



News Release

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IAEM Responds to White House Report on Lessons Learned From Hurricane Katrina

(Falls Church, VA – February 24, 2006) The White House report, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned*, contains recommendations that may significantly change the relationships between local, state and federal governments in emergencies. The fact sheet issued by the White House indicates that the 125 specific recommendations to the President have been reviewed by relevant departments and agencies and “will now enter an implementation process.” Although hurricane season is fast approaching, a rush to implement some of these recommendations would greatly concern emergency managers.

“Before implementing many of these recommendations, we need to get the state and local emergency management professionals who work in this field daily, as well as mayors, county commissioners and governors, at the table to work out what these changes in our relationships will really mean,” said Robert Bohlmann, Emergency Management Director for York County, Maine and Government Affairs Chairman for the International Association of Emergency Managers.

As examples, Bohlmann cited concerns about recommendation 109, which creates a state annual level of preparedness status “report card.” If this report card is not generated as the result of a collaborative process, it could turn out to be another meaningless bureaucratic exercise. Another recommendation essentially mandates annual training for governors and mayors, as well as participation in exercises.

“I think local and state emergency management professionals welcome accountability,” said Bohlmann. “But that accountability has to happen from a collaborative process involving all of the partners in the system.”

Mike Selves, IAEM President-Elect, observed, “At a time when the Administration is recommending decreases in assistance to State and local governments in the form of cuts to the Emergency Management Performance Grants, COPs, fire and homeland security grants, this

report calls for greatly increased workload and accountability on our part. Without significant collaboration with our Federal partners, how do we 'sell' many of these recommendations to our elected officials as anything other than 'unfunded mandates'?"

Larry Gispert, IAEM Regional President representing the hurricane-prone Southeastern region, stated, "Local emergency managers stand ready, willing and able to sit down with our State and Federal partners to fix those systemic problems exposed as a result of the Katrina response. A unilateral approach by the Federal government to fixing these problems would, in reality, just compound an already problematic situation."

The International Association of Emergency Managers is a non-profit organization representing 2,700+ emergency management and homeland security professionals for communities, state and federal disaster officials, private sector, non-governmental organizations and others involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all types of disasters including acts of terrorism. The IAEM (www.iaem.com) is dedicated to promoting the goals of saving lives and protecting property during emergencies and disasters.

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