was a bill in Congress abolishing it. It wasn’t until we

had an Administration who really understood that disaster response is a fundamental chore for government and it has to be done in collaboration with State and local governments.

My concern is DHS is taking a top-down approach. I am very happy to hear in the last year that they have been collaborating with State and locals, but if you look at what has happened in DHS, it is top-down. They are telling State and local governments what to do. They are telling the private sector what you can or can't do as part of a response. That is not how disaster responses work well. And all you have to do is look at the successful track record we had in the 1990s. We don't need to reinvent the wheel. We have a successful model.

Senator PRYOR. And Mr. Bourne, am I correct in assuming that your official position is that it stays where it is?

Mr. BOURNE. That is the position of the agency and the Administration and certainly the Department, and it is the position of the administrator. I have been personally there when he has gotten calls directly from the President at 6:30 in the morning. He has absolute access to the President. That has not been an issue in the last 2½ years. He is the one that travels with the President to disasters. He is the one that briefs the President, as well, and the Department has been very supportive during the time that Administrator Paulison has been in charge in being fully supportive. We have been able to get resources and assets from other departmental components that we might not have had access to immediately otherwise. And so there is a tremendous synergy that can be built there, other issues aside.

So there is an ongoing effort, and you will notice in Hurricanes Gustav, Ike, and Hanna, the floods in the Midwest, that Secretary Chertoff was very supportive, was engaged, but the Administrator of FEMA was running those disasters.

Senator PRYOR. I must say, I am pleased with this Administrator of FEMA.

Mr. GISPert, let me follow up on something that I asked Mr. Bourne early on in his questioning and that is on the National Response Framework. This is the document I mentioned before that the annexes that have the State, local, and private sector information is not complete and the catastrophic annex is not complete, either. Are you familiar with that document and—

Mr. GISPert. I am familiar with the National Response Framework, yes, sir.

Senator PRYOR. And has it been helpful for you, or does it—

Mr. GISPert. To be honest with you, no.

Senator PRYOR. OK. And why not?

Mr. GISPert. Because we looked upon the NRF as the way the Federal people work with each other.

Senator PRYOR. OK.

Mr. GISPert. We have had a long, comprehensive Community Planning Guide 101 which we have used as our method of planning and interacting, and so we looked at the NRF as the Federal way of getting their act together—who is going to provide what. So we didn't look at it very critically from a local level and we have not started those local and State annexes yet, that I am aware of.

Senator PRYOR. Right.

Mr. GISPERT. That is a couple of the annexes that haven't started. So once again, the reason that we pitched a fit, because we thought—and this is what we were able to clarify—we thought that the Federal Government was going to dictate to the State and locals a drastic change in methodology of emergency planning and response at the local level. They have since then backed off and said, "No, you guys continue to plan the way you do; we just need to interact with one another." That is perfectly reasonable. At one time, we truly did think they were going to mandate an entire change in the way we do emergency planning and that would be catastrophic in itself, sir.

Senator PRYOR. Right. Ms. Dragani, did you have any comment on the National Response Framework?

Ms. DRAGANI. I am very familiar with the framework. Until there is more meat on the framework via the annexes, I think that it is very theoretical and squishy in nature. That was probably the value in the Federal Response Plan. It was very specific. We knew at the State and local level what kind of Federal resources were coming from what agencies and that is the kind of detail that I think has yet to be finalized in the National Response Framework through those annexes.

Senator PRYOR. All right. Ms. Dragani, you mentioned in your opening statement that all hazards is the way to go and that you have to find the balance between the natural disasters and the manmade disasters or the terrorism-type disasters. In your view, have we as a Nation, starting with FEMA, and at the local level, too, State and local level, have we found that balance?

Ms. DRAGANI. No. I think that we are closer to that balance. Hurricane Katrina forced the Nation to recognize that Mother Nature can be the worst terrorist of all, so the pendulum has begun swinging back. I still see, as I review guidance for grants, as I review guidance for plans, an overwhelming focus on terrorism versus natural disasters, and I think that by separating terrorism out as a single specific event, it is not an all-hazards focus. An all-hazards focus recognizes that terrorism, hurricanes, pandemic, satellites falling from the sky, massive power outages are all threats that we may face and we need to base those threats on our situation, our jurisdiction, our geology, and our risk.

Senator PRYOR. Mr. Gispert, do you have any comments on have we found the balance yet?

Mr. GISPERT. No, sir. Originally, DHS did not even know the word "all-hazards." In the last year-and-a-half, they at least are speaking the word all-hazards. I have not seen a real substantial swing to the all-hazards. All-hazards is very simple. Eighty-five percent of the time, a cop is a cop, a fireman is a fireman, a public works is a public works. You don't need to keep changing what they do. They do the same thing regardless of the incident.

Now, terrorism does have some specific unique things, like hazardous gas and those kind of things. But basically speaking, 85 percent of the response to a terrorism event is the same as the response to a tornado, or to a hurricane, and that is what we kept telling them. Eighty-five percent of it is the same. Why are you swinging over and worrying about the little 15 percent of the 100 percent of the time?

They now at least understand that we are not going to give up on all-hazards at the local and State level, so if they don't want to use it at the Federal level, they are going to at least understand what we are talking about, because I can never, ever go back and tell the 1.2 million people in Hillsborough County, Florida, that I am most worried about a terrorism event when every summer we have a good chance that Mother Nature will visit us with a catastrophic hurricane. My citizens want to know, why aren't you planning for the hurricane, because that is going to happen. Terrorism may or may not, but hurricanes are. So we need to take that into consideration.

Every one of our communities throughout the country has their own specific problems that occur to them. They need to focus on them. Now, once they are comfortable with that, maybe they can think of other things. But until that time, you need to focus in on what your hazards are—you do a vulnerability assessment of your community, you rack and stack your hazards, and you start at the top and you work down.

Senator PRYOR. I want to thank all of you for being here today. I know some of my colleagues may have some questions, so we will leave the record open for 7 days or so. It is possible that the Subcommittee staff will follow up and try to get some answers to written questions because some of my colleagues may have those.

But I really do want to thank you for being here and most especially thank you for doing what you do because it is very important for the homeland security of this country that we have folks like you out there doing everything that you do.

So thanks again, and this hearing is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:06 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

Statement

Of

Marko Bourne

**Director, Policy and Program Analysis
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U. S. Department of Homeland Security**

Before

the

**Subcommittee on State, Local and Private Sector
Preparedness and Integration**

**Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental
Affairs**

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Introduction

Mr. Chairman, my name is Marko Bourne and I serve as Director of FEMA's Office of Policy and Program Analysis at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am pleased to be here and would like to begin by thanking the Committee for its interest in and continued support for FEMA and its operational readiness. It has been my task to oversee the integration of Preparedness functions into FEMA following PKEMRA and my office continues to oversee all of the agency's strategic planning efforts in an effort to integrate FEMA's directorates to strengthen our operational readiness.

The current operational tempo provides the perfect backdrop to our discussion – highlighting the progress we have made as an organization along with some of the challenges that remain.

Operational readiness at FEMA is constantly evolving as we implement additional improvements in the way we serve the American people. That is why to fully understand FEMA's operational readiness in the future, we must look at the progress we have made over the past three years improving the Agency's operational readiness today.

New FEMA

In December 2006, Administrator Paulison announced a vision for the New FEMA. He wanted to "regain the trust and confidence of the American people" by transforming FEMA into the Nation's Preeminent Emergency Management Agency.

In order to meet this goal, the Administrator said FEMA must:

- *Strengthen core capabilities, competencies and capacities.* Fostering a national emergency management system and implementing a cohesive national preparedness system by strengthening the foundational building blocks of the Agency.
- *Build strong Regions.* The Region is the essential field echelon of FEMA that engages most directly with State partners and disaster victims to deliver frontline services. It is the Region that builds and nurtures State, local, territorial and tribal capabilities across the spectrum of preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. And it is the Region that leads the Federal response to incidents across the spectrum of all-hazards events. A strong FEMA will rely on strong Regions to build and maintain the trust and confidence of Governors, mayors, leaders in the private sector and the citizens of our homeland.
- *Strengthen our partnership with States.* Response to disasters and emergencies is primarily a State, local, territorial and tribal effort. To build and support an effective national system of emergency management, FEMA must have effective partnerships with State, local, territorial and tribal governments.

- *Professionalize the national emergency management system.* The Nation's ability to marshal an effective response to disasters requires the right people with the right skills. We will work with our partners to build a nationwide system of trained and certified experts skilled in all hazards emergency management – starting right here in FEMA.

FEMA leadership was not alone in charting a new path for the Agency. Congressional passage of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act and the subsequent Appropriations Act provided FEMA with the additional resources and capabilities necessary. With a new path charted, FEMA went to work.

New FEMA Progress

To begin with, FEMA focused on expanding our capabilities and strengthening our organization. We have placed greater emphasis on Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments that help us to facilitate rapid response, as well as to standardize development of mission assignments prior to and during disaster operations. In 2006, FEMA started with 44 Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments with two Federal agencies. Today that number is 236 with 33 agencies.

On the ground, we are stronger with our new Incident Management Assistance Teams – or IMATs. They are ready to support States within 12 hours, coordinate Federal activities and provide initial situational awareness.

Our new Logistics Management Directorate is working closely to develop a supply chain that is in sync with the private sector. We can better track our resources and thus improve our coordination. We also have contracts and inter-agency agreements in place that improve our capabilities in providing supplies and services, base camp support, evacuations and transportation when disasters strike.

FEMA now has 60 Mobile Disaster Recovery Centers that can be deployed on-site at a disaster to help people get the support they need. FEMA continues to work with all of our partners to build a robust system for evacuation, sheltering and housing, including our collaboration with the American Red Cross to implement the National Shelter System.

We have established a National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System and a National Emergency Child Locator Center to help those displaced find their loved ones. We have a new policy to help those with pets. And we remain focused on streamlining and improving the housing and individual assistance programs.

Improved Planning and a Culture of Preparedness

Our response will only be as good as our planning and preparedness within FEMA and with our Federal, State, local, territorial and tribal partners. When I joined the agency,

we had few full-time operational planners. Today, we have hired operational planners at the FEMA Headquarters and Regional levels to improve our ability to perform sophisticated operational analyses, analyze trends and plan for the response to ongoing and future events.

Our plans incorporate a Gap Analysis review. Last year, working with our State, local, territorial and tribal partners we employed this tool to identify what was needed, should a disaster strike. We use a consistent set of measures and tools to evaluate strengths and vulnerabilities in seven critical areas: evacuation, commodity distribution, sheltering, interim housing, medical needs, fuel capacity along evacuation routes and debris removal.

Integrated Planning System

Signed by the President in December 2007, Annex I to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8) requires the development of an Integrated Planning System (IPS) to guide integration of planning and synchronization of plans across federal departments and agencies, and to enable integration with State, local, territorial and tribal planning around national and regional scenarios. IPS was designed on the same planning principles established by the State, local, territorial and tribal emergency management community through the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide – 101 (interim) to provide for consistency of process despite different planning requirements.

The development and management of IPS is handled by the DHS Office of Operations Coordination and Planning. FEMA is a key component in the effort and manages several actions associated with its implementation, including development of interagency concept plans for National Planning Scenarios and communication with the State, local, territorial and tribal community.

An interim version of IPS is currently in use by Federal departments and agencies. Currently, FEMA is working with interagency partners on concept of operations development and implementation for both the Period of Heightened Alert and Terrorist Use of Explosives.

Additionally, during this interim period, FEMA has been tasked with coordinating State, local, territorial and tribal input into the development of IPS, to include addressing the method for vertical integration. The resulting inputs will be used to update Comprehensive Preparedness Guide – 101 to maintain consistency between the two systems.

Strengthened Regions

FEMA has also taken steps to strengthen the regions. First, Administrator Paulison hired experienced emergency management professionals to serve as Regional Administrators. In fact, the ten Regional Administrators have more than 300 years of emergency management experience combined.

Regional coordination has been enhanced through the creation of Regional Advisory Councils and assignment of Department of Defense Coordinating Officers to each FEMA regional office. FEMA has also upgraded its Regional Response Coordination Centers communication capabilities to ensure communications between Washington, the Region, and our State, local, tribal and territorial partners remain strong.

FEMA Regional Offices have also worked with Gulf Coast States to develop evacuation plans. In addition, FEMA has utilized the Catastrophic Planning funds provided by Congress to plan for the catastrophic earthquakes along the New-Madrid fault line and in California. To support these planning efforts, FEMA Regions are actively engaged with State governments in exercises designed to test and validate plans and procedures.

The improvements we have made since 2005 have been substantial, but we still have more work to do to ensure we provide the best possible service to the American people during times of crisis.

Hurricanes Gustav and Ike

Over the past weeks, New FEMA has been put to the test. Hurricanes Gustav and Ike once again reminded us just how dangerous Mother Nature can be. These two storms brought significant levels of destruction and devastation not seen in three years.

The response and recovery to these two destructive hurricanes has been good but not perfect. No response to storms of this magnitude will ever be perfect. However, the progress made by New FEMA, along with our emergency partners at all levels of government and in the private and voluntary sectors, was both significant and important.

It is too early to provide a full review of our operations in response to these disasters. There are still many people without power or the ability to safely return to their homes. And they are the focus of our continued efforts.

However, there are some important areas of improvement that I would like to share with you today. First and foremost, the level of cooperation and coordination between all levels of government, NGOs, and the private sector was outstanding. The unified command system established for both Gustav and Ike worked well. We all communicated regularly and worked together to resolve issues before they became crises. For example, the benefits of improved pre-incident evacuation planning with our partners on the Gulf Coast were obvious as millions of Americans were able to evacuate in an orderly manner in advance of the storms.

In addition to the improved cooperation and coordination between levels of government, the cooperation and coordination within the Federal government were significantly better. The processes and procedures we put in place worked and made for a more effective Federal response.

The situational awareness among leadership at the Federal, State, local, territorial and tribal levels was also a vast improvement. We had reconnaissance teams on the ground

along with aircraft flying above the affected area providing real-time imagery and reports.

The final reports on Hurricanes Gustav and Ike are still a long way from being written. And FEMA, as it always does, will pour through the lessons learned and improve our operations, as appropriate. However, we are extremely proud of the hard work put in by FEMA and DHS employees over the past three years to create the New FEMA. The long hours spent improving how we operate has ensured millions of people received the kind of disaster response they deserve.

Operational Readiness

FEMA's future operational readiness is only assured by continuing to build on the progress we have made transforming the Agency. We must continue to strengthen our core capabilities, competencies, and capacities. We must continue to build stronger regions. We must continue to strengthen our partnerships with States. We must continue to professionalize the national emergency management system.

FEMA and DHS employees, with the support of Congress, have worked tirelessly the past three years to create an Agency the American people can be proud of, an Agency they can trust during times of crisis.

The men and women of FEMA, under the leadership of Secretary Chertoff, Administrator Paulison, and Deputy Administrator Johnson, have built a solid foundation for the future of the organization. This foundation has helped FEMA reach a higher level of operational readiness this year than ever before.

The time, however, is fast approaching when the current leadership team will be replaced by a new leadership team. It will be up to this new team, along with the strong and capable cadre of career civil servant leaders at FEMA, to continue building on the solid foundation we have worked to establish.

Change, particularly in leadership, brings uncertainty. That is why FEMA continuously prepares itself for sudden leadership change.

It all starts with FEMA's senior career leadership who has worked hard to prepare itself to step in and fill leadership positions at a moments notice. For the past two years we have aggressively recruited experienced and dynamic career professionals in each of our offices and directorates. We have converted three of our Regional Administrator positions, in our three busiest regions, to career executives. We have placed within each directorate and office a clear chain of command and continue to integrate planning and business functions through updated management directives and coordination councils.

It is a contingency we plan for regardless of the political calendar. Disaster victims want to know that FEMA is there to support their State, local, territorial and tribal governments regardless of political transitions or employee turnover in Washington, D.C. They want to know that we are there to support their family when they need us.

Our career leaders are an extraordinarily experienced and talented group. However, in order to continue building the New FEMA, they must have the right kind of leadership to support them. Our transition planning will provide comprehensive opportunities for the incoming leadership team to quickly come up to speed on the critical issues they will face and the programs they will be administering. The training available to new leadership at FEMA is excellent and we will also provide ample opportunity through discussions and exercise a forum to hone knowledge and skills. There is simply no replacement for years of experience as an emergency management professional. That is why Administrator Paulison has made hiring the best, most experienced leaders a priority. FEMA employees and the American people deserve nothing less.

Our State, local, territorial, and tribal partners also deserve experienced partners at the Federal level. That is why when asked what leadership change over the coming months means to them, the answer should be that the reforms made and the partnerships created must be continued and strengthened. FEMA will take the lessons of Gustav and Ike and continue to refine the way we operate. We will work with our partners, as we always do, to continue improving how we prepare, respond, recover and mitigate disasters together.

Our regional offices will continue to grow as planned, both in size and programs available to our State, local, territorial, and tribal partners. Our planners at both the regional and headquarters level will work like never before with State, local, territorial and tribal planners to improve preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation plans. And our outstanding educational institutions will continue to offer training opportunities to both experienced and new emergency management professionals at all levels of government.

If we have done our job correctly, the only change in operational readiness our State, local, territorial and tribal partners might find over the coming months is a new voice at the other end of the phone or a new face on-screen during a Video Tele Conference.

Continuity is Key

FEMA is proud of the improvements we have made as an organization over the past three years. The devastation and destruction brought by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike have tested New FEMA. And while some additional challenges and improvements have been identified, we believe the path we have chosen for FEMA is correct. If FEMA is to become the preeminent emergency management organization in the nation, the operational improvements we continue to put in place must not stop.

As we look to the future and how FEMA's operational readiness will be impacted by change and uncertainty, our message is straightforward: We will continue building on the foundation we have built over the past three years. And we will continue striving to make FEMA a more nimble, agile and compassionate organization focused on serving the American people.

Thank you for your continued support and for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

NANCY J. DRAGANI
PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION AND EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF THE OHIO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE

SENATE HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, LOCAL,
AND PRIVATE SECTOR PREPAREDNESS AND INTEGRATION
ON

“MISSION POSSIBLE: FEMA’S FUTURE PREPAREDNESS PLANNING”

THE UNITED STATES SENATE

SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

Introduction

Thank you Chairman Pryor, Ranking Member Sununu, and distinguished members of the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to provide you with a statement for the record on our nation’s preparedness. I am Nancy Dragani, the President of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA). I was named Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency in 2005, after serving with the agency since 1994. My previous experience includes a variety of positions with local, state and the federal government including the director of administration and public information chief for the Ohio EMA, editor of the Ohio National Guard’s quarterly magazine, and radio and television broadcaster with the United States Army. I served in the Ohio National Guard with 22 years of combined U.S. Army, Army National Guard and Air National Guard service. In my statement, I am representing NEMA, whose members are the state directors of emergency management in the states, territories, and the District of Columbia.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before your Committee today on FEMA’s future preparedness planning. FEMA’s readiness is a critical issue that Congress and the next Administration must carefully explore if changes are considered. Over the last several years, FEMA has weathered two significant reorganizations. First, the organization was included in the Department of Homeland Security just after 9/11 as the Department was created through the Homeland Security Act. Second, FEMA was again reorganized and retooled following the 2005 Hurricane Katrina through the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA). NEMA’s members have been carefully coordinating with FEMA through these transitions and serve as the state coordination point and the

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Governors' contacts for all hazards emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. With the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina still fresh, Gulf Coast recovery continuing, plus a new round of devastating disasters in 2008 including Midwestern flooding, and Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the need for a national emergency management system that effectively integrates local, state, and federal as well as private sector capabilities and resources has never been greater. To ensure our national preparedness efforts succeed, our efforts must be all-hazards based; span the national mission areas of prevention, preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation; and fully recognize the importance of a collaborative and coordinated approach among levels of government, the private and public sectors. In March 2008, NEMA's members drafted a White Paper outlining Recommendations for An Effective National Emergency Management System. I would like to share with you these recommendations today, including the top emergency management issues, states concerns in the current framework, and the priority recommendations for the Administration, DHS, and FEMA. While FEMA's role in the equation of successful response to disaster is key, it takes a strong partnership between all levels of governments to ensure FEMA has the tools and authorities to accomplish its mission effectively and in a timely manner.

TOP FIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ISSUES

To understand the scope of where FEMA fits into the national emergency management structure, we need to frame the most critical emergency management issues today. NEMA members have identified the top five emergency management issues:

1. All-hazards emergency preparedness must be the cornerstone of national planning efforts;
2. Emergency Management, from mitigation through long-term recovery, must be "owned" and supported by elected officials at all levels as a critical government service. Efforts and resources must be sustained so that long-term recovery planning and implementation can be achieved;
3. The nation requires an emergency management system, which recognizes the requisite integration of local, tribal, State, regional and Federal organizations capable of creating a single management structure in response to disasters;
4. Citizens and businesses must understand and act upon their responsibilities to prepare for disasters and emergencies and lessen their reliance on government; and

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5. Emergency management must continue to grow as a recognized profession. Adequate education and training resources are needed to meet the ongoing needs of emergency management professionals at all levels of government. A strategy is needed to recruit, train and develop our future leaders.

CURRENT STATE OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Many recent disasters did not impact just one state, but rather impacted many other states that assisted through mutual aid or evacuation and sheltering. As a result, the FEMA regions and regional coordination capabilities among states are more important than ever before. FEMA's current initiatives to build regional capabilities assists states in meeting the needs of disaster victims at the crucial point when state resources are becoming depleted. As Congress explores how FEMA should be best positioned to address emergency management in the future, NEMA supports the forward-leaning policies that FEMA has recently instituted. FEMA must have strong regional resources, leadership, and personnel to quickly address disasters. FEMA must be fully staffed at the Headquarters and Regional offices, must establish and maintain stockpiles and pre-position resources and equipment, and must continue to maintain a trained cadre of personnel to provide assistance to states in large disasters. Similar capabilities are necessary for State, local, and tribal governments.

Additionally, all states, local and tribal governments must be able to build, maintain, and sustain a baseline capability to respond to the hazards and threats that each uniquely face. Resources are an issue at the state level to ensure preparedness as well. As you know, the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG) is the single federal all-hazards emergency preparedness program in support of capacity building at the state and local level. EMPG should be maintained as a separate, all-hazards program with adequate funding and flexibility to address the specific needs of states and local governments. Personnel costs should continue to be eligible under the program with no caps or limits. Other programs, such as emergency operations center construction and renovation, should be included.

On the mutual aid front, NEMA appreciates the financial support of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) as an expedient, cost-effective approach to disaster response and recovery. EMAC is an interstate mutual aid agreement ratified by Congress, coordinated with the

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National Response Framework and adopted by all fifty states, three territories and the District of Columbia. Congress must continue to support EMAC by establishing permanent funding authorization to maintain and improve the compact's intent which is to allow states to assist other states with personnel and resources in times of disaster. Only that kind of continued support will ensure effective, coordinated emergency response

While not susceptible to large, potentially catastrophic events like hurricanes and earthquakes, Ohio is prone to devastating flash and riverine floods, tornadoes and winter storms. Over the years Ohio has developed a strong relationship with our federal partners, particularly Ed Buikema and the staff in Region V. We have an equally supportive relationship with our local partners at the 88 county emergency management agencies. An effective national emergency management system requires both trust and confidence in all your partners, at all levels. This trust and confidence was readily evident last summer, when we experienced devastating late summer floods in several central and west central Ohio counties. The Federal Coordinating Officer for this event was a familiar face to us, having served as our FCO for two flood events in northern Ohio the previous summer. When I learned that our FCO was going to be Jesse Munoz, my concern over any potential federal issues immediately dissipated because Jesse was, and is, a trusted, experienced federal partner who understands my state and our concerns. Ohio was fortunate to enjoy this type of support from FEMA in past, and continue to both to receive and expect it in the future. This type of mutual respect and partnership is critical. It must continue, at all levels of government, but particularly within FEMA, if we are to build a truly effective national system that serves us all.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FEMA, DHS, AND THE ADMINISTRATION

Congress and the Administration need to examine how to best position FEMA to be successful in the future. FEMA's ability to help state and local governments as outlined in authorities by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, must be maintained as a very important component of our emergency management system. For states, some of the critical considerations to ensuring a strong emergency management system and appropriate level of preparedness include:

- The FEMA Administrator must continue to serve as the primary advisor to the President on all issues related to disasters and emergencies, and have the full authority granted to the position through the Stafford Act and the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act;

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- All levels of government must share the responsibility for preparing for and responding to emergencies and disasters. Adequate personnel, equipment, facilities, training, and other resources are necessary at the local, state, and federal level. Strengthening the capabilities of local and state emergency management and their emergency support functions will help prevent the loss of life and property during disasters, deliver assistance to victims most expediently, and reduce the costs to the nation;
- State, local and private stakeholders should be involved in the full life cycle of any strategy, policy and plans development related to national preparedness efforts;
- Federal interagency preparedness activities must be coordinated at the federal level prior to implementation. Federal initiatives must be sustainable into the future; and
- The federal disaster declaration decision-making process should be consistent and documented. A quick resolution to appeals is needed so that other types of disaster assistance, including those from other federal agencies than FEMA may be available to disaster victims as soon as possible.

CONCLUSION

We appreciate Congress' attention and focus on ensuring preparedness at all levels of government for all hazards. We hope to work with the Committee and the next Administration to continue to strengthen FEMA and the nation's emergency management system. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of NEMA.



**Testimony of Larry Gispert, President
International Association of Emergency Managers
Before the
Ad Hoc Subcommittee on State, Local & Private Sector Preparedness
Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee
U.S. Senate
On
Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Planning
September 24, 2008**

Chairman Pryor, Ranking Member Sununu and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to present testimony on this critically important topic.

I am Larry Gispert, the Director of Emergency Management for Hillsborough County Florida. Hillsborough County is on the West Coast of Florida and has the City of Tampa as its county seat. The county's population is approximately 1.2 million. I currently serve as the President of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) and am testifying on their behalf. I have 28 years in the emergency management field with 15 as the Hillsborough County Director and have also served as President of the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association.

IAEM has over 4,000 members including emergency management professionals at the state and local government levels, tribal nations, the military, colleges and universities, private business and the nonprofit sector in the United States and in other countries. Most of our members are U.S. city and county emergency managers who perform the crucial function of coordinating and integrating the efforts at the local level to prepare for, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all types of disasters including terrorist attacks. Our membership includes emergency managers from large urban areas as well as rural areas.

We believe that the high potential for disasters and crises in our country demands that we execute "mission possible" -- an effective national system of emergency management. This national system needs to consist of strong partners at the federal, state, and local levels. It is our belief that this mission is most easily realized through making FEMA, once again, an independent agency reporting directly to the President. In the absence of this structural change, we believe success is not impossible, but will certainly require more effort coupled with a vigilant Congress.

At the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) annual meeting in Portland, Oregon on September 10, 2008, Robert M. (Mike) Walker, former FEMA Deputy Director, observed that the current situation at the Department of Homeland Security, "...is like requiring the Department of Defense to do both war-fighting and diplomacy." I think Mr. Walker brings this issue up because the creation of DHS resulted in the requirement to perform different and sometimes incompatible goals. Walker goes on to suggest that the missions of the Department of Defense and the Department of State could never be combined – and neither should consequence and crisis management.

After Hurricane Katrina, IAEM endorsed a number of critical elements for achieving a strong FEMA. They are:

- Maximum amount of access of the FEMA Director to the White House.
- FEMA clearly responsible for coordination of the Federal response to disasters
- Adequate funding, resources, and personnel for FEMA that cannot be reallocated without legislation.
- Experienced, qualified and knowledgeable leadership in all key FEMA positions.
- A culture of empowerment established and maintained within FEMA that promotes the maximum level of autonomy and supports the independent actions necessary to deal with the consequences of disaster.
- The Principal Federal Official (PFO) position abolished, as it leads to confusion.
- The FEMA Regions strengthened.
- Opportunities ensured for local emergency managers to have meaningful participation in the policy development process.
- A return to established emergency management doctrine – all hazards, integrated, all phases (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery). The entire Preparedness mission returned to FEMA.

These elements remain important, and we strongly urge their adoption by the next administration. In particular, IAEM would like to emphasize the importance of highly qualified leaders for FEMA – both in Washington and in the Regions – who understand the basic tenants of emergency management and have experience relevant to their position.

IAEM has a strong preference for FEMA leaders in the next administration to have been emergency managers at the State and local level.

Involvement in policy initiatives

The next administration should continue FEMA's recent noteworthy efforts to involve state and local emergency managers in policy development. Not too long ago, I gently reminded our partners in FEMA that if they wanted us to be there at the crash landing, we should be a part of the take off. I am pleased to say that there appear to be fewer crash landings recently – and we'd like to think this is a direct result of being more involved in the take off. Some examples of our recent involvement in policy initiatives include

FEMA reaching out to us on the Integrated Planning System (IPS), disaster policy changes, guidance for the Emergency Operations Center grant program, the Cost to Capability effort, and the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

We particularly appreciate the inclusion of State and local emergency management practitioner representatives on the National Advisory Council (NAC) and the Regional Advisory Councils (RAC).

We believe another important lesson has been learned by DHS / FEMA – that discussion with the States alone is not the same thing as discussion with the States and local governments. We strongly recommend the next Administration adopt this lesson early in its planning efforts.

We believe that these are key lessons – and that they deserve to be noted and passed on to the next administration, allowing them the opportunity to continue building these partnerships and relationships. Ultimately, this will allow each of us as individual team members charged with protecting the lives and property of our citizens to form a more efficient team.

All hazards focus

We urge the new administration to keep the focus on all hazards – of which terrorism is only one. While terrorism is an incident to which we are vulnerable it is certainly not the most likely disaster to occur. That honor probably belongs to the forces of wind and water – whether floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, or more.

Functioning during transition

Concerns have been raised regarding ability of FEMA to function before new political leadership is in place. We would certainly hope that the new administration will nominate a highly qualified FEMA Administrator as soon as possible after the election. And we would urge appropriate but rapid action by this Committee in considering that nominee. However, FEMA has many well seasoned civil service professionals who have been with FEMA for many years and they are the ones who make the agency run on a day-to-day basis. They will continue the agency operations as they have done in previous transitions. Nancy Ward, a civil servant who has been selected by FEMA to be prepared to act as administrator in the interim period, is a highly regarded professional with many years of experience.

The future of the emergency management profession

Strong State and local emergency managers are a critical element of the future success of our National Emergency Management System. In order to enhance the capacity of the profession, there are a number of critical elements that the new administration should embrace and promote. They are:

- The Principles of Emergency Management (POEM) initiative. This initiative was undertaken to provide a universal doctrine of emergency management. The document describing the initiative in detail is attached and incorporated herein by reference. The elements of POEM are designed to promote emergency management which is comprehensive, and not focused on one type of disaster; progressive; risk-driven; integrated; collaborative; coordinated; flexible; and, professional.
- The Emergency Management Institute. One of the crown jewels of the emergency management profession is the Emergency Management Institute. More recently, however, EMI has had neither adequate financial resources nor academic focus to fulfill its vital role. We must provide both of these elements in order to return to the established doctrine of integrated emergency management. In addition, the Higher Education Program – which currently works with more than 130 universities and colleges offering degree programs in the field – will be an essential element to producing future well-educated and degreed emergency management professionals. EMI must be viewed as the depository of all knowledge concerning emergency management. In order to accomplish this EMI must continually update their course materials and remain vigilant as the profession goes through constant change. This level of attention will require adequate budgetary support above and beyond current levels.
- Certification and Accreditation. Two established and mature standards – one for personnel and one for programs – are the Certified Emergency Manager ® (CEM) credential and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program. Taken together, these programs represent the consensus of the emergency management community on established professional emergency management standards.

Local preparedness

Our communities face different risks across the Nation, and have different needs. That's why it is so important that the guidance for grants needs to allow locals the maximum amount of flexibility possible. One size simply does not fit all.

I am aware that this subcommittee has been particularly interested in Citizen and Community Preparedness.

I believe that there is a role for the federal government here – to provide support in these activities for me, as a local government emergency manager. The 1.2 million citizens of my jurisdiction have a responsibility to ensure they are prepared to respond to any disaster that may confront them. It is my primary role to help them prepare for these disasters. Toward that end, my office does 200 or more public education events each year. What would really help us is for FEMA to provide tools for us to use in this vitally important mission.

We need messages – derived from state and local government emergency managers – that are available nation-wide. We need professionally developed Public Service Announcements and other messages that the typical local government emergency management agency is not sufficiently resourced to provide.

We jointly need to encourage personal responsibility and sustainability. Every message that goes out across the nation should refer citizens with specific questions or wanting more information to the local government emergency manager. Ultimately, I believe the responsibility of FEMA toward community preparedness needs to be concentrated in support to the local government emergency manager with the availability of publications to hand out at community events, Public Safety Announcements for local media, and other tools to help us increase community and individual preparedness for all hazards. We need tools to help us reach those with special needs. We have the audience, but we need help from FEMA with the tools.

We need to jointly work toward making our citizens survivors instead of victims. A survivor does everything within their power to mitigate the problems being presented by the disaster. Some citizens are not able to help themselves – but the general population is more than capable of doing so. A survivor never asks, “Where is my assistance?” Instead, a survivor asks, “How can I help with the problems?” Survivors act as force multipliers – victims are liabilities.

I have evacuated my jurisdiction on several occasions for pending hurricanes. On every occasion a significant percentage does not follow the evacuation orders. These non-evacuees will wind up getting injured or killed as a result of the effects of the storm and I will forever wonder what I could have done differently to have gotten them to evacuate.

Continuing Post Katrina Reform Act Implementation

We urge that Congress continue to monitor the implementation of the Post Katrina Reform Act.

Congress made it clear when the Post Katrina Reform Act was passed that they want a strong FEMA with an Administrator with clear authority for managing all aspects of disasters and emergencies. Some specific examples from the Act which we believe are not being followed include:

Section 611 (12) (B) is of particular importance. This amended the Homeland Security Act of 2002 by “striking the matter preceding paragraph (1)” which contained the language, “the Secretary acting through...” and inserted instead the following language. “In General – The Administrator shall provide Federal Leadership necessary to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from or mitigate against a natural disaster, act of terrorism and other man-made disaster – including...managing such response.” Congress acted intentionally to transfer these responsibilities from the Secretary to the Administrator.

Section 503 Federal Emergency Management Agency

(b)(2) Specific Activities – In support of the primary mission of the Agency, the Administrator –

(A) lead the Nation's efforts to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against the risk of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters, including catastrophic accidents.

(H) develop and coordinate the implementation of a risk-based, all hazards strategy for preparedness that builds on those common capabilities necessary to respond to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters while also building the unique capabilities necessary to respond to specific types of incidents that pose the greatest risk to our Nation

Section 503 (c)(4)(A) In General – The Administrator is the principal advisor to the President, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary for all matters relating to emergency management in the United States.

Sec. 503 (c) (5) Cabinet Status –

(A) In General – The President may designate the Administrator to serve as a member of the Cabinet in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

(B) Retention of Authority – Nothing in the paragraph shall be construed as affecting the authority of the Secretary under this Act.

We believe that DHS frequently and mistakenly quotes Section 502(c)(5)(B) regarding the authority of the Secretary and the Administrator as being applicable across the entire act when, in fact, it is limited in scope only to paragraph (5). We strongly request the committee to provide continual oversight of DHS on these matters to ensure they are following the clear and direct law on these issues.

Congress also rejected the DHS Stage 2 Reorganization and clearly and unambiguously moved all Preparedness functions and personnel to FEMA. IAEM believes that Section 506 (c) (1) and (2) of the Homeland Security Act as amended by the Post Katrina Reform Act clearly prohibits the transfer of any asset, function or mission from FEMA without a specific Act of Congress. A major function of FEMA is to rebuild relationships with State and local officials. Therefore, the Intergovernmental Affairs function assumes a much higher level of importance. Despite the clear prohibition on moving this function from FEMA, we understand there are numerous positions performing this vital role still under the National Protection and Programs Directorate (outside of FEMA) on a non-reimbursable detail. We urge this committee to insist that these positions and funding should be immediately transferred to FEMA for intergovernmental.

Another of our areas of concern focuses on the Office of Operations Coordination – which was created after the Post Katrina Reform Act, was signed into law--and whether the role this office will perform is consistent with the implementation of the Post Katrina Reform Act. Subtitle C of the Post Katrina Reform Act clearly assigned the FEMA Administrator responsibility for the National Preparedness System, including the National Planning Scenarios and the planning system yet these functions appear to have been placed under the authority of the Office of Operations Coordination. Yet another area of potential concern is a growing internal discussion within DHS regarding the perceived differences between Incident Management and Emergency Management. We believe we can help put the discussion of these terms to rest. Emergency Management is the broader, overarching and systematic approach to the issue of dealing with all disasters and emergencies, whether natural, technological, or homeland security. Incident management, while important, is a much more narrowly focused sub-element of response, one of the four phases of emergency management (mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery). To insist otherwise is to ignore the evidence of reality – and, a tacit acknowledgement on the part of DHS that they fail to understand the broader implications of the overall emergency management system.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we hope that the new administration will consider the critical elements IAEM has adopted. We believe a strong and independent FEMA with clear authority, direct access to the White House, and highly qualified leadership is essential. We urge Congress to insist on full implementation of the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA). We urge continued involvement of state and local emergency managers in policy discussions. We do not want any crash landings. We stand ready to assist in any way we can.

IAEM Contact Information:

International Association of Emergency Managers, 201 Park Washington Court, Falls Church, VA 22046

President: Larry Gispert (GispertL@HillsboroughCounty.org)

Government Affairs Chair: Bob Bohlmann (rcbohlmann@co.york.me.us)

Policy Advisor: Martha Braddock (MSBraddock@aol.com)

Testimony of Jane Bullock, Principal, Bullock & Haddow, LLC and former Chief of Staff, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Ad Hoc Committee on State, Local and Private Sector Preparedness and Integration

September 24, 2008

Chairman Pryor, Ranking Member Sununu and distinguished members of the Subcommittee,

I appreciate the opportunity you have given me today to talk about something that is very important to me, to my peers on the panel, to the Congress and, most critically to the American people and that is how we can better serve the American people during times of crisis.

I applaud the Committee for convening this hearing to examine how to ensure we are prepared during a time of change.

I believe I bring a unique perspective to this hearing. I had the privilege of working as a career civil servant in FEMA for 21 years culminating in my position as Chief of Staff to FEMA Director James Lee Witt during the Clinton Administration.

Early in my career at FEMA, I worked in such diverse programs as earthquake preparedness and mitigation, radiological emergency preparedness, and flood insurance and mitigation. In addition, I served as the Director of the Office of Regional Operations and the Director of Public Affairs.

During my tenure as Chief of Staff, I was proud to be a part of Project Impact, the most successful community-based hazard mitigation program ever implemented.

As a career civil servant, I served on the internal FEMA team for Administration transitions in 1988 and 1992 and led the reorganization of the Agency in 1993. As a career Chief of Staff, I led the Agency transition team in 2000.

Throughout my time at FEMA I worked along side of the most dedicated and talented civil servants in the Federal government who, from 1992-2000, successfully responded to over 300 major disasters including the 1993 Midwest Floods, the Northridge Earthquake, Hurricanes Floyd and Fran and the Oklahoma City bombing.

Since leaving FEMA, I have become a member of the Adjunct Faculty at the Center for Crisis, Disaster and Risk Management at the George Washington University and established a consulting business working with Federal, State and local governments, non-profit groups and non-governmental organizations to implement disaster mitigation, preparedness, and response and recovery programs.

But my heart has never really left FEMA.

When you work at FEMA, you can have a dramatic impact on people's lives and during my 21 years at FEMA, the Agency had one of the lowest personnel turnover rates in the entire Federal system.

FEMA is a unique Agency in that it's entire mission is focused on helping the American people to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of a disaster, whether it be a natural disaster or manmade, and when a disaster strikes, to provide support to individuals, families, and communities needed to effectively respond and recover.

However, we always recognized that FEMA cannot achieve this mission on its own. Our ability to succeed was always dependent upon working partnerships with State and local governments, other Federal agencies, non profits and the private sector.

All disasters are local and FEMA has been most effective when it has had the authority and resources to coordinate and direct the Federal government's efforts to support State and local officials before, during and after a disaster strikes.

Unfortunately, I believe the current Administration and the current leadership at the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA do not understand the mission of FEMA or how to best achieve it.

We saw this first in Hurricane Katrina, and now, three years later, after the promise of reform and the talk of a FEMA renewal, we are seeing it again in Hurricane Ike.

As we look forward to the next 12 months, change will be coming to Washington and to the Federal government.

During this period, we could experience any number of disasters including a major earthquake in California, which unfortunately is long overdue, severe winter storms that could disrupt our infrastructure, a major flu outbreak, a major hurricane or another domestic terrorism event.

What can be done in the coming months to ensure that should a major event occur during this time that FEMA and the Federal government will be prepared?

What should be the vision for the future of FEMA in a new Administration?

This Committee has an opportunity in its oversight capacity to have an impact of the future of FEMA and the safety of our citizens from future disasters.

FEMA should be returned to its former status as the world's best emergency management organization focused on customer service, applying an all hazards/risk based approach to emergency management, providing leadership to and working in partnership with State and local governments, and expanding the critical players to include the private sector and the NGO's.

In this context, I would suggest that the following actions need to be taken as we move forward:

- Move FEMA out of the Department of Homeland Security and reestablish it as an Independent Executive Branch agency whose Director reports directly to the President.
- Reinstate the Director of FEMA as a member of the President's Cabinet.
- The next President should appoint a FEMA Director who has a strong relationship with the President and experience in both emergency management and running a government agency. This appointment should be among the very first appointments the President makes.
- Rebuild FEMA's partnership with State and local emergency management organizations – make them full partners at the table and work with them to provide the support, training, exercises and tools they need to enhance their capabilities.
- Reinvest in FEMA's career civil servants and strengthen the role FEMA's Regional career staff play as the first line of defense in preparedness and response.
- Rebuild the Federal Response Plan that designates FEMA as the Agency that directs all Federal response efforts in major disasters in support of State and local governments.
- Invest in hazard mitigation and support community disaster resiliency efforts. A model for such efforts is the highly successful Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities started in the late 1990's but discontinued by the Bush Administration.
- Expand partnerships to embrace the private sector, NGO's and community- based organizations as full partners in our nation's emergency management activities

Obviously, all of this cannot be accomplished in the next few months but there are practical actions that can be taken to improve our preparedness during this time of change.

There are three areas that I would focus on: 1) rebuilding the State and local partnerships, 2) improving coordination among the Federal agencies and; 3) taking a thoughtful and careful approach to personnel actions during the transition :

First I would suggest that the career leadership in each of the FEMA Regions meet together with State emergency management and local emergency managers, where appropriate, to talk about what can be expected from FEMA during this period and how we will work together specifically in the event of a large disaster.

As you have heard from earlier panelists, FEMA has already begun to reach out to their partners but let's request that meetings occur at each Region to ensure that each partner knows what can be expected, what each can bring to the table, and how the coordination will work. This would be an important first step to rebuilding the partnership.

There are varying capabilities at the State and local level. An open and honest dialogue of what the State can expect from the Federal government and what FEMA can count on from the States and

localities will go a long way toward managing the response and managing the expectations of our citizens that may be impacted by a large event.

At the same time, I would strongly encourage that more formal efforts should be made to better understand and form partnerships with the numerous non- governmental organizations (NGO's), non profits and private sector organizations that are now very active in preparedness and response as a result of Katrina. We will need their support and help in a major disaster. But it is important, as with State and locals, to understand what assets they have and how they can be best utilized now, before the disaster strikes.

Second, senior career leadership at FEMA Headquarters should convene meetings with their counterparts in other Federal departments and agencies to make sure the coordination and relationships are in place to provide a coordinated and effective Federal response. Under the new Federal Response Framework, the roles and responsibilities of the Federal partners have been blurred and DHS/FEMA has tried to do it all. This has been a major mistake because DHS/FEMA simply does not have the expertise to do it all.

The most effective Federal response mechanism evidenced in the 1990's was based on utilizing the expertise of other Federal agencies, such as the Army Corps of Engineers for logistics, the Department of Energy for power restoration and Department of Agriculture for food stamps, etc. .

FEMA provided the coordination and reimbursement through the Disaster Relief Act.

An immediate step to improve preparedness would be to meet with the Federal partners and establish simple, short term operating agreements as to roles and responsibilities in the event of a large disaster

To be absolutely honest, I believe that, in the event of a disaster, we will see a more effective Federal response because the senior career leadership in FEMA know what needs to be done and will do it without being second guessed or restricted by indecision, cost or political philosophy as we have seen happen under the current political leadership. A political leadership team which have really never understood the dynamics of preparedness, response and recovery and mitigation.

Third, I would like to focus on several issues on personnel that are relevant to our ability to be prepared.

I know there has been concern over the numbers of positions at FEMA that remain unfilled. I would like to introduce a note of caution in rushing to fill these positions.

In the rush to fill these positions, we are seeing individuals being selected who may be qualified on paper but lack an understanding of what makes for a successful emergency management organization.

My concern is that FEMA is rushing to hire personnel without carefully thinking of the skills needed to rebuild FEMA.

FEMA has hired many individuals such as ex military and ex Coast Guard personnel who appear appropriate on paper but these disciplines are Federal centric, with a background of always being in charge and acting independently.

These disciplines do not have a lot of experience working with State and local governments. Therefore, they often don't recognize or understand the importance of State and local governments in emergency management and they tend to not listen to their ideas, concerns and needs.

The Constitution assigns public health and Safety to the States. The Disaster Relief Act makes it clear that the Federal government is called in when State and local capacities have been overwhelmed.

A strong and effective National system of emergency management must be built in partnership with State and local governments where the Federal participants play a supplementary and coordinating role, we need senior officials at FEMA who understand and value the importance of the State and local partnership.

During this time of change, another major concern is to ensure that career positions are not being filled by former political appointees from throughout the government who have very limited experience in FEMA related areas.

During the 2000 transition all Federal agencies were required to inform the Congress when a former political appointee was chosen to fill a career position.

I would urge Congress to request the same notification as we proceed through the next months. I think it only appropriate for the Committee to be informed by FEMA on a regular basis the names of any individual or individuals who have been selected for a civil service position who had formerly held a political position within the Administration and their qualifications for the new civil service position. I would suggest such reports cover a period starting from January of 2008.

FEMA is a small agency with a big mission and as such, must be careful to hire only the very best and most qualified to support its mission.

Another issue has arisen relative to the FEMA Regional Directors.

There has been significant discussion of converting the Regional Director position to career civil service, and DHS/FEMA has said it intends to do so as the positions are vacated.

I think this is a major mistake.

As a former Director of FEMA's Office of Regional Operations I have worked closely with FEMA's staff in the Regions. The FEMA Regional structure has always been built around a strong career

Deputy Regional Director and a political Regional Director who can be that critical interface with the political community of Governors, local elected officials, and Members of Congress.

In the 1990s, we found that FEMA's most effective regional directors were those political appointees who had the skills and experience to work in the political world and who were not intimidated by Governor's, Mayor's or other political figures.

Our most successful regional directors provided a needed buffer between the career employees and the political culture as the employees worked to help the American people to prepare for and respond to disasters.

These regional directors developed a level of trust with their career employees that allowed everyone involved to do their job.

I believe the career deputy regional directors can more than adequately manage their regions during the transition time between Administrations but it is imperative that a new group of regional directors be appointed by the President as soon as possible.

One final note on personnel, transitions are times of anxiety for career civil servants. The more the transition process can be open, transparent and involve the career employees, the unions and the organizations that represent the civil service, the smoother that transition and subsequent reorganizations will be. I would hope the Committee through its oversight responsibilities, could encourage the new Administration to endorse such an approach.

During my 21 year career at FEMA, the Agency was most successful when the President and the Congress made it clear that the Federal government has a critical role to play in supporting State and local governments in disaster management.

FEMA was most successful when the FEMA Director had emergency management experience and strong relationship with and direct access to the President and worked in concert with FEMA's dedicated career employees.

Our country's emergency management system was strongest when there was a working partnership among Federal, State and government, the voluntary agencies, NGOs and the private sector.

I strongly believe that the actions I have proposed today can restore FEMA and our Nation's emergency management system to its former status as the best in the world and restore the confidence of the American people that their government will be there to help them when the next disaster strikes.

Thank you.

Question#:	1
Topic:	dispute
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Marco Bourne
Director of Policy and Program Analysis
Federal Emergency Management Agency**

**From Senator Mark Pryor
"Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan"
September 24, 2008**

Question: Currently, there is no mechanism for resolving a dispute either between federal agencies or between state and local authorities in the midst of a disaster. What happens if everything does not go according to plan and there is a question about who should do what? To who are those questions referred?

Answer:

Presidentially declared disasters are managed locally at Joint Field Offices (JFO) serving as the primary Federal incident management field structure from which direction is given. The JFO and within it the Unified Coordination Group is a mechanism that could help resolve issues between state and local authorities. The JFO is a temporary Federal facility that provides a central location for the coordination of Federal, State, tribal, and local governments and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations with primary responsibility for response and recovery.

The mechanism for resolving disputes between Federal Agencies lies with the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO). The FCO coordinates all Federal response. Released in March, 2003, Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) – 5, *Management of Domestic Incidents* establishes a single comprehensive national approach to domestic incident management which, among other functions, clarifies Federal roles (see footnote). HSPD-5 mandated the development of, and serves as the foundation for, the National Incident Management System (NIMS), a guide to unified command, and the National Response Framework (NRF), a guide to house the Nation conducts all-hazards response. The NRF is built upon the NIMS concepts of scalability, flexibility, and adaptability in coordinating structures to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation, linking all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector and contemplates decision making at the lowest level possible up through the Unified Command Group at the Joint Field Office.

Question#:	1
Topic:	dispute
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

All Federal departments and agencies may play significant roles in incident management and response activities, depending on the nature and size of an event. Many of these arrangements are defined in the Emergency Support Functions (identified in the NRF), coordinated through pre-scripted mission assignments, and formalized in interagency agreements.

State, tribal, and local governments have responsibility to develop detailed, robust all-hazards plans and hazard-or incident-specific annexes with supporting procedures and protocols to address their locally identified hazards and risks.

FEMA continually works to engage stakeholders in developing and communicating clear national doctrine and policy both internally and externally. FEMA is constantly working to ensure the Nation's jurisdictions have adequate plans and programs to effectively address all-hazards and minimize loss of life and property. Coordination in these two areas helps to address disputes or disagreements that may arise on a disaster operation.

¹ HSPD-5 clarifies roles in incident management by assigning specific responsibilities to the Attorney General, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and the Assistants to the President for Homeland Security and National Security Affairs, and directs the heads of all Federal departments and agencies to provide their full and prompt cooperation, resources, and support, as appropriate and consistent with their own responsibilities for protecting national security, to the Secretary of Homeland Security, Attorney General, Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of State in the exercise of leadership responsibilities and missions assigned.

Question#:	2
Topic:	distinction
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: Should there be a distinction in the Stafford Act between “regular” and catastrophic disasters has come up in several homeland security hearings? Is there any distinction in the planning and exercising now? Do you recommend that a new administration try to differentiate? What would you consider the advantages and disadvantages of each approach? What would be your top five recommendations for establishing a catastrophic designation under the Stafford Act?

Question:
Should there be a distinction in the Stafford Act between “regular” and catastrophic disasters has come up in several homeland security hearings?

Answer: No, there should not be a separate disaster declaration for catastrophic disasters. The Nation’s response and recovery assets under a disaster declaration are flexible and scalable for any size disaster and creating a new catastrophic disaster declaration will just result in delay and confusion as we try to determine what size disaster we have rather than making a declaration and responding to the disaster. Under the Stafford Act, as currently constructed, there is wide latitude for the President to make federal resources available to support state and local governments. A new category of disaster declaration garners no new authority or support that is not already available to the President under Stafford as currently constructed. Also trying to define a “regular vs catastrophic” disaster is a matter of great conjecture and debate. What constitutes a “catastrophe”? In some cases it could be to one state or even one region within a state, or it could be something that is multi-state in nature. It is also true that to one town a disaster is a catastrophe. To set a parameter around a non-specific type of event is arbitrary and will potentially have a limiting effect on federal support as opposed to opening up new avenues of federal support.

Question:
Is there any distinction in the planning and exercising now?

Answer: Most planning and exercises are designed around developing and/or organizing capabilities that are scalable to an event of any size. “Catastrophic Plans” are usually those that plan for highly unusual/low probability events that have very high consequences (economic, health, environmental, etc.) and which will require an extraordinarily large response under dire circumstances. Using the Integrated Planning System (IPS), FEMA is constantly updating and improving disaster response plans, and tests those plans by conducting exercises. The FEMA National Exercise Directorate

Question#:	2
Topic:	distinction
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

(NED) is charged with planning and coordinating these exercises under the National Exercise Program, with a major emphasis on how Federal, state and local governments would address catastrophic disasters including major IND and biohazard incidents. Per the Homeland Security Grant Program guidance, States are also required to conduct exercises based on "scenarios that are catastrophic in scope and size, as defined by the National Response Framework." However, there is no difference in the disaster declaration process because there is no separate catastrophic disaster declaration.

Question:

Do you recommend that a new administration try to differentiate?

Answer: No, for all the reasons previously mentioned, there would be no value in creating a new catastrophic disaster declaration category.

Question:

What would you consider the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?

Answer: FEMA sees no advantages to establishing a new catastrophic disaster declaration category and there would likely be disadvantages with confusion as to which type of declaration should be made in certain incidents as well as considerable time and effort being expended developing criteria for differentiating between a disaster and a catastrophic disaster.

Question:

What would be your top five recommendations for establishing a catastrophic designation under the Stafford Act?

Answer: We do not recommend such a designation be created.

Question#:	3
Topic:	grant funds and risk
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: How would you recommend that the next administration measure the effectiveness of homeland security grant funds at reducing risk? Has FEMA tried to do this and failed or just not had time to do it?

Answer:

Since 2002, DHS has awarded over \$27 billion in grants to strengthen the Nation's capabilities to prevent, protect, respond to, and recover from natural and man-made disasters. FEMA is building the capability to measure the effectiveness of homeland security grant funds and the preparedness efforts of state, local, and tribal governments. Measuring a return on investment and the impact of capital investment on risk will allow the department to more accurately measure national preparedness and prioritize the investment of homeland security resources. While the risk of a terrorist attacks changes over time and is influenced by counterterrorism strategies implemented at all levels of government, the dynamic aspect of risk poses challenges for estimation, measurement, and allocation of resources. FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate is currently developing a comprehensive assessment system that will attempt to capitalize on previous efforts undertaken by FEMA, the former Preparedness Directorate, and the Office of Domestic Preparedness. The goal of these efforts is to meet the requirements established in Sec. 648 of Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA). PKEMRA consolidated grant-making efforts and transferred the responsibility for allocating and managing all preparedness related grants to FEMA. To better steward these funds, FEMA moved forward on a Cost-to-Capabilities (C2C) initiative in order to determine the relative impact of grant programs in terms of capability gains. This Cost-to-Capability (C2C) initiative will determine the relative impact of grant programs in terms of capability gains.

The objective of the C2C initiative is to identify grant investment information, the resulting capabilities acquired, and utilize this knowledge to more effectively manage GPD's portfolio of federal preparedness grant programs. With the tools generated by C2C, grantees will be able to optimize their local preparedness investment strategy with respect to the Nation's Homeland Security priorities. The C2C analytical framework that is currently under development seeks to provide flexibility for State and local investment strategies while linking those strategies to DHS and FEMA doctrine such as HSPD 8. With further development and refinement, the analytical framework could provide

Question#:	3
Topic:	grant funds and risk
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

subjective outputs to include a suite of investment strategies for State and local grantees in which they could choose the one that they believe would be the optimal investment strategy. By design, these tools will adapt to changes in the Nation's Homeland Security Strategy – translating national priorities into a clear prioritization of capabilities-based investments that grantees can then operate within.

The C2C initiative began in spring 2008. Major activities include designing an analytical framework, concept of operations, and requirements document to support a unified approach to FEMA preparedness grant program data collection, analysis, and decision-making.

Following initial design of the C2C analytical framework and requirements document, GPD will enter a multi-year development and implementation process to sharpen C2C's approach and create the tools needed to support a robust and standardized data analysis capability. Stakeholder input is essential in order to identify the best and most appropriate information sources to drive the C2C analytical framework. C2C tools depend on quality information from state and local stakeholders to maximize the effectiveness of preparedness grants.

The output of the Grants C2C initiative will provide decision makers with data analysis to:

- o Identify the capabilities gained by the investment of federal grant funds;
- o Determine the relative value of grant programs;
- o Guide the strategic allocation of funds towards new or existing grant programs;
- and
- o Support policy, budgetary, and investment-related decisions.

This initiative takes a stepwise approach to evaluating capability gains across the portfolio of grant programs, beginning with preparedness grants data gathered between 2003 and 2007. Available data from FEMA grant financial systems will be analyzed to determine the investment patterns of States and local recipients in support of the National Preparedness Guidelines. Focusing on the highest investment areas, FEMA will evaluate the gains achieved in improving the capacity and capabilities of the recipient communities. In addition, FEMA will evaluate its programs' effectiveness in shaping the investment priorities of State and local governments. The resulting analysis will be used to guide the strategic allocation of funds and investment in new or existing grant programs.

The Grants Programs Directorate is chartered with evaluating the effectiveness grants have on preparedness activities. These returns on investment activities started within FY 2007 and are ramping up in FY 2008. The Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009 provided funding to build on these efforts to determine overall national preparedness.

Question#:	4
Topic:	regional offices
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: What is the role of the 10 FEMA Regional Offices in the transition? How closely are the Regional Office Administrators and staff coordinating with state and local emergency managers regarding the transition process? How, specifically, is coordination being conducted?

Answer: FEMA's Regional Offices will play an important role in keeping our local, state, tribal, private sector and other external partners informed about the transition and the continuity of FEMA's mission and programs. Over the next two months, each Regional Office will conduct their quarterly Regional Interagency Steering Committee meetings with external stakeholders. The transition will be a major topic in each of those meetings, allowing for a free exchange of questions and answers. The meetings will also be an opportunity to discuss regional succession plans and to let stakeholders know who their main points of contacts will be during the transition period.

In mid-November, all regional leadership participated in the FEMA Senior Leadership Conference in Washington D.C. This conference focused on transitional planning and execution. This conference outlined FEMA's five priorities during the transition. Those are:

- Readiness
- Communications and Outreach
- Succession Planning
- Knowledge Transfer
- Management and Administration

These core elements of FEMA's transition planning will be coordinated so that there is continuity throughout the agency in communicating with our stakeholders.

In addition, Nancy Ward, who has been named the Career Transition Senior Official, will be visiting each Regional Office over the next several months to conduct all-hands meetings with staff to discuss the transition and messaging to our partners. These visits will allow for consistent discussions with FEMA staff and partners on the agency's transition plans.

Ms. Ward also is engaged to speak at stakeholders conferences to further explain FEMA's transition plans.

As communications and outreach is one of the five priorities of the agency's transition plan, FEMA leadership is being very proactive in reaching out to both internal and external stakeholders across the country to emphasize our primary focus which is readiness and continuity during the transition.

Question#:	5
Topic:	DAE and CORE
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Mark Pryor
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, FEMA increased its dependence on DAE (Disaster Assistance Employees) and CORE (Cadre of On Call Response Employees) employees. Both groups of these employees are only deployed "when needed." As of August 2, 2008 there were 4,378 paid CORE employees and 4,807 in FEMA's database of eligible employees. It's my understanding that the authorization for these employees will end soon and decisions will have to be made regarding reauthorizing some, all or none of these positions.

Where are you in that process? Is this a decision you expect to make in this administration or the next?

I assume some or all of the employee positions will need to be reauthorized or have the contracts renewed. What is the decision making process for these employment decisions?

Do you think FEMA needs to keep up this "increased size," so to speak?

Answer: To answer this question, it is important to distinguish between COREs and DAEs. Both are appointed under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, but they perform very different roles.

4-Year CORE

Positions under FEMA's CORE Program are authorized under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, (PL 93-288) to perform temporary disaster work and are funded (with Congressional approval) from the Disaster Relief Fund, specifically the Disaster Support Budget. CORE positions are excepted service, temporary appointments. In 2006, FEMA proposed to Congress to convert 799 4-Year CORE positions to Permanent Full Time (PFT) positions over a three year period. The conversion of these temporary CORE positions will allow the Agency to build a stronger capacity to support FEMA's mission to prevent, protect, respond and recover from major disasters and emergencies. Initially Congress authorized FEMA to convert 250 CORE positions in FY 2007. However, only 110 CORE positions were converted in FY 2007 since Congress allowed FEMA to delay the conversion of 140 CORE positions, and provided the Agency with the authority to utilize existing funds to hire 190 new PFT positions.

Question#:	5
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The FY 2008 DHS Appropriation authorizes FEMA to convert another 250 4-year CORE positions, plus the 140 CORE positions delayed from FY 2007, thus, totaling 390 4-Year CORE positions subject to conversion to Permanent Full Time (PFT) positions during the 2008 fiscal year period. The Agency has converted 85 percent of these positions and expects to complete them prior to the end of the 1st Quarter, FY 2009.

The remaining 298 positions are projected to be converted in FY 2009.

2-Year CORE

The 2-year CORE positions are assigned to authorized disaster fixed site locations engaged in specific functional disaster assignments. They are funded as "general disaster" positions at the National Processing Service Centers (NPSC) as well as those direct funded by Katrina-related operations. Senior leadership is currently evaluating staffing needs and options related to the 2-year Katrina-CORE positions that are direct funded.

As the "not-to-exceed date" of the employees' current appointment approaches, management determines if the work still exists prior to extending the employee's appointment for another year. The total number of 2-year CORE positions is dependent upon disaster activity.

Disaster Assistance Employees (DAEs)

Disaster Reservists are a non-permanent workforce structured to perform disaster response and recovery activities, usually at temporary work sites located in disaster damaged areas. Reservists are deployed, as needed, to meet FEMA's disaster surge requirements from their homes to a disaster work site through the Automated Deployment Database. They are assigned to Regional Offices and Headquarters National Cadres under appointments of three years, and renewable in increments of three years. They receive compensation only when actually employed and may move from one disaster to the next with a work schedule and temporary geographical assignment subject to change based upon the needs of the Agency.

There is no statutory limitation on the number of DAEs FEMA may employ. FEMA will continue to reappoint DAEs to maintain the current size of the Disaster Reserve Workforce at near 8,000 Reservists in order to meet disaster response and recovery requirements.

Question#:	6
Topic:	PKEMRA
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

**Post –Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Marco Bourne
Director of Policy and Program Analysis
Federal Emergency Management Agency**

**From Senator Joseph I. Lieberman
“Mission Possible: FEMA’s Future Preparedness Plan”
September 24, 2008**

Question: The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 created a new FEMA, with responsibilities, missions, capabilities, and resources far exceeding those of FEMA at the time of Hurricane Katrina and, in many respects, beyond those that FEMA had possessed as an independent agency. Among other things, the Post-Katrina Act gave greater autonomy to the agency, elevated the status of FEMA and its leaders within DHS, and brought within FEMA a range of preparedness responsibilities including responsibility for administering all of DHS’s homeland security preparedness grants to states and localities beyond that which the agency had ever previously had. In debating the Post-Katrina Act, Congress decided to strengthen FEMA within the Department of Homeland Security rather than remove it from the Department as some had suggested in recognition of the fact that the kinds of catastrophic disasters for which the nation must prepare, whether resulting from natural disasters or acts of terrorism, require resources far beyond what FEMA can effectively marshal standing alone. One of the Act’s primary goals is to better enable FEMA to coordinate effectively the substantial response resources of other components within the Department, such as the Coast Guard, as well as to be more effective in coordinating the response assets of the rest of the federal government.

Were any of the new or expanded authorities, responsibilities or resources provided by the Post-Katrina Act useful in helping FEMA prepare for and respond to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike? If so, please describe any such authorities, responsibilities, or resources and how they made a difference.

Were any DHS resources or assets from components other than FEMA used in the preparation for or response to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike? If so, please list any such assets or resources and how they were used. Was it easier to coordinate any of the DHS resources or assets used because such resources or assets were from the same Department of which FEMA is a part?

Question#:	6
Topic:	PKEMRA
Hearing:	Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Answer: We have developed the "New FEMA" based on the expanded scope of the Agency's mission growing out of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) as well as other legislation and increased appropriations. The expanded authorities and resources have enabled FEMA to more effectively perform its missions in a multitude of ways, including:

- We committed to strengthening our partnerships at all levels, and the return of the preparedness programs to FEMA provided us with the opportunity again to work more closely with our state and local partners to increase their ability to both meet their own disaster response needs and also be more closely aligned with FEMA and our Federal partners so when our state and local partners need Federal assistance they are better able to access and make effective use of it.
- The development of the new FEMA approach of leaning further forward to deliver assistance to States, communities and disaster victims more quickly and effectively has served FEMA and its partners well during recent disasters, including Gustav and Ike.
- Upgrades to FEMA's National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) has enabled us to improve communication and coordination with our Federal, State and local partners through regular VTC's that include the FEMA regional offices and Joint Field Offices (JFOs).
- FEMA's strengthened staffing and funding has allowed us to develop new response teams and assets, such as the Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs), so we more effectively support State and local response and recovery efforts when called upon. These teams were successfully deployed during Gustav and Ike and provided critical on-scene command, control, and communications support to State and local officials during those disasters.
- FEMA has made operational planning a core Agency competency using the increased operational planning capabilities FEMA has at its regions and headquarters. We have coordinated planning efforts with our Federal partners to increase preparedness for major incidents under the Integrated Planning System and have used our joint planning, exercise and training efforts with our State and local partners to improve readiness at their level. These efforts include the Gap Analysis Program (GAP) initiative that enabled us to identify preparedness gaps at the State and local level and Federal capabilities that could fill those gaps if needed. We have also supported effective evacuation planning efforts for a number of areas, including Texas and Louisiana plans that were implemented for Gustav and Ike. Last but not least, the increased FEMA operational planning capacity allows us to identify and address response and recovery unmet needs

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before they become a major problem rather than after they wreak havoc on our citizens.

- A key component of FEMA's ability to support State and local response and recovery activities is its ability to meet their emergency needs for commodities, services and goods. As part of the restructuring to develop a more responsive, forward leaning FEMA that effectively supports its partners, we have elevated the logistics function to the Directorate level including increased resources and strengthened support systems and business practices. These new approaches have been validated through improved logistics support activities in recent disasters, including Gustav and Ike.
- The strengthened FEMA Office of Acquisition has significantly greater resources (over 230 acquisition professionals versus 35 contracting positions during Katrina) and improved processes and practices. FEMA now has over 70 pre-positioned contracts in place and ready to implement for immediate response when needed, a number of which were activated during Gustav and Ike. Increased capacity has allowed us to pre-deploy acquisition staff so they could provide immediate support to field operations staff once a declaration was made.
- Another improvement in the timeliness of response support is the increased development of Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments (PSMA's) with Federal agencies that allows for quicker response of Federal assets. While in 2006 FEMA had only 44 PSMA's with two agencies, FEMA now has in place more than 235 PSMA's with 33 agencies, and those PSMA's were implemented 546 times during Gustav, Hanna and Ike.

Regarding DHS assets utilized during the response to the 2008 Hurricanes, the following is a representative sample of the mission assignments which FEMA issued:

Transportation Security Administration (TSA):

- Deployed hundreds of security officers, Federal marshals, and transit teams to New Orleans, LA Houston International Airport, and Gulfport, MS to facilitate evacuation of critical transit need individuals.
- Deployed Federal Air Marshalls to TX to assist with planned evacuations.
- Deployed more than 370 Transportation Security Officers to Houston-area airports to re-establish airport operations.
- Transportation Security Officers staffed points of distribution (PODs) to assist FEMA & USACE.
- Deployed relief teams from airports around the country to backfill local personnel and provide coverage for continued operations.

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Topic:	PKEMRA
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U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP):

- Provided law enforcement officers to support search and rescue (SAR) efforts and assist with evacuation and contra-flow traffic issues.
- Provided reconnaissance and imagery for situational awareness.
- Deployed hundreds of CBP Agents, officers, and technical support personnel to Texas and Louisiana to support law enforcement operations.

U.S. Coast Guard (USCG):

- USCG Cutter DECISIVE positioned in Pascagoula, MS, to provide a Command and Control platform in the Gulf of Mexico.
- USCG DARTS--boats and personnel capable of conducting rescue in shallow water and urban environments supported response.
- SAR helicopters and fixed wing aircraft at Mobile, New Orleans, Corpus Christi, and Houston supported response.
- Conducted aerial pre-storm assessments, post-storm port assessments, and restored navigational and port operations.
- Supported SAR operations with personnel, equipment, and helicopters/aircraft.
- Conducted port assessments and restored navigational and port operations in coordination with port and industry partners.

DHS Infrastructure and Protection Office:

- Deployed Protective Security Advisors to Texas and Louisiana to identify critical infrastructures, support impact assessments, and coordinate prioritization of restoration efforts.
- National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center (NISAC) generated critical infrastructure impact assessments.
- NISAC shared computer modeling assessments with private sector owners and operators, State and local response officials, and Federal departments and agencies.
- Worked with the private Sector Coordinating Council to identify all impacted nationally significant infrastructure.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE):

- ICE evacuated and relocated detainees to facilities that were outside the storm's path.

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Topic:	PKEMRA
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- Contacted community organizations and media to reschedule all appointments in offices closed because of the disaster.

National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD)/National Communications System (NCS):

- Activated the Disaster Information Reporting System to collect communications data on wire line and wireless communications networks, broadcast transmitter systems, cable systems and public safety answering points.
- Activated the Shared Resources High Frequency Radio Network to augment FEMA's National Emergency Communications Network and the National Public Health Radio Network maintained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Coordinated with the communications industry to conduct damage assessments and worked with power crews to coordinate restoration efforts.

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Nancy Dragani
President, National Emergency Management Association
&
Executive Director, Emergency Management Agency, Ohio Department of Public Safety**

From Senator Mark Pryor

**“Mission Possible: FEMA’s Future Preparedness Plan”
September 24, 2008**

1. How would you recommend that the next administration measure the effectiveness of homeland security grant funds at reducing risk?

Before the next Administration attempts to measure effectiveness, consideration needs to be given to how to define risk and, subsequently, how to measure risk. Any measurement tool must adequately address the differences in population, geography, urban versus rural areas, as well as many other factors that vary among states, localities, and territories that receive homeland security funding. One of the challenges the nation faces is that we measure effectiveness differently every other year, depending on the result we obtain: if the targeted result is not obtained, then we change the way effectiveness is measured. By failing to establish a tool, and allowing it to mature over time, one cannot truly measure similar capabilities or processes because there is no consistency from year-to-year. This frustration is compounded by the seemingly multiple attempts by multiple divisions with DHS to measure different capabilities; with limited staffing and funding availability, many states find it difficult to expend the time and energy engaging in these multiple investment tools when we do not see a return on our investment.

In assessing risk and measuring a grant’s effectiveness at reducing risk, DHS/FEMA should recognize that states are unique and often have different types of risks and vulnerabilities. To account for these differences, DHS/FEMA should work with each individual state to understand how they view risks and threats, and how grant program funds could be expended to support both identified state and national priorities. For example, a small, rural, agriculture state may need to focus on threats and risks associated with agriculture, whereas, a more industrial state may need to expend more time and funds focusing on chemical facilities. Effectiveness should start from the ground up. Building on investment justifications, sub-grantees could be asked to develop four to five key capabilities. DHS/FEMA could then provide those sub-grantees with an extended period of time – such as two to three years – for which to develop goals to meet those pre-identified capabilities.

A good start to measuring how well homeland security grant funds have reduced risk begins with determining priorities, and developing tailored capability and program improvement/sustainment plans to meet those identified priorities. While homeland security grant program funds are needed to meet national priorities and broad themes, state and local priorities and critical needs must not be overlooked. Any measurement tool should be developed in coordination with state and local stakeholder input, and should allow states to identify their risks and the types of capabilities they need in order to address those risks.

2. The administration will be transitioning soon. How closely are the FEMA Regional Office Administrators and staff coordinating with state and local emergency managers regarding the transition process? How, specifically, is coordination being conducted?

FEMA Region V had a meeting with State Directors and homeland security advisors during the January 2007 timeframe, during which transition issues were discussed. During the meeting, FEMA Administrator David Paulson discussed with State Directors FEMA transition issues, how FEMA planned to build capabilities with career staff, and how FEMA was developing transparency among management personnel to avoid a knowledge gap between incoming FEMA employees and departing FEMA employees. Since that initial briefing in January 2007, FEMA Region V contact on Administration transition issues has been sporadic.

In order to adequately address this question, NEMA requested that each NEMA Regional Vice-President provide information on how closely the FEMA Regional office Administrators and staff have been coordinating Administration transition issues with their respective FEMA Regions. In large part, the NEMA Regional Vice-Presidents found there to be minimal outreach by the FEMA Regional offices to discuss Administration transition issues. Of those NEMA Regional-Vice Presidents that responded to this question, only two State Directors reported there to be formal conversations on Administration transition with their respective FEMA Region. However, the depth of these conversations is uncertain, with one State Director reported to receive "few, low-key communications on transition. Mostly, the acting [Regional Administrator] has emphasized that any emergency during the transition will be handled swiftly and without delay." Two states reported having informal conversations on Administration transition issues with their respective FEMA Regions. An additional three states reported that their respective FEMA Regional office has made no effort to reach out to them on Administration transition issues.

One NEMA Regional Vice-President indicated that although they had not been contacted by anyone within FEMA regarding Administration transition, their office has had discussions with DHS Transition Team Director Admiral John Acton. According to the NEMA Regional Vice-President, Admiral Acton's staff participated as observers in an emergency operations center during an exercise, and sought information as to how the emergency management agency "functioned and coordinated emergency management actions at the state and local level, and how we interacted with our Federal partners in the region."

ADDENDUM

The following information was provided directly by NEMA Regional Vice-Presidents.

1. How would you recommend that the next administration measure the effectiveness of homeland security grant funds at reducing risk?

Responses Provided by NEMA Regional Vice-Presidents:

- Answering question one requires a great deal of thought because of the difficulty in measuring risk, and coming up with a measurement tool that adequately addresses the differences in population, geography, urban versus rural areas, and other factors that are different and varied among states and cities that receive homeland security funding. A good start in measuring how well the funds have reduced risk begins with determining priorities and moving on from there. It is not clear that there will ever come a point at which risk can be truly quantified, and a national risk measurement tool can be developed that can determine if homeland security funding is reducing that risk.
- The next Administration must start with how to measure risk before leaping to how to measure the effectiveness. Currently, the risk and threat assessments stop at the state borders because it is convenient to do so. The grants go to states – not regions. But the risk and the threats follow the supply chains which cross borders and the populations that are highly mobile across states. The next Administration should change the competitive nature of risk assessments. States (and regions of states) should collaborate with DHS on the flow of goods, services, and people. Then make the assessments. The measures then derive from the risk. Neither nature nor criminals will stop at a state border. Some states protect oil, which is vital to the U.S.; other states protect the food supply; other states protect tourists from around the nation – but this is undervalued in the existing risk assessment.
- DHS/FEMA should start looking at each state as unique, and work with the states to create a tailored capability improvement and program sustainment plan. Grant funding should then be pushed down to the states to accomplish the plan. The work plan accomplishments can be individually tracked and short falls/successes identified. DHS/FEMA can then identify the best practices of individual states and begin to promote them to other states with similar problems or initiatives. States can be held more accountable for completing the items that they identified as needs.

Too much of the money is currently being provided to push national/broad themes developed in a vacuum that do not necessarily cover the true needs of each state. For example, much of the DHS funding is being tagged for Planning. Some states, which may be EMAP certified, do not need a significant amount of additional planning funds. Instead, those states may need funding for items such as risk analysis, building commodity distribution/warehousing capability, creating a state level disaster program for non-declared events, and increasing public awareness mediums; but needed funding for this is not available.

A growing trend by DHS/FEMA for solving problems is to provide a team of planners to be placed in EOC's around the nation without a clear mission. Too much of the federal effort is beginning to rely on outside contracting to solve issues and, as a result, we are not building true internal agency capability within all government levels of emergency management. Once a contract dries up, so does the expertise.

- Risk in and of itself is hard to quantify. States have always tried to stay focused upon their number one priority as a state when targeting homeland security funds towards the "reduction of risk". Another problem is that for some states, such as a small, rural, agriculture state, there has always been the failure or refusal to recognize the threats and risks associated with agriculture. DHS/FEMA should interact with each individual state to understand how each state views risk, threat and need, and conversely expended the funds in support of the identified state and national priorities. The problem has always been a refusal to interact and understand the state programs. The main impediment is the very bureaucratic beltway approach with "the best subject matter experts money can buy, consultants" leading the Federal program.
- The most effective way of evaluating a government's ability to respond to either natural hazards or terrorism related incidents is an effective planning, training and exercise program. The exercise program should be evaluated by high-quality teams established by and funded by FEMA and DHS. The models utilized by the Radiological Emergency Preparedness program are very effective for determining if governments are prepared for incident response. An established schedule is prepared many years in advanced, criteria is established and evaluators are well trained to observe exercises to ensure that plans and training are adequate to support incidents. Exercise programs do need to be based on risk and all states have risks that are specific and DHS funds should be truly focused on an all-hazards approach.
- A lot of work went into the preparation of the FY 2008 State Preparedness report. States should have quantified as well as qualified state and county levels of readiness through the expenditure of homeland security grants. Another DHS tool or program to gauge readiness or the effectiveness of federal grants is not needed.
- This is a very difficult question to answer. One can measure increasing capacity, and one can measure a reduction in gap from a benchmark to a desired end state, but that's about it. Define risk; if the question refers to how one would measure grant funds effectiveness in reducing terrorism, you cannot do it - there is too many variables. This same issue surfaces when trying to measure grant funds effectiveness aimed at all hazards. There may not be a real answer to the question posed this way.
- The next administration should maintain a multi-discipline, all-hazards approach to measure the effectiveness of homeland security funding relating to risk reduction.
- Define an effective response to a terrorist attack or disaster by jurisdiction size and hazards:
 - Capabilities
 - Capacity
 - Time Frames of Response

Post-Hearing Questions for the Record

Submitted to Larry Gispert

President, International Association of Emergency Managers

&

Director of Emergency Management for Hillsborough County, FL

From Senator Mark Pryor

"Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Plan"

September 24, 2008

1. Question: How would you recommend that the next administration measure the effectiveness of homeland security grant funds at reducing risk?

Answer: I would select a few jurisdictions as a pilot taking into consideration population size, location, and known risk factors and do a thorough evaluation of their existing capabilities. I would then use that evaluation as a comparison matrix over the next few years to chart improvement in certain areas.

The areas of concern would be as follows:

- Command and control at the local level
- Resource management, i.e. logistics capabilities
- Thorough understanding of surrounding jurisdictions and their capabilities (mutual aid)
- Interoperability of communications with agencies contained in the jurisdiction, surrounding jurisdictions, state and federal agencies who might respond.
- A post disaster redevelopment plan for getting the community back to some form of normalcy quickly.

I would then take the results of this pilot and come up with criteria that could be easily used to evaluate the progress of jurisdictions throughout the country instead of setting up a singular system to evaluate them which violates the concept that one size does not truly fit all.

2. Question: The administration will be transitioning soon. How closely are the FEMA Regional Office Administrators and staff coordinating with state and local emergency managers regarding the transition process? How, specifically, is coordination being conducted?

Answer: We are not aware of FEMA Regional Office Administrators and staff coordinating with local emergency managers on the transition process at this time. Actually we would not expect it. Our expectation is that in most regions the Deputy Regional Directors will take over and the region will run the same as in the past. However, we certainly hope that the regional staff is being consulted by FEMA headquarters on how the regions can be strengthened in the new Administration. We also hope that FEMA headquarters will keep IAEM informed on transition issues and that we will have an opportunity to discuss local emergency management concerns with the transition team.

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Jane Bullock
Former Chief of Staff
Federal Emergency Management Agency
&
Adjunct Faculty at the Institute for Crisis, Disaster and Risk Management
George Washington University**

From Senator Mark Pryor

**“Mission Possible: FEMA’s Future Preparedness Plan”
September 24, 2008**

1. How should the next administration measure the effectiveness of homeland security grant funds at reducing risk?

In the future it would be beneficial for FEMA to work with State and local partners to design an evaluation by which these grants can document: (1) an increase in capability to better respond to any risk including terrorism. (2) a reduction in risk in their communities through implementation of mitigation measures; and (3) a on- going partnership with governments, the public and the private sector to actively promote risk reduction.

2. Since you were employed at FEMA during several administration transitions, can you please describe some of the best and worst practices you saw during these transitions?

One of the best practices I saw was during the Clinton Transition in 1992. This transition team established their offices at the Agency and met with individuals working at FEMA from all levels. They met with SES managers but also with the GS-4 mailroom clerks. They made the process very open and transparent and seemed genuinely interested in what the rank and file thought were problems or positives about the Agency operations and programs. They were very clear in not talking about individuals or personalities in the Agency but ways to improve the Agency. It facilitated the career employees accepting and supporting the incoming Administration officials.

As a member of the internal FEMA Transition team, I was one of several staff that spent several months preparing materials for the transition. In this case, I saw one of the least desirable practices. This was when the incoming Administration transition team simply requested that we send the briefing books to the Transition Offices and they would contact us later. There was minimal interaction with the incoming team. I believe that there was at least one meeting of the head of FEMA’s transition team with the Presidential Transition Team. There was a sense that the work that the internal Agency team had produced was not valued and led to suspicion and disillusionment among staff toward the incoming Administration.

Internal Agency transition preparation and practices vary greatly and I think it would be worthwhile for the incoming Administration to explain its proposed procedures and requirements to the Departments and Agencies when they begin the process. Often a lot of time and energy is spent producing materials that are often not used.