



Statement for the Record
By Jeffrey Walker, CEM ®, President
U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA)
On the FY 2014 Appropriations
For the Federal Emergency Management Agency
Department of Homeland Security
For the Subcommittee on Homeland Security,
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

May 6, 2013

Chairman Landrieu, Ranking Member Coats, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, I am Jeffrey Walker, the Senior Emergency Manager for Licking County, Ohio. I have been a local government emergency manager for 13 years and before that was in local law enforcement and safety and security for local business and industry. I am proud to say that I was the emergency manager for a Project Impact award winning county. I serve currently as the President of the U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA); and, I am providing, on its behalf, this statement on critical budget and policy issues for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Regarding FEMA's FY 2014 budget, IAEM-USA supports the President's request of \$350,000,000 for the Emergency Management Performance Grant and urges \$21,569,000 for the Emergency Management Institute, an increase of \$1 million over the request. IAEM-USA opposes the termination of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. We are reviewing the re-proposed National Preparedness Grant Program. We deeply appreciate the support this subcommittee has provided to the emergency management community over the past few years, particularly your support for the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG).

Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG)

IAEM-USA respectfully urges that the Subcommittee approve the President's request of \$350,000,000 for EMPG, but continue to reject combining it with other accounts. This budget request once again includes EMPG in the State and Local Programs account and in a new PPA called First Responder Assistance. We support the administrative funds being included in the Salaries and Expense account and not taken as a percentage of the grant funds.

The Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG) should be maintained as a separate all-hazard program focused on capacity building for all-hazards preparedness,

response, recovery, and mitigation at the state, local and tribal levels for those entities statutorily charged with such responsibility. All disasters start and end at the local level, which emphasizes the importance of building and sustaining this capacity at the local governmental level – and EMPG funding should not be invested exclusively in any one specific level of government. Funding from EMPG frequently makes a difference as to whether or not a qualified person is present to perform these duties in a local jurisdiction. Our members are observing the current EMPG situation in the state of Louisiana with great concern. Last year the state passed through 63% of the funding to local parish emergency managers. This year the Governor has proposed retaining 80% of the funding at the state level and only passing through 20%. There is concern that of the 64 parishes, less than a third of the offices of emergency preparedness will survive—taking local preparedness back to a pre-Katrina status.

EMPG is fundamentally different from the suite of post September 11, 2001 homeland security grants. It has been in existence since the 1950's, requires a 50% state, tribal and local match and has established performance measures. The authorization of EMPG is purposefully broad to allow jurisdictions to focus their attention on customizing capabilities. EMPG, called “the backbone of the nation’s emergency management system” in an Appropriations Conference Report, constitutes the only source of direct federal funding for state and local governments to provide basic emergency coordination and planning capabilities including those related to homeland security. The program supports state and local government initiatives for planning, training, exercises, public education, as well as response and recovery coordination during actual events.

Given that EMPG represents a shared investment made by both the Federal government and participating local, tribal and state jurisdictions, any changes to the program should be considered and implemented in conjunction with representatives of participating jurisdictions.

Emergency Management Institute (EMI)

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI), located in Emmitsburg, Maryland, provides vitally needed training to State, local and tribal government emergency managers through on-campus classes, a curriculum developed for field deployment and distance learning. This “crown jewel” of emergency management training and doctrine has made progress over the past three years with the funding support of Congress. We respectfully urge the Subcommittee to increase the funding for the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) by \$1,000,000 over the request level of \$20,569,000. We are particularly pleased with the progress made in the development of the Emergency Management Professional Program (EMPP) which includes the Foundations, Leadership and Executive Academies. These multi –course academies will enhance the education and training opportunities of the current and next generation of emergency managers by focusing content on the vitally important core competencies which were developed as part of the project.

It is now time to focus on expanding the delivery capability of these valuable training and education programs by providing funding to allow for deliveries of the Foundations Academy in each of the 10 FEMA Regions on an annual basis, while continuing the on-campus delivery of the Leadership and Executive Academies. The additional \$ 1 million would assist in the

development of a qualified cadre of Foundations Academy instructors, for regional delivery of the Foundations Academy nationwide and for the on-campus delivery of all EMPP programs. IAEM-USA urges you to again specifically designate funding for EMI in your Committee Report and to require FEMA to include a specific request in the budget documents

We appreciate the Committee's support for essential facility upgrades to restore and maintain the beautiful and historic National Emergency Training Center (NETC) facility. We strongly support installing wireless access to the facility to improve the cost efficiency of training delivery. This improvement will reduce the need for printed materials for course delivery by providing wireless capability so students can use tablets and e-readers for course work.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM)

We urge the committee to again reject the proposal to terminate the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program and provide a minimum of \$25,000,000 as appropriated in FY 2013. A Congressionally-mandated independent study by the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Council, a council of the National Institute of Building Sciences, showed that on the average, a dollar spent by FEMA on hazard mitigation (actions to reduce disaster losses) provides the nation about \$4 in future benefits.

National Preparedness Grant Program (NPGP)

We are reviewing the re-proposed National Preparedness Grant Program which would consolidate 18 different preparedness grants (excluding EMPG and Firefighter Assistance Grants) into one grant. Secretary Napolitano has indicated the Administration will be forwarding a legislative proposal; we look forward to seeing the proposal and having further discussions with FEMA officials regarding the details. We will provide additional comments when our review is completed. However, I would like to comment on two elements of the proposal. We are concerned that the NPGP proposal indicates that a request will be sent to change the definition of local unit of government. In addition, the proposal requires "mandatory engagement of urban areas, ports and transit authorities in the State Administrative Agency generated THIRA's and investment justifications in FY 2014." It encourages states to collaborate with all levels of government in the development of the THIRA, but it does not indicate how localities not designated as urban areas will be assured to be engaged.

Last year we urged the Committee to reject the NPGP proposal until there were sufficient details to discuss it and for local stakeholders to have the opportunity for input. At that time twelve national organizations including elected officials, first responders, and emergency managers sent a letter outlining a set of core principles to guide grant program reform. We believe these principles are still relevant as you evaluate the re-proposed NPGP. This letter is available on the IAEM website at <http://www.iaem.com/documents/CoalitionHouseAppropriationsCommitteeLetter-032012>.

These principles are as follows:

- **Increased Transparency** – It must be clear and understandable to the federal government and the public how the states are distributing funds, why they are making these decisions, and where the funds are going.

- **Greater Local Involvement** – Local government officials, including emergency managers and emergency response officials, know best the threats and vulnerabilities in their areas. The THIRA process must include the input of local elected and emergency response officials, and FEMA must be able to audit states by comparing local risk assessments to the state level THIRA. Further, local governments should have the opportunity to challenge a state THIRA that inadequately reflects their needs or input.

- **Flexibility with Accountability** – Any changes to the existing federal grant programs should allow federal funding to meet individual local needs, and preparedness gaps as identified at the local level. Effective but sometimes less politically popular programs, like mitigation, must still receive funding.

- **Protect Local Funding** – Since event impact and response are primarily local in nature, grant funding should support primarily local prevention and preparedness efforts, as is the case under the current program structure. It is important that the vast majority of federal homeland security grants continue to fund local prevention and response activities, including local emergency managers and first responders, and activities that support their preparedness efforts.

- **Sustain Terrorism Prevention** - The current emphasis on supporting law enforcement's terrorism prevention activities must be maintained. The federal grant funds should not be used to support larger state bureaucracies at the expense of operational counter terrorism preparedness, threat analysis, and information sharing activities.

- **Incentives for Innate Regionalization** – FEMA's proposal focuses on states and multi-state regions (similar to the FEMA regions). The homeland security grants must also support preparedness in metropolitan intra-state and inter-state regions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we urge the Subcommittee to continue to build State and local emergency management capacity by funding EMPG at \$350,000,000 and retaining it as a separate account. We urge increasing funding for the Emergency Management Institute by \$1,000,000 over the request level. We urge that the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program not be terminated.

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IAEM-USA is our nation's largest association of emergency management professionals, with 5,000 members including emergency managers at the state and local government levels, tribal nations, the military, colleges and universities, private business and the nonprofit sector. 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.