



NEMA Position Paper on Critical Emergency Management Issues

DATE: March 10, 2009

SUBJECT: Critical Emergency Management Issues for the Obama Administration and Congress

DISCUSSION: The National Emergency Management Association has identified a list of critical issues that must be addressed by the Obama Administration and Congress in order to maintain a viable and effective national emergency management system for the United States.

BACKGROUND:

Communication and Collaboration

There has been significant effort in the past eight years to improve our national ability to prevent, protect, respond, recover and mitigate across the full range of threats and hazards confronting America. Success in these efforts requires constant assessment of our national strategic goals and the steps being taken to achieve them. No single entity, public or private, is the sole authority in defining these goals and none is solely responsible for their accomplishment. Building America's all hazards emergency preparedness capability is a shared *national* responsibility that federal, state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector organizations share with the American people.

The federal government currently has the opportunity to transition from top-down direction to meaningful collaboration with all non-federal stakeholders. A robust and consistent capability for engaging national stakeholders in both national discussions and the resulting decision making process is required.

National Preparedness

The Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have taken the approach of leading the national emergency management/preparedness programs with limited regard to input from State and local stakeholders. Those who practice the emergency management profession at the State and local level are as committed to national standards, measurable capabilities, and improved readiness posture as our federal counterparts. That is why emergency managers have voluntarily created, implemented and measured themselves against an agreed upon set of national standards.

The Emergency Management Accreditation Program should be the voluntary national measure of achievement for both State and local emergency management programs. Congress, DHS and FEMA should endorse and embrace EMAP and refrain from inventing duplicative and competitive programs

National Response and Recovery System

When disasters strike, the only metric we should ever measure ourselves on is whether we met the needs of the survivors of that event. Every iterative process, government regulation, new idea, technological investment, statutory rule, grant program, assessment process, training effort, or education endeavor is only important and necessary if it leads to the achievement of this outcome. If it does not, its implementation, use, and expenditure of resources must be questioned.

The Emergency Management Assistance Compact is a program that NEMA has developed over time that could very effectively help address response and recovery capabilities. Since 1993 EMAC has been used to respond to the nation's largest disasters and was cited by Congress and the White House as one of the few success stories in the responses to Hurricane Katrina. EMAC was created *by States for States*.

NEMA acknowledges that our federal counterparts, our local partners and our members are all interested in accomplishing the goal of a nation prepared for any emergency or disaster. Congress, DHS and FEMA should acknowledge State and local initiatives as tools that may be used to achieve our collective national goal. EMAP and EMAC are examples of established, functional alternatives to some of the programs being promoted by DHS and FEMA.

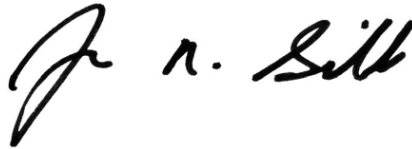
RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Foster communication and collaboration. Ensure stakeholders are included in all aspects of national policy development as successful collaboration requires a partnership with state and local governments, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations. This collaboration must occur with involvement of non-federal stakeholders at the development stage for programs/policies and not just as a review and comment action.
- The federal government should coordinate all national and regional policies, programs and initiatives through the State and not directly with local government. Bypassing the States jeopardizes the achievement of State-wide goals and objectives and creates distrust between State and local jurisdictions and their federal partners.
- Maintain FEMA's mission and lead agency responsibilities for all hazards emergency preparedness, regardless of where the agency resides within the Federal organizational structure. Ensure any evaluation of FEMA's status within DHS or as an independent agency is thoughtful, deliberative and comprehensive, taking into account all the potential ramifications. Include NEMA and key stakeholders in any such evaluation.
- Revise the FEMA Interim Final Rule on State Management Costs and establish reasonable rates that allow States to recover eligible costs for administration of the Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs.
- Adopt and implement the NEMA-FEMA recommended disaster declaration criteria indicators for Individual Assistance. The Federal government must build greater transparency in the declaration process and provide quicker and more detailed communication with the States on disaster declaration request and appeal decisions.

- Congress, DHS and FEMA should place a moratorium on all evolving and new requirements on State and local emergency management programs and conduct a comprehensive review of policies, programs and requirements to determine their effectiveness in reducing risk and building capabilities for State and local governments. This review includes, but isn't limited to, the Target Capabilities List and the TCL assessment, NIMS compliance requirements, planning requirements for emergency management and homeland security grants, National Planning Scenarios, Gap Analysis Program, State Preparedness Reports, Comprehensive Assessment System, and Cost-to-Capability pilot. Involve state and local government representatives whom you are trying to serve through these programs in the review process.
- Work with key stakeholders to create a new National Sheltering System for disaster evacuations.
- Conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the national response and recovery system and disaster assistance programs; redesign as necessary to meet the needs of the future. Include key stakeholders like NEMA in the process from beginning to end.

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Second: CNMI

DISPOSITION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY



Authenticated: _____
NEMA Secretary

NEMA 2009 Mid-Year Conference, March 6-11, 2009, Alexandria, VA