

**NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
MITIGATION COMMITTEE
POSITION PAPER**

DATE: March 10, 2009

SUBJECT: Support for Reauthorization of the Predisaster Mitigation Program to complement the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

DISCUSSION:

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2K and P.L. 106-390) authorized a national disaster hazard mitigation program “to reduce the loss of life and property, human suffering, economic disruption, and disaster assistance costs resulting from natural disasters and to provide a source of predisaster hazard mitigation funding that will assist states and local governments in implementing effective hazard mitigation measures that are designed to ensure the continued functionality of critical services and facilities after natural disaster.” The title of the bill that authorizes the predisaster mitigation program sunsetted on December 31, 2003. Congress approved several more authorizations, keeping the program currently running until September 30, 2009.

Congress has funded the national predisaster mitigation program at the following funding levels:

- FY 2009 - \$90 million
- FY 2008 - \$114 million
- FY 2007 - \$100 million
- FY 2006 - \$50 million
- FY 2005 - \$100 million
- FY 2004 - \$150 million
- FY 2003 - \$150 million

While federal costs towards disasters remain a concern, significant commitments must be made towards both predisaster and post-disaster mitigation in order to lower overall disaster costs in the long run. With such low levels of funding, the predisaster mitigation program has never fully able to address the intent of DMA2K. In 2005, the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Council published a study that found that every \$1 FEMA invested into mitigation projects saves society approximately \$4. The Congressional Budget Office has also found that for every \$1 of investment in mitigation yields \$3 in savings in a September 2007 study.

Predisaster mitigation programs and initiatives have proven their value in not only saving lives and property in recent disasters, but also in many cases have negated the need for any emergency response and recovery. The key to the value of the programs is that predisaster mitigation is coordinated through the Governors and the state hazard mitigation plan as required by DMA2K. The program addresses the unique areas of greatest need to prepare for and reduce the overall costs of a disaster event.

A competitive program as proposed in Presidential budget requests and advocated by some members of Congress severely limits the ability of smaller states, the territories, and those with less frequent disasters to apply for grants and receive grants. These states and territories may face scrutiny because their grant applications would not be viewed favorably against those from larger states experiencing more frequent events. There is a distinct possibility that a competitive approach would mean the end of mitigation funding in many states, territories, and local communities. Additionally, the costs of preparing the application and the

various reviews are substantial and burdensome to smaller jurisdictions. Predisaster mitigation must include all, since science cannot accurately predict where the next disaster may be or what kind of disaster may be faced. The predisaster mitigation program must create readiness in all states and territories from the most critical potential disasters.

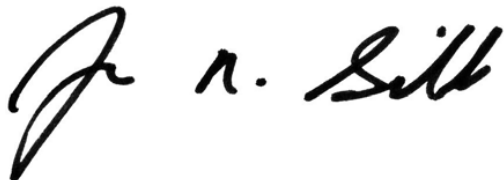
While NEMA is supportive of the Predisaster Mitigation Program, we remain supportive of both pre- and post-disaster mitigation. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) must not be changed in order to ensure a balanced holistic national mitigation program that includes both pre- and post-disaster mitigation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. NEMA calls on the President and the Congress to reauthorize the Predisaster Mitigation Program as authorized by DMA2K. NEMA offers itself as a resource during the consideration of reauthorization legislation.
2. NEMA vigorously supports a separate predisaster mitigation program, but remains concerned that adequate funding must be provided to reap the benefits of mitigation across the country.
3. Attempting to prioritize limited predisaster mitigation funding on the national level is counter productive to the establishment of State and local planning, therefore NEMA supports the distribution of predisaster mitigation funds by a base plus population formula rather than by competitive grants. Further, NEMA supports a predisaster mitigation program that follows the criteria included in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2K). *(Note: Previous NEMA Position dating back to the start of the program.)*
4. NEMA strongly supports a balanced national and federal mitigation program that adequately funds both a Predisaster Mitigation Program and a Hazard Mitigation Program with the formulas included in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (P.L. 110-295).

Moved: Arkansas DISPOSITION: Approved Unanimously
Seconded: Iowa

Authenticated:



NEMA Secretary

NEMA 2009 Mid-Year Conference, March 6-10, 2009, Hilton Alexander Mark Center Hotel, Alexandria, Virginia