



**The Future of FEMA:
Stakeholder Recommendations
for the Next Administrator**

Statement of

**Lanita Lloyd, CEM
President**

International Association of Emergency Managers

presented to the

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE
AND COMMUNICATIONS**

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

U.S. House of Representatives

February 14, 2017

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the 6,000 members of the International Association of Emergency Managers USA, I want to thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement for the record to help guide the management and policy decisions of the next FEMA Administrator.

Let me start by thanking you and your colleagues on the Homeland Security Committee for working with IAEM and other stakeholder organizations last year to incorporate our recommended savings clause into the Defense Reauthorization legislation. The legislative language was necessary to ensure the current protections of FEMA's authority to manage disaster response will be applied to the joint task forces that the Defense Authorization bill established. Following the disastrous response to Hurricane Katrina, IAEM and our peer organizations worked hard to ensure FEMA's responsibility, authority, and capability to coordinate the federal government's response to disasters was restored and protected from future dismantlement. By including the savings clause in the Defense Authorization bill, this committee wisely reaffirmed Congressional commitment to safeguarding these provisions that have proven to be successful and have enabled FEMA to become the effective emergency management leader that we all depend upon when disaster strikes our states and communities.

Local emergency managers are the front line in the battle to minimize the loss of life and the destruction of property when natural and man-made disasters occur. We are responsible, day in and day out, for the development of comprehensive, all-hazards emergency management programs in our communities. This involves the development of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery programs for every community across the country. However, even with all of the forethought we put into preparing for crisis, the severity and costs continue to escalate. We need and rely upon the support of the federal government when our local ability to handle a disaster is overwhelmed by its magnitude.

At IAEM, we work hard to improve emergency management coordination at all levels of government, and we are proud of the improvements we have made, working in conjunction with our federal partners at FEMA, to build and develop our emergency management capability and infrastructure. There is always room for improvement, but we feel Administrator Fugate -- a professional emergency manager with unquestioned credentials -- did a phenomenal job turning the

agency around after Hurricane Katrina. The next Administrator, as set forth in the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, must also be a professional emergency manager with unquestioned crisis management credentials and should manage FEMA as a partner with state and local stakeholders, just as his/her predecessor did.

From the lessons learned in the failed Hurricane Katrina response, the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act implemented legislative changes based on the following principles:

- 1. Consolidate emergency management authority, coordination, and decision making with emergency management professionals in FEMA, giving the FEMA Administrator the authority to advise the President directly in times of disaster.**
- 2. Maintain an all-hazards focus on the complete disaster life cycle -- Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Mitigation.**
- 3. Strengthen and protect FEMA's core response capabilities and authorities.**

IAEM still strongly believes these principles are ironclad, and we feel all decisions about the future of FEMA should start and end with a commitment to maintaining the sanctity of all three of these principles.

I also want to take a moment to briefly highlight a few of our key policy positions for you to consider as the Homeland Security Committee works to improve our nation's emergency response system . . .

- Congress should work with President Trump to reinstate the Administrator of FEMA as a designated member of the President's cabinet as provided for in PL 109-295.
- The FEMA Administrator must have the authority to coordinate federal government disaster response on behalf of the President, with the elevated role as principal advisor to the President for emergency management. The authority is critical for effective disaster management and coordination of the entire federal government.
- All functions of the emergency management cycle (preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation) must remain intact within FEMA. Duplicate

offices should not be created in other parts of DHS or other federal agencies.

- Congress should protect the use of the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) for its intended purpose of providing disaster response and recovery assistance to state and local governments by opposing efforts to amend the Stafford Act to allow redirection of funds to other departments and agencies for federal activities.
- Congress should continue to build emergency management capability and infrastructure at the state and local levels by increasing funding for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) for FY 2018. EMPG, the backbone of local government emergency management, has been appropriated \$350 million annually since FY 2014 and should be increased as soon as it is feasible to do so. In addition, EMPG is and should continue to be a separate grant program that should not be combined with any other grant allocation or application process.
- Congress should increase funding for the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) to deliver high quality emergency management training through EMI's academies. The pending appropriation for EMI for FY 2017 is \$20.5 million, the same amount as FY 2016.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record about the future of FEMA. We at IAEM look forward to working with you throughout the 115th Congress to further build America's systems for emergency response.