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## News Release

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### Local Emergency Managers Applaud FEMA Reform Legislation in H.R. 5441

**September 26, 2006 (Fall Church, Va.)** – Our national emergency management system took a first, tentative step away from its previous decline as the House and Senate Appropriations Committees agreed late yesterday to include the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reform compromise legislation as part of the conference report on H.R. 5441, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations bill for FY 2007. The compromise will provide much needed structural realignments and protections for FEMA inside DHS.

“The House and Senate Appropriations Conferees took positive action today in agreeing to the conference report on H.R. 5441,” said International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) First Vice President Mike Selves. “Once the conference report is approved by votes on the House and Senate floor and signed by the President, much needed structural and financial CPR will be administered to our ailing national emergency management system.”

H.R. 5441 appears to be one of just a few appropriations measures that have a chance of being completed before Congress recesses for elections. “We appreciate the incredible efforts of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and the House Homeland Security Committee in crafting this FEMA compromise legislation,” said IAEM Government Affairs Chairman Bob Bohlmann.

The FEMA compromise legislation within H.R. 5441 provides for restoring the rational partnering of preparedness to mitigation, response and recovery as responsibilities of a soon to be re-energized FEMA, which will again be charged with responsibility for dealing with effects of all types of hazards. The reform legislation also elevates the status of the Administrator of FEMA within DHS and provides for this position to be the chief advisor to the President on disasters. The FEMA reform compromise legislation in H.R. 5441 further requires extensive emergency response and crisis management experience for the Administrator of FEMA. It also provides a level of protection to FEMA funding similar to that of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Secret Service within DHS.

“This is a victory for all Americans who deserve and demand a professional and responsive emergency management system within our cities, counties, states, and the nation,” said Selves.

H.R. 5441 also provides \$200 million in funding for the Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG). This funding is the single most effective use of federal dollars in providing emergency management capacity to state and local governments. No other source of homeland security funding is based on a consensus building process determining outcomes and specific deliverables backstopped by a quarterly accountability process. This program, which is cost shared, provides the funding for the emergency managers who perform the role of the “honest broker” at the state and local level and who establish the framework for preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. EMPG is used for personnel, planning, training, and exercises at both the state and local levels. It also supports the people who have had the added responsibility of administering homeland security funding programs and additional planning efforts since 2001.

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**About IAEM**

*IAEM 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](http://www.iaem.com)) is dedicated to promoting the goals of saving lives and protecting property during emergencies and disasters.*