

**FIVE YEARS LATER: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE
POST-KATRINA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
REFORM ACT**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE,
AND COMMUNICATIONS**
OF THE
**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
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FIVE YEARS LATER: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE POST-KATRINA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REFORM ACT

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:59 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Gus M. Bilirakis [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Bilirakis, Marino, Farenthold, Richardson, Clarke, Hochul, and Thompson (ex officio).

Mr. BILIRAKIS. The Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications will come to order. The subcommittee is meeting today to receive testimony from Administrator Fugate on the progress FEMA has made since the enactment of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act 5 years ago.

I now recognize myself for an opening statement. I want to welcome Administrator Fugate to the subcommittee. Welcome, sir. We appreciate you appearing before us and I thank you for your flexibility in scheduling this hearing.

FEMA certainly has had a busy year with a record number of major disaster declarations. You have responded to tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, and severe winter storms. A number of Members of Congress on this committee represent areas that were impacted by natural disasters this year and we thank you for all of FEMA's efforts.

This hearing is a follow-up on a field hearing the subcommittee held in Clearwater, Florida, which of course is in my district, in June, at which we received testimony from State and local emergency management officials and the Red Cross. The witnesses gave their perspective on the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act and working with FEMA, and let us know what is working well and gave us their suggestions for improvements that could be made.

Today we continue that discussion, of course, with Administrator Fugate. I am pleased to note, Administrator Fugate, that your response to these recent disasters has received positive feedback from the Members and emergency management officials with whom I have spoken. That is good news and it is in some cases due to the

authorities in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, which was signed into law just over 5 years ago on October 4, 2006.

I think we can all agree that FEMA has come a long way since Hurricane Katrina, but we have, of course—we know that there is always room for improvement.

Administrator Fugate, I am particularly interested in your assessment of what is working well with FEMA, what requirements, again, of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act could be working better, and what new authorities would enhance your ability to prepare for, respond to, and assist in the recovery from disasters.

A topic also worth discussing is efforts to mitigate damages to homes and businesses before disaster strikes. I am pleased that you mentioned this in your testimony, your written testimony.

As Benjamin Franklin said, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” That is why I have introduced the Hurricane and Tornado Mitigation Investment Act of 2011, which would provide incentives to individuals and business owners to make improvements to their property that will help mitigate hazards. These efforts can help reduce loss of life and property damage, speed recovery, and also save money in the long run. Administrator Fugate, thank you again for appearing here today and I look forward to your testimony.

The Chairman now recognizes the Ranking Minority Member, Ms. Richardson from California, for any statement she may have.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Bilirakis, for convening this hearing to evaluate FEMA’s progress in implementing the mandates of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. I would also like to thank Administrator Fugate for appearing before the subcommittee today. I look forward to hearing your assessment of FEMA’s present ability to manage effective emergency preparedness and response efforts.

We are here today because just over 6 years ago, Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast and was a sobering test of our Comprehensive Emergency Management System. History reports that FEMA failed that test. As a Nation we learned how ill-equipped the Federal Government was to manage disaster recovery and response activities. Determining who is in charge, who should coordinate Federal, State, and local response efforts, what resources are available and how to acquire the needed supplies efficiently was not done well.

In the mean time, a Nation watched television coverage of this horrific disaster. Ironically, television news crews were able to get to the scene, but relief supplies were not.

In response, Congress enacted the Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act. Although the bill was not perfect, it made much-needed changes to our emergency response infrastructure, notably extreme line emergency preparedness and response operations, by consolidating all components of the Comprehensive Emergency Management System into the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It established a clear chain of command for disaster response activities by giving a Federal coordinating officer, FCO, statutory authority to head disaster response coordination. It directed FEMA to ad-

minister grants and guidance to State and local governments to improve their preparedness capabilities. It established something that you have been known for, Administrator Fugate, for implementing. It established 10 regional offices charged with coordinating with State and local governments and nongovernmental organizations to develop effective regional disaster preparedness and response plans.

The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act directed you, Administrator Fugate, to appoint the disability coordinator to ensure that vulnerable populations have access to and knowledge of and means to evacuate emergency housing and any other necessary resources in the event of a major disaster.

Under your leadership, FEMA has made progress in implementing the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. For example, you have taken significant steps in implementing the integrated public alert and warning system, which I am a strong proponent of, which will facilitate effective public warnings regarding future disasters. These warnings will give people like those in American Samoa the opportunity to seek safe shelter in the wake of a major disaster.

Despite the progress 5 years after the enactment of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, significant gaps remain in our comprehensive emergency response system. I am concerned that a combination of budget cuts and other obstacles will hinder our ability to realize our preparedness goals. For example, another issue of particular importance to me is one that I would like to address later in my questions, specifically regarding the disability coordinator and whether that coordinator has the adequate resources to carry out the responsibilities of this act. This coordinator was appointed in June 2009; however, in the full year 2011, the Office of Disability Coordinator had a budget of just \$150,000, and I asked about this last year. There was no request for additional funding in the full year 2012 budget request. I am concerned that this budgetary amount may be the clear sign of the priorities FEMA places on the mission of this office.

I would be interested to hear your comments on this issue, and others, regarding IPAWS as this hearing progresses. Again, I thank you for being here today and I look forward to your testimony.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you.

I now recognize the Ranking Minority Member of the full committee, Mr. Thompson.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing to review the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform. A perfect storm is a popular expression. It describes an event where isolated conditions merge to create a radically worsening situation. In the process, deep and profound problems are revealed. Katrina was a perfect storm. Hurricane Katrina's devastation of the Gulf Coast revealed a Federal emergency management structure that was disorganized, uncoordinated, and seemed uncaring.

In the aftermath of the storm, numerous investigations led to suggested changes in the organizational structure and the culture of FEMA. These changes were not to be merely window dressing.

FEMA clearly needed to find a way to fulfill its mission, improve the response, and regain the trust of the American people.

Congress acted and passed a Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. Five years after the passage of that legislation, I think we can all agree that FEMA's implementation of the legislation is a mixed bag. Improvements were made, but challenges remain. I am pleased that Administrator Fugate is here today to report on both the improvements and the remaining challenges. I look forward to hearing his testimony.

But before we get to Mr. Fugate, I want to take this opportunity to talk about disaster relief. I hope that we can all agree that funding for disaster relief should never be held hostage to political ideology. When a hurricane, wildfire, earthquake, strikes a community, it does not ask about party affiliation. This is why I was troubled to read that some on the other side of the aisle are now accusing this administration of using the Federal disaster declaration process as a way to turn low-cost storms into Federal disasters. Instead of addressing the underlying need to ensure adequate money in the disaster relief fund, claims are being made that the act of declaring a disaster is some kind of political game. They are saying that declaring a disaster is simply a way to drain FEMA's aid from the Federal Government, weaken the capacities of the States to respond to disasters without Federal help, and divert FEMA from preparing for catastrophic events. These are conspiracy theories worthy of a Tom Clancy novel.

So before we begin this hearing, let me set the record straight. In 2010, there were 81 major disaster declarations. In 2009, there were 59 major disaster declarations. While the numbers are clear, the reasons for the increases are subject to interpretation. It could be more disaster declarations occurred because more disasters have occurred. It could also be more disaster declarations occurred because States were stretched thin; budgets are seeking disaster assistance.

It is unlikely that FEMA is forcing States to take disaster declaration funding. But whatever the reason, given the increase in disaster declaration, a compassionate Congress would hear the cries of those who have lost everything and provide help. Instead, this Congress has called for fiscal discipline. FEMA's budget for management and preparedness program has decreased. FEMA's management budget was reduced by \$10 million between fiscal year 2010 and fiscal year 2011. FEMA's pre-disaster mitigation fund was cut from \$100 million in fiscal year 2010 to \$50 million in fiscal year 2011. FEMA's Grant Program Directorate was cut from \$4.165 billion in fiscal year 2010 to \$3.38 billion in fiscal year 2011. This is a situation that is not sustainable.

As we move forward, I am hopeful we can focus on the facts and provide the help that people in the United States truly need. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for calling today's hearing and I yield back.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

Other Members of the subcommittee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

I am pleased to once again welcome Administrator Fugate, of course, before our subcommittee today. Mr. Fugate was appointed by President Obama to serve as the administrator of the Federal

Emergency Management Agency and was confirmed by the United States Senate on May 13, 2009. Prior to coming to FEMA, Mr. Fugate served as the director of the Florida Division Emergency Management, a position he held for 8 years.

Mr. Fugate began his emergency management career as a volunteer firefighter, emergency paramedic, and finally as a lieutenant with the Alachua County Fire Rescue. Mr. Fugate and his wife hail from Gainesville, Florida.

Administrator Fugate, your entire written statement will appear in the record. I ask that you summarize your testimony, please. You are now recognized, sir.

STATEMENT OF W. CRAIG FUGATE, ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. FUGATE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Richardson and Ranking Member Thompson. Staff spent a lot of time coming up with a bunch of facts and figures on how we have gotten better and how we have improved under the Post-Katrina Reform Act. After I kind of read it, I kind of took the approach that I also heard today: We have done a lot, we still have got a lot to do. So I want to focus on what I think are some of the key elements of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act and how they played out in the last couple of years that I have been here in response to disasters.

I think one of the key things that came out of that Act was we were able to move away from utilizing only the Stafford Act as a tool to look at how we prepare and respond to disasters. That is important, because if you look at the Stafford Act, you must wait until you have a request from a Governor. It then has to go through the process and determined from the President whether or not to declare a disaster, and then you begin the elements of that response.

But as we saw in Katrina, as we have seen in other disasters up and down the seaboard this year across numerous river floods that reached records, if you wait until it is that bad, the response will take time. This is one of the things, really, I think we spent a lot of time in FEMA trying to educate our own staff, that we no longer start with the Stafford Act. It is not our enabling legislation. It is the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. It establishes FEMA. It establishes our mission. It establishes our structures, including the regional office structure, including the findings of many activities that we are to engage in and prepare for in recovery, respond, and mitigate activities.

But I think it is most important that we recognize that access. In the likelihood that an event would be declared or would potentially require Federal assistance, the Federal Government must not wait until a Governor request identifies that they are overwhelmed. It says we shall be prepared and will begin response with the tools that we have, including the ability to use, as Ranking Member Thompson spoke about, the disaster relief fund prior to the President getting a formal request from a Governor.

Now, this may seem rather bureaucratic, but I think it is important that if you wait until you know how bad something is to begin

a response, you have lost time. You have to be able to respond in those events that are likely to require Federal assistance by anticipating needs, not waiting for formal assessments nor waiting until the full impacts are realized. Other aspects of that allows us to do things such as pre-staging teams or equipment in areas that we think will need help.

When you look at what happened with Hurricane Irene, we were actually starting down on the Virgin Islands and in Puerto Rico. Then as it approached the U.S. East Coast, everywhere from Florida to Maine and inland, as we saw in Vermont, were potentially going to be impacted by this hurricane. We didn't wait until the States had made formal requests for assistance. We were able to send teams in to link up with the States and began working with them as they go through the preparations and decisions about evacuations and sheltering, and not wait until they are hit and then ask for help. That ability to get teams in place, to have equipment prestaged, to really work across the Federal enterprise with our State partners as their supporting local government, integrate in our volunteer faith-based and community-based organizations, and I think really start to embrace and be able to integrate the private sector, particularly those sectors that provide goods and services so that we are not duplicating what they do best, but focus on the areas where they are either expecting significant outages or challenges.

That response sped up, in many cases, the time from when incident occurred to actual results were happening. People were on the ground, resources were available. I think this is one of the things that we really continue to focus on, is that the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act gives us speed, not haste, but speed in responding to and ensuring that we get resources in there.

I would be remiss if I said this was entirely a FEMA effort in that much of the response we saw, particularly in the tornadoes across the southeast and up in the Missouri area from Joplin, much of what people saw on television, the search-and-rescue teams, the mobile communication command post, all of that response was actually generated through State and local resources mutual aid, paid for and built and trained and exercised with the preparedness dollars this country has been investing since 9/11. If those dollars had not been invested, those teams built and trained and exercised and equipped, the response this spring would have looked vastly different because those local teams would not have been there. The equipment would have come from further away. We would have had to have deployed more of our Federal assets to those disasters, which would have taken more time to get there. As it was, as we saw, unfortunately time and time again in tornadoes—which oftentimes give us little warning—rescuers and teams from throughout the area across State lines, using the emergency management assistance compact which also receives funding through our grant program to enhance that, were there on the ground doing their job. We were able to focus quickly, then, on the recovery challenges that were going to be faced by those communities.

So if anything else, the legacy of this Act has been able to speed up the process and ensure we work as a better integrated team to

focus on the survivors and local communities, with a clarity that we don't have to wait until everybody is overwhelmed before we begin the response.

[The statement of Mr. Fugate follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF W. CRAIG FUGATE

OCTOBER 25, 2011

INTRODUCTION

Good morning Chairman Bilirakis, Ranking Member Richardson, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee. My name is Craig Fugate, and I am the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is an honor to appear before you today on behalf of FEMA to discuss our progress since the enactment of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) 5 years ago.

The importance of PKEMRA to the emergency management community cannot be stressed enough. For the first time, it gave FEMA clear guidance on its mission and priorities, and provided us with the authorities and tools we needed to become a more effective and efficient agency, and a better partner to State, local, territorial, and Tribal governments.

Today I will highlight some of the great strides we have made using this guidance and the additional authority given us by PKEMRA. In particular, we have made significant improvements to our approach to preparedness. We now focus on engaging the Whole Community in preparedness activities. We have realized that a Federal-centric approach will not yield success and that instead we must collaborate and engage with partners at every level of government as well as the nonprofit and private sector. But there is more work to be accomplished.

Going forward, FEMA is committed to working with State, local, territorial, and Tribal partners to develop innovative and effective ways to communicate both with first responders and with the individuals and entities affected by disasters. We will build upon the foundation that PKEMRA created to identify best practices and lessons learned from each disaster. By having a culture that continuously looks for ways to improve, FEMA can continue to be a capable, innovative, and effective agency.

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

PKEMRA gave FEMA the authority needed to lean forward and leverage the entire emergency management team in response and recovery efforts. This team includes not only government, but also private, private non-profit, and citizen partners—the Whole Community. This Whole Community approach emphasizes the importance of working with all partners to successfully prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Prior to PKEMRA, Federal incident response duties were shared by two separate teams: Emergency Response Teams (ERT) and Federal Incident Response Support Teams (FIRST). Due to cost constraints, ERTs were comprised of staff with primary day-to-day duties in other areas and the FIRSTs had only a small dedicated staff in two regions. This limited our ability to quickly and adequately deploy Federal response teams. PKEMRA changed this by consolidating response teams. As a result, FEMA now has Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs)—13 regional and three National—staffed with full-time, dedicated personnel.

These resources proved invaluable during the response to Hurricane Irene. In preparing for and responding to Hurricane Irene, FEMA pre-positioned a majority of the IMATS along the East Coast to coordinate with State, Tribal, and local officials to identify potential needs and address shortfalls in the disaster response and recovery. Additionally, Mobile Emergency Response System (MERS) assets are strategically located in disaster-affected areas to support emergency response communications needs. Because of all the advance preparation and pre-positioning leading up to the storm's landfall, State, Tribal, territorial, and local officials consistently reported no unmet communications requests.

Some other examples of FEMA leveraging the "Whole Community" during response and recovery include:

- In Missouri, FEMA Emergency Support Function No. 14 (Long-Term Community Recovery) provided planning, organizational, and on-site support for the Joplin Citizen Advisory Recovery Team's efforts to engage residents about the recovery planning process.

- In Georgia, following the severe spring storms in the Southeast this year, FEMA and Georgia Emergency Management Agency collaborated with the State's Bar Association to provide free legal assistance to survivors.
- In Alabama, FEMA partnered with the Alabama Department of Mental Health to activate Project Rebound in the tornado-affected parts of Alabama to provide free crisis counseling for an extended time period after the disaster. This initiative was conducted under the auspices of FEMA's Crisis Counseling Program (CCP). FEMA administers this program in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- In Missouri, FEMA worked with the State-led Housing Task Force to place families with school-aged children in mobile home parks first, successfully housing all families identified before the start of the school year. In addition, along with State and local partners, FEMA formed a Schools Task Force to support and help Joplin local officials establish temporary facilities for schools to meet their goal to open schools on time in the fall.

The agency is also leading substantial response planning, including the development of plans across the Federal Government for catastrophic incidents; planning for future operations for potential/actual incidents; regional planning for all-hazards events; and evacuation and transportation planning. There are also special programs focused on planning for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) hazards to communities throughout the Nation.

Another way that FEMA is engaging with its partners is with the National Mass Care Strategy. This strategy will provide a framework to strengthen and expand resources available to help shelter, feed, and provide other mass care services by pooling expertise and identifying partnership opportunities. The newly created National Mass Care Council was launched in June 2011 and is co-chaired by the American Red Cross, FEMA, and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (National VOAD). FEMA's role is to represent ESF-6 and all Federal mass care components on the Council.

In addition, the American Red Cross and FEMA are now jointly leading the mass care portion of Emergency Support Function No. 6 (ESF-6), to better facilitate the planning and coordination of mass care services. During Hurricane Irene, FEMA worked closely with the Red Cross, local voluntary agencies, and impacted States, to ensure emergency shelters were open locally along the East Coast to provide shelter to residents who had evacuated from the storm. FEMA also coordinated with trained disaster workers from partner organizations such as AmeriCorps, National Civilian Community Corps, The Salvation Army, and Southern Baptist Convention among others. These volunteers helped provide food along the entire East Coast. The effort included more than 250 feeding vehicles, tens of thousands of pre-packaged meals, and temporary kitchens prepositioned in numerous locations.

PKEMRA required FEMA, along with its partners, to develop a National Disaster Recovery Strategy to guide recovery efforts after major disasters and emergencies. Through additional direction in Presidential Policy Directive-8 (PPD-8), FEMA and its interagency partners have developed the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF). The final draft of the NDRF was released in late September 2011.

The NDRF clearly defines coordination structures, leadership roles and responsibilities, and guidance for Federal agencies, State, local, territorial, and Tribal governments, and other partners involved in disaster planning and recovery. The NDRF introduces six new recovery support functions (community planning and capacity building, economic, health and social services, housing, infrastructure systems and natural and cultural resources) and identifies specific recovery leadership positions that help focus efforts on community recovery such as the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC). The FDRC will be deployed when a Federal role is necessary and significant interagency resource coordination is required due to the large-scale, unique, or catastrophic nature of the disaster. The FDRC's sole focus is coordinating available resources to assist the community with rebuilding and recovering.

FEMA has been field testing certain aspects of the NDRF, including the appointment of a FDRC. For example, in the wake of the 2011 tornadoes that tore through Alabama and much of the South, a FDRC was appointed to work with Alabama State officials to develop a recovery strategy that emphasized coordination. In addition, the Governor established a lead State agency to manage State coordination efforts and staff were co-located within the Joint Field Office to provide a direct connection between Federal and State partners. The NDRF recognizes the importance of engaging and utilizing the entire team—Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, non-profit organizations, and the community—to help a community maximize available resources to recover from disaster.

FEMA has also improved its disaster case management services. On December 3, 2009, FEMA signed an interagency agreement (IAA) with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The IAA specifies each agency's responsibility for a two-phased Disaster Case Management (DCM) Program for future deployment. On March 11, 2011 FEMA signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with ACF to strengthen areas of mutual support and coordination in the development, administration, and implementation of the DCM. Phase I of the DCM Program consists of the ACF DCM model of rapid deployment with immediate assistance to applicants. Phase II is a State-managed DCM Program that will assist applicants with long-term unmet disaster needs. Additionally, FEMA has developed and released a DCM Application Toolkit and is currently developing a DCM Program Manual.

These are just a few of the many examples of FEMA's efforts to utilize the expertise and resources of our stakeholders at every level and use the newly developed tools to improve response and recovery capabilities and activities.

PREPAREDNESS

Part of FEMA's mission is to "develop and coordinate the implementation of a risk-based, all-hazards strategy for preparedness." FEMA's Protection and National Preparedness (PNP) organization includes both our National Preparedness and Grant Programs Directorates, which work to ensure the Nation is adequately prepared for disasters of all kinds. PNP strives to promote National preparedness through a comprehensive cycle of planning, organizing, equipping, training, exercising, evaluating, and continuous improvement.

Our National Preparedness Directorate has met some of the preparedness goals envisioned for the agency through PKEMRA, including:

- Issuance of Credentialing Guidelines;
- Promulgation of a National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training Plan; and
- Refocusing and improving our National Exercise Program.

These are only a few of NPD's accomplishments that will contribute to National preparedness. Our Grant Programs Directorate continues to focus and improve upon our many preparedness grant programs, which have provided tens of billions of dollars in critical aid to our State and local partners in advancing their preparedness.

This September, we held a National Recovery Tabletop Exercise (Recovery TTX) in the Washington metropolitan area. This exercise involved players from the Whole Community, with over 200 participants from Federal, State, Tribal, and non-governmental organizations. The Recovery TTX consisted of both plenary and breakout group sessions and focus on three planning horizons: Short-term, immediate, and long-term recovery. This exercise was the first opportunity to explore the applications of the National Disaster Recovery Framework using a large-scale, multi-State catastrophic disaster scenario.

An important part of the Whole Community is the private sector, and FEMA works to incorporate them into its preparedness activities as much as possible. In addition to being strong partners in our most recent National Level Exercise, private sector representatives also participate in FEMA's no-notice "thunderbolt" disaster response and recovery exercises. To further connect directly to the private sector during the most crucial disaster response efforts, a rotating representative from the private sector works in FEMA's National Response Coordination Center during activations to communicate and coordinate with all members of the private sector including small businesses.

FEMA also stresses the importance of individual businesses conducting emergency planning. In order to raise awareness, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Ad Council launched the Ready Business Campaign as an extension of the Department's successful Ready Campaign. Ready Business helps owners and managers of small- and medium-sized businesses by providing them with practical steps and easy-to-use templates that include information on a variety of preparedness topics including creating an evacuation plan, fire safety, and protecting business investments by securing facilities and equipment. In addition, DHS grant programs managed by FEMA allow a tremendous amount of flexibility for State and local jurisdictions to include private-sector companies as part of their all-hazards planning efforts. Allowable activities include the development of public-private sector partnership emergency response activities, development of assessment and resource sharing plans, and the development or enhancement of plans that engage with the private sector to meet human services response and recovery needs of disaster survivors.

In addition to engaging the private sector, a realistic approach to emergency management means not only conducting exercises that reflect real disaster scenarios,

but incorporating the needs and abilities of real disaster survivors into planning and preparedness efforts. Our planning must be inclusive of people of different ages and abilities and it must meet the access and functional needs of children and people with disabilities. In February 2010, FEMA established the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, and in July 2010, established the first-ever Disability Working Group within FEMA. The Disability Working Group is responsible for ensuring that the access and functional needs of children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into all aspects of FEMA's disaster planning, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts initiated and coordinated at the Federal level. As an example, when we pre-stage commodities in preparation for disasters, we include basic items such as water, meals, and generators. However, military-style Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) and other provisions are not necessarily suitable for the entire population, especially young children. So we transitioned from MREs to commercial shelf-stable meals and we pre-stage commodities including infant formula, baby food, electrolytes, and diapers to anticipate, understand, and specifically plan for the needs of children. By improving the preparedness of the Whole Community, FEMA is better able to respond to catastrophic events in an organized and efficient manner.

MITIGATION

In addition to our preparedness and recovery activities, disaster mitigation is an important part of preparing for disasters. In the April 2007 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report, "Potential Cost Savings from the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program," the CBO estimated that future costs are reduced by \$3 for every \$1 spent on mitigation projects. By encouraging and supporting mitigation efforts, FEMA leads the Nation in reducing the impact of disasters and helping to break the "damage-rebuild-damage" cycle in America's most vulnerable communities. FEMA has the lead role in helping communities increase their resilience through risk analysis, reduction, and insurance. One mitigation tool is the Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis Program, which addresses flood hazard data update needs and preserves the successful Flood Map Modernization investment. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) provides flood insurance on a National basis to owners of properties located in vulnerable areas through the Federal Government, through both a premium revenue and fee-generated fund called the National Flood Insurance Fund (NFIF).

In fiscal year 2010, the NFIP reduced potential flood losses by an estimated \$1.6 billion. The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program offers an annual funding source for qualified mitigation activities that are not dependent upon a declaration of disaster by the President. In fiscal year 2010, the PDM program has reduced administration costs by \$800,000. Furthermore, Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) is FEMA's program to provide communities with flood information and tools they can use to enhance their mitigation plans and better protect their citizens. FEMA initiated 600 Risk MAP projects in this past fiscal year, which assisted 3,800 communities by addressing the highest priority engineering data needs, including coastal and levee areas.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The ability to effectively communicate during and immediately after a disaster is essential to fulfilling our mission. In the past 5 years, we have—in response to changes in technology—completely overhauled the way we communicate with each other and with the public in a disaster environment. We now leverage cutting-edge technology as well as important social media tools to communicate in a more effective and dynamic way.

PKEMRA included the support of National communications capabilities as part of FEMA's mission. As a result, in 2008 FEMA established the Disaster Emergency Communications Division (DECD) within the Response Directorate as the lead integrator of tactical Federal disaster emergency communications. DECD provides tactical emergency communications support utilizing its Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) and Mobile Communications Office Vehicle (MCOV) assets, to emergency managers and first responders when Federal, State, local, Tribal, or territorial infrastructure cannot support communications needs for disaster emergency operations. Some of DECD's activities included offering support to emergency responders in the field for the establishment of State-specific disaster emergency communications plans to improve the Nation's interoperability and response capabilities.

PKEMRA also requires the establishment of a Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) within each Regional Office to report

to the Regional Administrator and coordinate its activities with the Regional Advisory Council. RECCWGs have been established in each of the ten FEMA Regions. The Working Groups continue to mature, enhance membership, and collectively evaluate inter- and intra-State interoperability programs, share best practices, and advise the FEMA Regional Administrators on the state of regional communications interoperability.

Looking to the emergency communications of the future, FEMA is also developing a next-generation infrastructure for alert and warning capabilities, known as PLAN (Personal Localized Alerting Network). Cell phones are data centers, capable of quickly accessing and storing a large amount of information. One of the major lessons we learned from the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti was that even if the physical infrastructure of an area is completely destroyed, the cellular infrastructure may be able to bounce back quickly, allowing emergency managers to relay important disaster-related information and enabling the public to request help from local first responders. This new, free public safety system allows customers with an enabled mobile device to receive geographically targeted messages alerting them of imminent threats to safety in their area whether cell phone towers are jammed or not.

We are also expanding our use of social media tools. Social media is an important part of the Whole Community approach because it helps facilitate the vital two-way communication between emergency management agencies and the public, and it allows us to quickly and specifically share information with State, local, territorial, and Tribal governments as well as the public. FEMA uses multiple social media technologies like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to reach the public. Rather than asking the public to change the way they communicate to fit our system, we are adapting the way we do business to fit the way the public already communicates. We value social media tools not only because they allow us to send important disaster-related information to the people who need it, but also because they allow us to incorporate critical updates from the individuals who experience the on-the-ground reality of a disaster.

CONCLUSION

I am very proud of the progress we have made since Hurricane Katrina. While we still have more work to do, I am confident that with the authorities and tools given us by Congress and the lessons we have learned through their application during disasters, FEMA will continue to be an agile and innovative agency that is consistently improving its processes. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions the subcommittee may have.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you very much.

I have a couple of questions. So I recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Again, FEMA has clearly made strides in its capabilities since Hurricane Katrina. I know you addressed some of this. What lessons have we learned from more recent disasters about gaps in our preparedness and response capabilities, and what additional authorities do you need to further advance FEMA's response capacity?

Mr. FUGATE. I am not sure yet about additional authorities, but I do know that there are some areas that we are working on and this comes back to some of the technologies. We have been working very aggressively with the geospatial NGA in providing us better information. One of the things we know is our ability to get information, before people actually get on the ground, to begin describing impacts can help all of the team make better decisions in early response. So this is an area where we have a tendency to wait until we are down there in an area to get information or we are waiting for things to come up through official channels when they are busy responding.

Two things we are focusing on is how do we get information from various types of sensor platforms; but on the other hand, how do we get more information from the public? This is one of the things I think that I am seeing more and more of and the benefits we saw

in these recent disasters. Oftentimes we were getting faster and more accurate information from people that were sending out everything from social media to local and National news media that had reporters on the ground. They were sending uplinks of those disasters. Looking at that and going just based upon that, I am seeing a lot of damage.

We can go. But how do we do this in a way that we can get this information out that is actionable and speed up that response, and the faster we are able to adjust to those issues, the better our response is. So I think it is one of the challenges that we look at: How does the public share information, how are they communicating and are we listening to what they are telling us? Then combine that with a lot of the capabilities that we now have working with NGA on how to use better GIS and geospatial information to put together a better operating picture so we are responding faster.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Good. As part of the National Preparedness System, PPD-8 requires that the development of various frameworks to enhance our ability to prevent, protect against, respond to, mitigate, and recover from natural disasters and terrorist attacks. As part of this requirement and a requirement of PKEMRA, FEMA recently released the National Disaster Recovery Framework. I understand FEMA is in the process of reviewing the National Response Framework. What is the status of this review and what is FEMA's role in the development of the other frameworks? What is the status of that effort?

Mr. FUGATE. Status is on-going. We have various delivery dates that are published. The National Disaster Recovery Framework was in its inception when PPD-8 was being developed. So it conformed to and met those requirements as one of the elements to the framework. The National Response Framework and the other frameworks will be updated as we go through the process of implementing PPD-8. FEMA has been charged by the National security staff and Secretary Napolitano for the coordination role, but some of those goals will actually be managed by other agencies that are more focused on some of those activities. But we have the overall responsibility for coordinating all of those documents and all of the frameworks under PPD-8.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you. Earlier this year, the subcommittee held a hearing on the IPAWS program, and Ranking Member Richardson had mentioned it, and I am also a supporter. We heard from Assistant Administrator Penn about the plans for the implementation of the Personal Localized Alerting Network. Would you please provide an update on the status of PLAN? When you and Chairman Genachowski and Mayor Bloomberg unveiled the program in New York City this summer, the intent was for the plan to be operational in New York and Washington, DC by the end of the year. Give us the status. Are we on track for that? How would you say the cooperation between the FCC and FEMA has been through this process?

Mr. FUGATE. Well, let me start with the cooperation of the FCC. The Chairman and I have been working closely on this and other activities, including the National emergency alert system test November 9, and there is a lot of activities that I think we have built

a good partnership in working in their role as a regulatory in dealing with licensed carriers and the broadcast industry, and our role working with the user groups and the warning systems.

As far as I know, things are on track but I will go back and make sure we are doing that. One of the things that we hoped that we are seeing is there was a time frame for industry to adopt, as we published the rules, the technology to do the plan, so you had the personal location capabilities and cell phones. From my understanding, we are actually seeing industry adopt to that faster, and so that they are actually going to exceed a lot of those deadlines. But I will go back to Damon Penn and get an update on the status of all of those.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Please do. I am very interested. I know the Ranking Member is, too.

I yield 5 minutes to the Ranking Member, Representative Richardson.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I said, Administrator Fugate, regarding the disability coordinator, in each region is there a disability—is there a person responsible for disability coordination?

Mr. FUGATE. As far as I know, I think we finished hiring the last one and several of them, in fact—in all of the recent disasters they have been deployed, and particularly across the tornadoes were deployed into those joint field offices. Most recently, the recent hire in Region 4, which is based in Atlanta, was deployed into North Carolina, which was a tremendous asset helping us work with the hard-of-hearing and deaf communities.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Is that that person's sole responsibility in each region?

Mr. FUGATE. It is their primary responsibility. Again, we also like to remind ourselves that we are all emergency managers and we do what we have to do during disaster. But their primary responsibility for preparing for, responding to, recovering in the mitigation, is looking at being inclusive across our programs. So not only do we look externally at our response functions, but we also look internally at our own practice to make sure we are being inclusive, everything from meetings to just accessibility in our buildings.

Ms. RICHARDSON. What else are those individuals responsible for?

Mr. FUGATE. I would not be aware of any additional specific tasking, but I can get that in writing.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. What I would like to know specifically is, is there a specific person responsible for disability coordination in each region and, if so, what percentage of their work is inclusive in doing that? Of their other work, what is that and how much time does that take? The disability coordinator has a budget of approximately \$150,000. What is used for that?

Mr. FUGATE. I am not sure that is the full extent. I am not sure how we are accounting for it. We just hosted a conference that I know was far in excess of that. On the disability integration hearing in Washington, the Chairman spoke at that. We have deployed these folks out. We have done training. We have been working on guidance. So one of the things I need to look at is this being reflec-

tive of all of the money we are spending across the various programs, or is this just one part of that.

So I would like to respond in writing and get you the full accounting of the total staff that are assigned to that office, all the resources we are pulling from other elements. You are correct, I did not ask for a line item. We took a lot of these out of activities we were doing and focused on disability integration and basically got different parts of FEMA to provide the resources.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. So we look forward to that in writing. As you know, I represent the largest amount of Samoans outside of Samoa. What current emergency system do they have there working right now?

Mr. FUGATE. As last I knew, we were going through the testing phase of the island-wide siren system. That was one of the concerns we had after the tsunami, that there had been previous studies but they had not actually carried out and implemented the warning system for the island. My understanding is it has been going through the test. I don't know if we have certified it yet. But that was to address the issue of not having island-wide warning for a tsunami warning which occurred when they were hit with a tsunami in 2009.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. At our July hearing, the Federal alert and warning effort witnesses identified a need to increase IPAWS training for emergency managers as a critical area to address. What status have you taken to increase training for managers with IPAWS?

Then further, I would like to build upon, it is my understanding that there is a test of the emergency alert system scheduled for November 9, 2011. Although I understand the test is not a pass/fail, I am interested to know the performance of the system and how it will be evaluated. Can you speak to that?

Mr. FUGATE. I will ask Damon Penn for an update on training. I know they have been working to do more training on IPAWS both in the broadcast industry and the emergency management community.

Regarding the National emergency alert test, this is the first test outside of Alaska of an emergency alert notification, which would be a Presidential notification. Since the creation and all of the history of the emergency alert system back as far as the emergency broadcast in Connorel, it has never received a National test. So this will be the first time that we will actually begin the activation as an emergency action notification from the White House as the origination.

We utilize this to look at how the system performs and how that message is carried out. Because this is a legacy system, it does not have a test function. So we are using the actual alert notification message, and it is important that we remind people of that on the test date, that this is just a test. We are working with the FCC and the broadcasters to ensure that. But this will be the first time of a historic test of the system on a National basis.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Fugate, I just want to say, although we can all make improvements, it has been very assuring to see you at the numerous disasters that we have had. I think you have been very proactive. You have been very visible on television, providing

updates and reports, and I think it has been a huge change and I want to thank you personally for your work.

Mr. FUGATE. Thank you.

Ms. RICHARDSON. I yield back.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I now recognize the Ranking Member of the full committee, Mr. Thompson, for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I would like to echo the sentiments of Ms. Richardson. I have been here pre-Katrina, post-Katrina, and I have seen a different FEMA. Obviously it is always a work in progress, but I have never seen you as administrator not address whatever problems you were presented with, and I thank you for that.

Just for the record, Mr. Fugate, just so the public understands that a declaration from the Presidential level is only after the State and local requirements based on some kind of request have been made. Can you just kind of walk us up that chain?

Mr. FUGATE. Yes, sir. This goes back to under the Stafford Act. Only the Governor of a State or territory is authorized to request from the President a disaster declaration, and that disaster declaration is based upon the Governor certifying that that event has overwhelmed State and local capabilities. We look at impacts on a per-capita basis for public assistance to determine part of that, but it is not the sole determination. It can oftentimes be based upon the significant impacts of what the trauma is to a community.

In addition, when we look at individual assistance, again it is not based on a homeowner's destruction, it is based upon the overall impact of the State, it is based upon the size of that State. So you will see disasters declared in much smaller States because of the population that in a much larger State you would assume would have more resources to deal with that. So it is not based upon a numerical formula for that assistance. It is always based upon the Governor certifying that this exceeds their capabilities and they are formally requesting the President to declare that a disaster.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you. So the President on his own, by law, can't do it without the necessary request from that Governor?

Mr. FUGATE. The President has some limited abilities, but in most cases and in all of the disasters that we have dealt with, the only time that we have responded to is when a Governor has made that request.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you. If, in fact, FEMA, in its prepositioning and mobilization efforts, was limited in doing so based on some standard of offset, what would that do to FEMA's ability to respond to a wildfire, hurricane, tornado, if an offset had to be identified before you would be able to move?

Mr. FUGATE. To be honest with you, sir, what I am looking at is what is the fund balance in the DRF and how the money gets there really is now secondary to that. What I did see as we approached the end of our current fiscal year last year, our response funds dropped to a level that we would have been extremely compromised in our ability to respond to a no-notice disaster such as an earthquake. We looked at what the various options were. But when that balance drops below a certain amount and that amount is oftentimes, you know, up to about a billion dollars, when you look at the cost of the response to some of the large-scale threats

this country faces, whether it is earthquakes in California or a major hurricane making landfall in, let us say, Miami or Tampa or New York, response cost is in not tens or hundreds of millions, it literally can very quickly escalate into the billions of dollars.

At our National level exercise we did this year on the New Madrid Earthquake, initial response cost estimates were about \$1.5 billion. So when you are sitting there with a fund of only 100-or-so million dollars in a fiscal year, it begs the question, Mr. Chairman, how will we respond to the next catastrophic disaster? That is one of my greatest concerns is, we should not look at the DRF just for the disaster to have been declared. It is also those funds needed to respond to the next no-notice disaster that we have to be prepared for.

Mr. THOMPSON. To what extent have you directed your staff to close out past disasters that are still on the books?

Mr. FUGATE. We have taken a tiered approach. Our first goal and looking at open mission assignments from previous disasters that the Federal agencies had completed but they still had fund balances, so we closed those out, that returned over \$2 billion back into the DRF last fiscal year.

The next steps, versus closing out the entire disasters, has been looking at projects that had been completed and the States were no longer drawing funds against, but they had outstanding balances in the obligations. In working with the States, we were able to deobligate those dollars, and that was over a billion and a half that we were able to recover in the past year. We expect there to be about another billion in the next fiscal year is approximately what we are looking at.

As we get to those recoveries, then we will start looking at these older disasters which still require a financial reconciliation. There is no more money, but we still need to get them finalized to officially close them out. But our first goal was to get money that was obligated, but was not going to be used, back in the DRF so we can continue paying for the more recent disasters.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you. Just for the record, can you provide the committee with a status report on those disasters that are still open?

Mr. FUGATE. Yes, sir.

Mr. THOMPSON. Whatever the accounting is. Thank you, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you. I now recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Marino, for 5 minutes, who was obviously affected by the storms, his Congressional district.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you. Director, it is good to see you again. Yes, we were affected by the storms in Pennsylvania. But I want to commend you and your staff. I know we had communications during our hurricanes and Irene. I see Pat sitting behind you and he is quite a trooper. He was on the phone with me a dozen times when we needed water, we needed food, and we needed strategic changes made. I want to thank him for the service that he provided. I know he got a promotion, but, Pat, I still have your cell phone number and I am going to take advantage of it.

You brought up a good point on being notified. Just briefly, going into how important it is for States to be in touch with FEMA so

you can get on the ground running and that—many indications that that—you didn't have that in Katrina. There are also indications that just the request—the requests weren't asked or they weren't asked for in time. How important is it?

Mr. FUGATE. I think it is absolutely critical. Of all the lessons I have learned over history is we really—when we are dealing with these types of events—and I am going to break this into two pieces, those that we are dealing with that are recoveries and those that are an active response such as we saw with Irene. It is really hard to be effective if you are always identifying yourself as a local, State, or FEMA Federal person. You have really got to work as one team. So to get in there quickly, work as one team, be responsive in anticipating needs, versus waiting for things to get so bad before they are overwhelmed before you get the next request.

So I think that is one of the hallmarks of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, is really getting rid of these artificial divisions. Saying, look, when it hits that level, we have got to work as one team. It shouldn't be something where we are literally passing paper up the food chain to get an answer. We should be able to work together and work and solve problems quickly.

Mr. MARINO. Do you have the authority that you need now post-Reform Act to step in even if a State fails to request, for whatever reason, and say, look, we see this as a disaster and we need to come in and assist you in doing preventive measure? Do you have that authority as far as you are concerned?

Mr. FUGATE. We can do quite a bit without a formal request from the Governor to pre-position supplies and move resources in. But I don't know if the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act can address this, sir. You are actually getting into a Constitutional question. As we reserve the police powers for the States under Article 10 of the Constitution, we could take some actions. But I think, again, we find it much better to get our teams in there with the State and work through those challenges, behind the doors, to get things done versus waiting until people fail.

So I would say that our goal is to get there early, work with the State, anticipate need, not wait on the request and, where we can, advise and help get to a better decision faster.

Mr. MARINO. Well, I will certainly be supporting you in that aspect. If we need more legislation, I will be taking the lead on that with you as well. I know we did a lot of things right in Irene the last few weeks and over the month, and in my district—just an example of it, I have never seen the Feds, the State, and the locals work so closely together. So tell me what we realized from this last round, what was not effective and what can we do differently?

Mr. FUGATE. Well, I will pick on one aspect of this because it is going to come up, and particularly when we deal with flood events, is looking at the National Flood Insurance Program. One of our challenges is that we have communities who have chosen not to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program and they get flooded, it severely limits our ability to provide individual assistance. It is to effect we are holding individuals responsible for the failure of local governments to adopt and join the National Flood Insurance Program.

So it oftentimes puts us in a bind where people have been flooded, they have had losses. Their neighboring communities are getting assistance, but they can't because their community didn't adopt the National Flood Insurance Program. I think it would to me make more sense to put maybe the burden back on the local governments and look at their public assistance versus the individual assistance. I realize, you know, with the Flood Insurance Program, our goal here is to get people at risk to purchase flood insurance and to have that protection so the taxpayer is not having to pay for flood damages. But it is an area that it will be difficult—it is part of the reason why we have to send out remittances when we do provide assistance to people and it turns out they weren't in a Flood Insurance Program, and we have to ask for the money back. As Ranking Member Thompson can tell you, that is a very difficult proposition when we get to that point.

Mr. MARINO. Right. Look, I know you need the funding. I was the one that stood up in the House and said look, let's not argue of what is going to happen here, let's just get the funding out. My district appreciated it. I think there are enough inefficient agencies here in the District of Columbia that deserve to be cut and those funds that we can hopefully make certain that you have them, so you can serve so well as you have in the past. Thank you so much. I yield back.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you. I now recognize the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Clarke, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLARKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Administrator Fugate, I appreciate you being here. I represent metropolitan Detroit, which includes the city of Detroit and also includes the Northern Border with Canada. A couple of questions.

My first deals with promoting interoperability among communications with our first responders as well as with our Federal officials along with our Canadian counterparts. Let me just illustrate that. There was, according to one of our local law enforcement first responders a few years ago, there was an accident on the Detroit River. That first responder had a hard time communicating to the Coast Guard about it, and in turn none of them could notify their Canadian counterparts.

As a result of the new law in 2008, FEMA established a Disaster Emergency Communications Division. Particularly how does this division help coordinate response on the Northern Border or could be used to coordinate response on the Northern Border in a way that would foster interoperable communications among first responders with their Canadian counterparts and the Federal authorities?

Mr. FUGATE. Well, we will start with the disaster emergency communication function. I think it does two things. One, it helps bring in and reestablish communications to local and State jurisdictions that have lost it in a disaster. But a more important element that we saw was really beneficial was helping States develop their communications plans.

Again, I will be honest with you, those have been State-centric. The question you raise is actually interesting because it is something that I know Secretary Napolitano is working across the enterprise in DHS—is looking at how do we work to cross-border

issues that are transnational, but in a response world first responders can see each other across the river. How do you get better integration there?

I know that our Region 5 administrator is working with your shop on some of this, but I think it is one area that I would like to take back to Secretary Napolitano as a concern you have raised and look at how our plans, which are really focused on the States, could be tied into more activities at DHS, particularly with the Coast Guard, Immigration, and Customs and some of the others that are working across the border. Because we know the first responders are. I think that is kind of an area that we will go back to the Secretary and say, this is maybe an area that these committees could work closer and there may be avenues to work through other parts of DHS to work with our Canadian counterparts.

Mr. CLARKE. Thank you very much. Administrator, one other question and it deals with how can we best prepare citizens who are struggling right now financially to be prepared in case there is a disaster?

You know, in the city of Detroit, our city, our region, we have lost more jobs, more people, more homes than any other city or region in the country over the last 10 years. So in downtown Detroit in particular, we have many people that have special needs who may be physically challenged, you know, get around with wheelchairs or other type of devices to help them with their mobility. We also have folks who are struggling every day just to provide for their own basic needs just financially, just don't have the money to do so. So how can FEMA better help prepare individuals who are struggling right now to be able to be prepared for a disaster?

Mr. FUGATE. Well, not to sound trite about this, but I think we oftentimes make the entry level into being fully prepared so expensive. Even people of means look at this and go, if I went and bought everything on your list brand new, that could cost me hundreds of dollars. I think we have made that such a high bar, that we actually want to go back and start out with more basic questions. Again, I think this is again your office, and folks can help get this word out; you don't have to make sure you have got everything, but just start with the most basic thing. Do you have a family communication plan? We know that for a lot of folks, they don't have—they are very mobile, they use mobile communication devices, they use their cell phones, they don't have anything else. Do they have a plan of what to do—because as we saw here with the earthquake, you are not going to be able to get dial tone. But do you have a backup plan to text message or do you have rally points to know if I cannot get to you, there is someplace we can meet?

Preparedness oftentimes starts with just the basic steps of developing your family communication plan of how you are going to let family and friends know, and where you are going to go if you can't get home. Those initial steps start the process.

But we are also sensitive to the fact—and this is one of the things we have been working with our State partners on, durable medical goods and other supplies that may be needed for people that have additional resource needs. We are really trying to be focused on making sure we are inclusive on the front end, not treat-

ing this as an afterthought of dealing with people who may need additional resources when a disaster strikes.

Mr. CLARKE. Thank you.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. The gentleman yields back, correct?

Mr. CLARKE. I yield back.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Okay. Now I recognize Mr. Farenthold for 5 minutes from the great State of Texas. You are recognized, sir.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Thank you, Chairman Bilirakis. Administrator Fugate, we have been plagued in Texas by wildfires for the past year. Of the disasters FEMA faces, wildfires are one that actually can be mitigated while they are going on. So I have a two-part question for you to begin with. First, can you outline what FEMA's responses have been to the wildfires in Texas and how has FEMA and the Federal Government as a whole cooperated on bringing the resources necessary to mitigate those fires as they are going on, and afterwards?

Mr. FUGATE. Well, the two pieces of this—I will start with the last one first, because the lead agency for coordinating Federal assistance is the U.S. Forestry Services, Agriculture, through the interagency. We support them there.

On the other side, the financial side of this, has been through the issuance of a record number of fire management grants that are fire-specific, as well as a major Presidential disaster declaration focused on individual assistance. In some of the more recent fires, we lost a large number of homes.

What is happening in Texas, though, the wildfires are merely a symptom. What we have got is a sustained long-period drought that doesn't seem to be ending. One of the challenges that I am finding that I experienced in Florida is that our fire management grant programs are really designed about very large, centralized fires. What we have in Texas is a lot of little fires that, if you don't get them knocked down quick, will grow to the big fires.

So there is quite a bit of activity on-going across Texas. A lot of it is being done by volunteer fire departments that are tied to these fire management grants. I have had discussions with the State director of emergency management there named Kidd, and I have asked my staff to come back and look at some of these issues. But my concern in Texas is this is not a situation that is improving and it is not a fire by fire. It is the underlying drought. Until that drought breaks, my concern as to the wildfire situation in Texas will continue to be active and that we have to continue to look at our tools, providing assistance both through our interagency process with the U.S. Forest Service as well as the financial assistance through fire management grants and declarations.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Short of praying for rain, I would appreciate if you or your staff could get with my office and the rest of the Texas delegation to see what, if anything, can be done to improve that situation.

I also want to move over to the EAS just for a second and shift gears. You have got the test coming up. I would imagine, having been in broadcasting since I was 16 years old, I see first-hand the flaws of the EAS and what it has evolved into. Is FEMA looking at, with the advents of new technologies like cell phones, text mes-

saging and the internet, coming up with a new technology to either replace or supplement EAS?

Mr. FUGATE. Yes, sir. In fact, that was some of the remarks that our Ranking Member Richardson and the Chairman talked about, what we call IPAWS, the integrated public warning and alert system. It is taking advantage of newer technology and using a common alerting protocol to go across all devices. Part of this is working with the FCC where personal location, alert notifications, can be geographically tagged to your cell phone based upon your location, as well as the ability to now operate across a lot of different technologies.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. My concern with that—and as we saw in the earthquake up here—the cell phone network, especially in a time of disaster, is substantially more fragile than we would like to believe.

Mr. FUGATE. That is correct. Again if we were trying to use the cell phones for the way you would be doing voice traffic, it would not work. But cell phones are also radios. The cell towers actually have broadcast functions that you can actually send one-way transmissions to. That is the benefit of that.

The other benefit is rather than alerting everybody in an area, we can specify those areas that are geocoded to the threat, so when a tornado—remember how we used to have to alert the whole county? Now we can give a more—

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Is that based on tower location or GPS from the phone, or both?

Mr. FUGATE. It is based upon the phone knowing where it is at, whether it is GPS or triangulation. We don't track that information. It just tells everything in that tower area to alert. It doesn't track the actual phones. So the phones are self-aware, but the system doesn't monitor the phones. It just broadcasts to that specific area.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. All right. I appreciate your responses. Thank you for being here and thank you for your hard work. I will yield back.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you. Now I would like to recognize the gentlelady from New York, Ms. Hochul, for 5 minutes.

Ms. HOCHUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are talking about personal notification systems, Mr. Administrator, how you can give information to the public. What troubles me in this century is that the public is not able to send a 9-1-1 text messaging to public safety dispatchers, whether it is in a natural disaster, whether it is a situation we had at Virginia Tech, whether children—young students in a lockdown situation and they are sending 9-1-1 messages out there on their cell phones, believing fully that they are going to be heard, and we don't have the capability. I find that to be a National embarrassment personally, and I am not casting any dispersion, any blame. I am just saying how do we solve that?

When I am talking to people at FCC sometimes they will say it is going on over at Homeland Security, Homeland Security might say it is FCC. What is preventing us from doing that? Because I think that is something that—you know, there is a generation, probably from my age on down, or lower than me down, where the expectation is that when they send 9-1-1 on the cell phone, it is

going to be received by somebody who is in a position to help them. Very sadly, that is not the case in America today.

Mr. FUGATE. I am going to ask my staff to get the FCC to respond back in writing, because I share your concerns. I know that the FCC has been working on what they call next generation 9-1-1, and they have been looking at some pilot programs of how you could start taking in text messaging and other types of social media. One of the challenges is the system was never designed with that as this technology has come on board.

So I know the FCC has been looking at preliminary rulemaking. They are looking at several pilots. I will ask my staff to work with the FCC so we can respond jointly back to you. What they are looking at in the next generation of 9-1-1, they are anticipating how do you adapt to the known, but also emerging technologies that we may not quite understand? Again, it is a common idea, and I think you pointed it out very well. We have to adapt the way the public communicates, not necessarily force them to enter the legacy systems. That has been one of the challenges as we move forward.

Ms. HOCHUL. I appreciate your attention and I would urge that you make that a major priority, because in natural disasters or in lockdown situations or anytime that our public needs help, they are assuming that they are reaching us.

We had a situation where gunshots were fired in one of my suburban high schools outside Rochester. Fifty kids sent 9-1-1 messages and they thought they were received. So I would like this to be a major priority because I think it could be a tremendous help. If you are talking about pilot programs, I will sign up right now. I have sat down with many of my public safety dispatch operations throughout my seven counties and they are ready to do it. They just need the resources to get it going.

But again, I commend you on your attention. You have so many issues in this country to pay attention to, so many disasters unexpected.

I want to make sure we don't lose sight of some disaster assistance that was requested in New York State after some flooding in the spring. I can give you a copy today, again, because we mailed this out. This is from our New York delegation asking for assistance. If you could please commit to reevaluating Governor Cuomo's request to reverse your denial of assistance to areas that were flooded in the spring, because I still have farmers that are never going to be whole again, and my economy relies on my farmers planting, harvesting, getting it to market. So If you could take another look at that as well.

Again, you have probably got the toughest job in America with all of the different disasters that come your way, whether it is the fires in Texas; who would have thought Upstate New York would be victim to an earthquake, a hurricane, a tornado, all within a couple of weeks?

So we are living in what seems like unprecedented times. But I hope that you are up to the task. I am sure you are. If there is anything we can do to assist you, we are partners in protecting the American people. Thank you.

Mr. FUGATE. Thank you, ma'am.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back?

Ms. HOCHUL. I am sorry. I do.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. If it is all right with Administrator Fugate, I think this is such an important topic, we have time for a second round. So I would like to begin. I will recognize myself for 5 minutes.

As part of your effort to engage in the whole community—and I commend you for that, Administrator—you have included a rotating seat for the private sector in the National Response Coordination Center. How is the initiative working?

Mr. FUGATE. It is working very well. Not only are we giving the private sector a seat in there, we are really looking at some of the things that will speed up our ability to see what they see, such as really getting the point of the major big box stores, recognizing they don't provide everything but they are a good indicator of how areas are impacted, giving us live data on store openings and closures so we can see what is going on.

We first really saw this when we were dealing with the ice storm earlier this year. It is kind of hard to remember that far back, we had this threat of an ice storm across the central United States and moving towards the Northeast. But they were literally giving us updates on the store statuses in real time as we were making decisions about where we may need generator stuff.

We saw this again in Puerto Rico when Hurricane Irene hit. We were getting lots of reports of flooding, but they were able to come back and give us statuses of drugstores, hardware stores, grocery stores, that pretty well told us that the bulk of the island primary services were intact and our focus was really on flooding in some of the higher elevations where some of the towns were destroyed. That real-time information made us more comfortable with the decision that the Governor's request was not for more resources but focus on the recovery so we could shift those attentions now to the East Coast, to the United States. Without that information, we would have been a little bit concerned that we didn't have all of that information; and what if we didn't send the supplies, would we get behind? But because the retailers were assuring us they were up, they were running, the ports are up, the airport is up, that information coupled with the Governor's request made sense and we were able to shift our resources now to the East Coast.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. As a follow-up, the emergency management officials I have spoken with see this engagement with the private sector as a very positive step. However, they have expressed concern about the PS-Prep Program. Their concern: While FEMA has a structure in place for the program, it has yet to create an incentive for participation with the private sector.

Recognizing that PS-Prep is a voluntary program, what can be—what can we do to better engage the private sector and encourage them to take steps to enhance their preparedness?

Mr. FUGATE. To be honest with you, Mr. Chairman, I think when that program was starting out, we were looking at the private sector as getting a certification to be able to sit at the table. In some ways what we found was that there should be an entry requirement to be a part of the team. They are doing it already. We need to work closer.

I think PS-Prep is going through an evolution and I will ask my staff to come back to you with more specifics. But I think one of the things that I have learned in this process is oftentimes when we start programs with good intentions, we find that we maybe are not going the way we thought we were going and we need to reassess. I think this is a continuing area: How do we reassess that program to get better participation and, at the same time, recognizing there may be some entities that will not participate there but are still wanting to be part of the team when we respond and recover from disasters?

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I think if you have some suggestions for us as well, we can work with our constituents. I think that that would be very beneficial as well.

I am interested in your assessment of National Level Exercise 11. What are the main lessons learned from the exercise? How are we sharing these lessons with participants at the State, local, and Tribal and private-sector levels?

Mr. FUGATE. That is a large exercise, and in the short time I have, I would like to give you some written responses to that. But I want to point out one thing I really haven't had a chance to talk about in these committees but I think has been a tremendous improvement in our capability, and that is the resolution of the issue of applying Federal forces to a State, particularly Title 10 Active-Duty forces, when the Governor has their National Guard on State Active-Duty and running the realities of: How do you manage that?

Under a program that was initiated by Congress forming the Council of Governors to work with the National Guard and Governors as well as with the Department of Defense, we now have what we call dual-status commanders. This is a program that has been enthusiastically supported, I must say, by NORTHCOM and the Department of Defense, to take National Guard flag officers—and almost now all the States train them as dual-status command, where they can now command at the request of the Governor and the designation by the Secretary of Defense and the President, command both State Active-Duty and National Guard and Title 10 forces under one commander, not having to have two separate joint task forces.

In our National Level Exercise, this showed that the ability to bring in Federal forces in support of the State, with their National Guard activated into Active Duty, minimize the confusion and the duplicity of having a multiple joint task force operating in the same State. So I think this is one of the things that we were able to look at in exercise, but I think it is one of the huge unheralded milestones we have in this country of resolving, I think once and for all, the issue of: How do we bring Active-Duty forces to the Governor in a way that does not duplicate or replicate what they are doing through their National Guard and work as one team?

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Very good. Thank you. All right. I now recognize Ranking Member Richardson for 5 minutes.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Fugate, I need to come back to the EAS test. First of all, I want to clarify. Does the EAS test include all the territories and all the States? Everyone or just—

Mr. FUGATE. My assumption is yes, because this will be an activation of the emergency alert notification which will be a Presidential message and a National message. So my understanding, it should go out through all of the systems, but I will verify that.

We have done two separate State tests in Alaska to test the system. But this will be the first time we will be activating it across the entire country, and I will verify that it will go to the territories.

Ms. RICHARDSON. If it does not, are you committed to including them?

Mr. FUGATE. Absolutely. If it isn't, it has more to do with the legacy systems than it is by any intention. This is one of the things we are hoping as we move to IPAWS, to get past some of the legacy limitations in our existing infrastructure.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. Then when we were talking about American Samoa and their alert system test, was this one and the same, or were they having a separate test?

Mr. FUGATE. This was a separate test of certifying the outdoor warning system. This was a key component that, when the tsunami warning center issues the warnings, there was no outdoor warning systems in American Samoa. It was a testing of that system.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Has that already occurred?

Mr. FUGATE. I will have to get back to you. I know they were doing it, but I don't know if they completed the test and signed off on that. I just really don't have that at my fingertips.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. If you could also supply us the results of that.

Back also to the EAS. As I said, I don't believe it includes a pass or fail. In particular, could you tell us how the data will be gathered, what will be the gaps in performance identified and improvements to the system made, and is there a specific time line that you have associated with?

Mr. FUGATE. The actual test itself will be looking at all of the primary entry points for the system, activate the local primaries, and how many of those stations that are supposed—one of the things about the Emergency Alert System, it is always voluntary except when a Presidential notification occurs. That is why we don't have a test capability. This is the only one that will trip everything, because it is designed to automatically engage all of the pre-transmit functions. So the test will be: How far did it go and where were their gaps and breaks in the chain of notification? This goes to everything. It actually starts a chain of primary entry points and the local primary points that then set off their tones, which will then activate other receivers. Because this is the one function that was built in that—broadcasters are optioned on everything else and they can set their equipment to manual or delay. This will be the first time we will see if all of the systems go through.

So the first part is did that happen and were there breaks? The other part will be, as it went out, did we see any difficulties? We already know of some issues that are germane to the legacy systems that will be a challenge for this.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. I apologize. I have got 2 minutes. Will your assessment include improvements that need to be made?

Mr. FUGATE. Yes.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Just that. Then do you have a specific time line when you anticipate being able to give us this report?

Mr. FUGATE. I will defer back to Damon Penn to get an update of what we expect to get back on that and when we would have a report.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. I have got three really quick questions, and he is going to give me a little more time. One of the issues that I found in American Samoa was that they owed prior money to the Government and therefore, because of that, were hesitant of extending on additional services beyond the initial, whatever it was, 72 hours. Have you established a new process or have we had a discussion of how to deal with maybe States or territories that might have a past-due situation?

Mr. FUGATE. The issue of those that still owe money from previous disasters or previous grant programs is one we are looking at of the recoupment process there, and whether or not and how we go forward. We know it is going to be a challenge there in American Samoa. There are also some other territories that are facing the same situation. I will respond back in writing. But it is again similar to other recoupment processes where, if the money under IG or General Accounting Offices, finds that money is owed back, we have to look at a collection process which either will offset future costs or have to be tied to some other reduction in funding.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. So if you could supply this committee of who currently owes, how much they owe, what is the process of paying it back.

Last two questions. Twice now we have had colleagues who have brought forward a concern about the UASI grants and whether the funding should be in tiered levels and so on. Could you please share your particular feedback of why you think it should stay the same or change?

Mr. FUGATE. Well, again as we presented the options to Secretary Napolitano, she made the decision that we would reduce funding, could no longer continue to fund all of the cities on the list, and needed to focus on those that were in the top tier based on a variety of information we used to make those decisions. Given the amount of funding, I think that will be the continued recommendation as we present to her this year; as we look at this year's appropriation is, with reduced funding, the decision made to fully fund those top-tiered cities versus reducing funding across the board?

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. So if I am hearing you correctly, if we were not to reduce funding, which some folks on this committee have advocated for, we might have a better ability to assist all the cities?

Mr. FUGATE. That would be an option to look at, yes, ma'am.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. My last question is, for full year 2012, the proposed level of funding for first responders is less than half the amount that Congress appropriated 2 years ago, in full year 2010. The Congress appropriated a total of \$4.17 billion in grant funding for first responders. Further, if H.R. 2017 is enacted by Congress, the grant funding will have been reduced by almost 60 percent within two fiscal cycles. How do you plan on addressing

these cuts and to ensure that the regions have the adequate resources?

I want you to know I am asking you this on the record and intend upon bringing it back up when the committee then discuss things like cutting at these, what I would believe, very unreasonable levels.

Mr. FUGATE. Well, the short answer is that with these reductions of fundings, we are looking at what we can do to maintain current capabilities that have been built with the dollars, and putting emphasis on those items and teams that are more critical to the National interest and of National capabilities. Which means not everything is going to be funded, and there may have to be decisions about what cannot be supported, but looking at things that are really designed to be of a National interest and have capability to support the National threats.

Again, as we saw with the mutual aid in the past disasters, one of the things we know is making sure that regional mutual aid through State-directed responses is the most effective use of these resources. So, looking at how we can leverage more regional response capabilities with fewer dollars.

Ms. RICHARDSON. So if you could provide to this committee what, in light of the proposed cuts, what you view would fall within the National realm of being of National interest and what potential things could be cut in the event we have to operate at the levels you have been given?

Mr. FUGATE. We will do that.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Thank you, sir.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you. I recognize the gentleman from Mississippi, the Ranking Member of the full committee, Mr. Thompson.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Fugate, will you comment on your efforts to get FEMA to start buying locally in disasters and whether or not that effort has rendered a positive result?

Mr. FUGATE. Yes, sir. Early on when I got to FEMA, one of the things we found was that we used a lot of National contracts, kind of one-size-fits-all. It is easy for us to administer. But it tended to result in us buying resources and bringing things from outside a disaster area when they were already there in the community.

After several disasters, particularly what I observed in Haiti, I realized that one of the flaws in our system by doing that is we are not putting any money back in the local economy when it is at its greatest need. So we adopted a philosophy of buying local and hiring local, whenever possible, to put money back in the local community, in many cases at no real additional cost to the taxpayers, and sometimes a savings because it is faster and it is right there.

I would say right now it has been mixed, but where it has worked, I think it is significant in that we can go to a local computer store, we can go to a local vendor, we can go to a local print shop, and we buy services for people that are in the area that are trying to get their lives back together. What I know from all of the things I have seen, small businesses are most vulnerable. If they don't get work quickly, they don't survive. I figure as best we can, if we can buy local services wherever possible, we will benefit not

only the community itself, but I think ultimately speed the recovery.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you. There have been some Title 6 issues in FEMA on an on-going basis. Provide us with your efforts to resolve many of these issues, please.

Mr. FUGATE. Well, first of all, it comes back with—one of the things we are looking at, we have a remediation going on in Florida. What we have worked with with the IG on this one, I think what we are going to do with the State is go back and do a remedial training and some pilot, and provide them additional grant guidance oversight as they are issuing the grants for Title 6 compliance. We also put into our office fraud investigations, the Title 6 functions for investigating those complaints because, again, we felt this needed to be more focused on those complaints when they came up.

So I think it is two parts. One is the enforcement piece of it where we do have the complaints and the investigations and determine if it needs to be referred to the IG. The other part of it is the education to make sure on the front end, in providing grant guidance, people understand the requirements of Title 6 and are complying with that, particularly these large projects.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you. Can you provide the committee with some current statistics on EO complaints and what have you, say over the last 2 years? Not now. Just come back to us with it and just—to give us how many have been resolved, how many are ongoing, this kind of thing, and whether or not you have looked at that situation and whether or not you will recommend changes, or what have you, going forward. I think that would be helpful.

With respect to recoupment, I couldn't let you get away without recoupment, the issue of recoupment. We are still, I guess weekly, getting dinged by constituents who are receiving letters.

Two questions. To what extent can other constituents expect these letters to come? But on the other hand, especially for the Katrina victims, a disproportionate number of people have been misplaced. Bad addresses, things like that. I would like to see whether or not, when letters go out and those individuals were moved to Houston from New Orleans and subsequently somewhere else, that basically through no fault of their own, but obviously from an address standpoint, you still have them in Houston.

I would not want somebody who is really resettled, getting themselves back together, and now all of the sudden because they didn't get a letter, they would in fact be breaking the law. If you come up with a solution for that; if not, when you could, it would be very helpful to people like me who have constituents getting those letters.

Mr. FUGATE. Yes, sir, there is going to be more letters. That is an absolute fact. There is still a lot more to go out from Katrina and Rita from recoupments. We send the letter to the last known address. When that letter comes back, what do we do? I have asked staff, and what they briefed me on—and I will provide this in writing—is we have a process with a third party to try to track down any additional financial records to try to locate that person.

One of the concerns I know that was raised was: When would penalties and interest kick in and when do you refer them to

Treasury for collection? That is an area where I don't have an exact time line because I don't know what we do as far as how long it takes for us to go through the due diligence in trying to locate them. It is generally because they are not responsive or we have exhausted our ways of locating them, that they would actually get referred to Treasury to see if they can recoup there.

As you point out when you send a letter to them, the first step is to see if they are going to appeal that, if there is more information that was lacking in the initial application that may mitigate that, or they can apply for forgiveness as they don't have a financial ability. But I have asked staff. We do use a third party to try to track folks down. What I don't know is what is that time frame that we would go before we would say we are unable to serve this letter or we are not getting a response, that it would go to Treasury and start accruing interests and penalties.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you. I appreciate it.

I have a couple of questions and then we will finish up. Thanks for your patience. I really appreciate it.

With regard to mitigation, I know you believe in that strongly, but I believe—and that is why I filed my bill, to encourage businesses and residential owners to rebuild, mitigate of course. But I feel that maybe the Federal Government is just encouraging folks and this is all we have—the authority we have is to basically rebuild the way it was before instead of building stronger and better. That way the buildings and structures are more resilient. Comment on that, how we can improve things with regard to mitigation.

Mr. FUGATE. I found both as a State and now as a FEMA administrator that I oftentimes put a lot of emphasis under the Stafford Act, under the section—it is just a section number. It doesn't really mean anything to anybody else. But there is a part of the Stafford Act that says if you have got damages, you have got a public or eligible nonprofit and you have got damages and we are going to give you money to repair it, we also need to look at does it make sense to build it back better to reduce future damages. Under that section we look at things such as a cost-benefit analysis that says we realize the building code may be for 110-mile-an-hour roof, but if you got wiped out by a hurricane and we build this roof back at maybe, say, 130, 140 because it is a public safety building, or whatever that is appropriate, and then that building survives the next time, is that not a good investment? So under the Stafford Act of section 406, this is money that is tied to the actual damages.

We have another part of that program called section 404, which provides an overall percentage of funds to the State afterwards for mitigation, but it doesn't have to necessarily be tied to damaged properties, which may allow them to mitigate other threats. Particularly with some of the flooding we have seen, we know that many States and local communities will be looking at those additional funds of how to reduce future flood loss.

Tell you what, Mr. Chairman. We saw a lot of areas where they have done things such as buyouts that in previous years had flooded severely, that had much less impact, even though they received

record floods. We have seen elevation work. We have seen safe rooms work. So again, it is one of those areas that is important.

But the problem with these programs is they are always after we have had a disaster. I think the greater mitigation actually comes back to States that are willing to develop and implement, as we did in Florida, building codes appropriate for the hazards, and the tremendous difference that made in homes built prior to that unified building code. The performance in the 2004 and 2005 hurricanes was so dramatic, you could literally fly over neighborhoods and almost tell when the roof was built by what was standing and what was damaged.

So again, I put a lot of emphasis on if we are going to spend Federal tax dollars to fix something, build it back better. An example was down in Charlotte County. They lost all seven of their fire stations. The building code only required it to be built back for the wind hazards but the reality was they got hit with a Category 4 hurricane, and I said it doesn't make sense that we are going to have to take public safety buildings and only build them back to the code. We really need to go code-plus so they survive the next hurricane, so the fire crews aren't losing the equipment, and the stations are there to respond in the aftermath. So we are very much supportive of continuing that practice where it makes financial sense.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Very good. Exactly. It makes financial sense as well.

One last question. Again, PKEMRA required FEMA to develop and implement a training program for staff on the prevention of waste, fraud, and abuse of Federal disaster relief assistance. Comment on that. What is the status of that program?

Mr. FUGATE. We have been breaking that into training—one of the areas we focused on very early was our COTARS through our chief procurement office, as well as looking at overall training for folks to recognize in our National processing centers when people call in. There are some steps we take to try to rule out bogus addresses and things like that, to minimize that, but also things to look for that would raise suspicion. Where we do find instances of fraud in individual assistance, we refer those for investigation. Where we find cause, we refer it to the IG.

But I think what we have been trying to do is convince people we can be fast and not have the kind of abuse to the system we saw in previous disasters. But that means you have got to change how you look at things and build this into their front-end. You can't bolt it onto the end and try to capture it.

Our most recent audit that we got from the outside auditors on our error rate for IA went from about the high of Katrina, which is an outlier, because it was just an extraordinarily large storm, a double digit, down to a less than 1 percentage point error. But we continue to look at this, of how do we minimize the error rate without putting an undue burden of people applying for assistance, but then also look at everything from our contracts, how we do our business, how we proceed to do our business. We will be more than happy, sir, to provide you an update. We have already had another request very similar, what all these activities are and how we are doing that.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you very much. That will conclude the hearing. I want to thank you for your testimony today. I want to thank the Members for their questions. The Members of the subcommittee may have—they will have some additional questions for you. I am sure you will be able to respond in writing, Administrator. We ask that you respond, of course. The hearing record will be held open for 10 days.

Of course, without objection, the subcommittee stands adjourned. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:19 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER LAURA RICHARDSON FOR W. CRAIG FUGATE

Question 1. Please inform the committee whether there is a specific Federal full-time equivalent responsible for the implementation of the disability coordination program in each of the ten regional offices and what percentage of their duties is made up of these responsibilities? If they are assigned additional responsibilities outside of the disability coordination portfolio, please provide the percentage of these additional duties.

Additionally, per the administrator's testimony, provide in writing the full accounting of the total staffers assigned to the Office of the Disability Coordinator and any additional resources shifted to the mission of the Office.

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2a. Please describe the current Emergency Alert System being used in American Samoa.

Has the current system passed all testing and contain the necessary requirements to ensure that it is certified?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2b. If the warning system for American Samoa has not yet been certified, why has not been certified and when does FEMA expect the system to be complete?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3. At the subcommittee's July Hearing on Emergency Communications witnesses from the Emergency Management community identified a need to increase the level of training related to the emergency alert system. What steps has FEMA taken to increase IPAWS training for emergency managers?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 4a. In light of the November 9, 2011 test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), please provide the committee those States and territories that will be participating and their level of capacity?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 4b. Also, how will the data be collected and evaluated?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 4c. What is the time line for this assessment?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 5. What is the status of the outdoor warning emergency alert system for American Samoa? Has this system been tested and if so what was the outcome? Please include how the data will be gathered, gaps in performance discovered from the test, the affect of any improvements made to the system and the time line for all remediation of problems?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 6. Please provide the committee a list of those States or territories that currently have outstanding debts to FEMA and include how much they owe; the process FEMA uses to collect these funds; and the particular States and territories unable to receive Public Assistance Grants due to these debts.

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 7. In light of proposed funding cuts to FEMA, please provide the committee what programs and responsibilities must continue to receive level funding and possible programs and responsibilities that could be eliminated in the event you are forced to operate at the current funding levels recommended for fiscal year 2012.

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 8. Describe FEMA's progress with the Disaster Closeout Process allowing FEMA to close out and de-obligate funds from previous disasters that are currently still on FEMA's financial reports. Please provide the committee with a status report on these efforts including the number and dollar amount affiliated with both open and closed disasters.

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 9. Please provide the committee the current statistics on the number of Title VI complaints reported against FEMA, the number of complaints that have been resolved, the number of complaints outstanding, actions taken on the complaints for the previous 3 years. Also, include any recommended changes or possible improvements to the current process.

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 10. What is the status of the FCC program to create “next generation 9–1–1” that allows individual to text emergency requests to law enforcement and emergency management calling centers?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 11a. There is concern that the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination lacks the adequate resources to carry out its responsibilities under the Act.

The Office of Disability Integration and Coordination has existed for approximately 2 years, with a budget of about \$150,000. What outreach activities have the Office initiated in that time under its current budget?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 11b. How many staff members are allocated to the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination? Is this an adequate number of staff to carry out the Office’s mission?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 11c. Do you plan to request additional funding for the Office in the fiscal year 2013 budget?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 12a. As you know, FEMA is currently responsible for administering all DHS grants, including grants for programs falling outside the agency’s expertise.

How does the expenditure of FEMA’s resources on the administration of all DHS grants affect its ability to carry out its core mission (i.e.: preparing, protecting, mitigating, responding, and recovering from terrorist attacks)?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 12b. Is the administration of all DHS grants the most effective use of FEMA’s limited resources?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 13a. As you may know, I represent a large number of constituents with family connections to Samoa so the 2009 tsunami in American Samoa was a great concern for me. Too many people told me that their families weren’t warned in time to effectively prepare. A fully implemented IPAWS, accessible to all populations, system would have provided adequate warnings.

At our July hearing on Federal Alert and Warning Efforts, witnesses identified a need to increase IPAWS training for emergency managers as a critical area to address. What is the status of FEMA’s efforts to increase training for emergency managers on IPAWS?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 13b. What efforts have been made to ensure that emergency alert systems will effectively warn vulnerable populations, including individuals with hearing, vision, and other functional disabilities, the elderly, and the poor?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 14. As you may know, my district is home to a very large Samoan population and I am particularly interested in the support we provide to American Samoa, as well as the other Pacific islands. Two years ago, the a National Academy of Public Administration Report identified “distance, time, and training” and as major obstacles to achieving preparedness goals in a territory determined to be the least prepared in its Region. What steps are you taking to ensure the Pacific Islands are receiving the training, funding, and attention they need to properly prepare for and respond to a disasters?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 15a. As you know, FEMA has relied predominately on temporary housing units and rental housing to provide disaster housing alternatives. In American Samoa, there was a lack of rental housing and it was not possible to provide temporary housing units, FEMA instituted a construction pilot program, which raised unique concerns regarding the objective and of FEMA’s emergency housing programs.

What efforts has FEMA made to identify disaster housing options to accommodate a range of emergency situations, including earthquakes, floods?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 15b. What efforts has FEMA made to identify disaster housing options for islands or other remote areas?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 16. The purpose of the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) is to assist State and local developing a plan for recovery from a major disaster before a disaster strikes. Since the final NDRF was released only a few weeks ago, how is FEMA working with local communities to communicate the need for planning in both the initial response to a disaster and through the long-term recovery process?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 17. In the past FEMA has worked with the Corps of Engineers to contract for the installation and maintenance of temporary housing units. What steps does FEMA take to ensure that individuals who install THU's are licensed and certified to install manufactured homes in accordance with the HUD Manufactured Home Installation Regulations?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 18. In light of drastic cuts to FEMA's budget and the needs that have arisen from the increasing number of disaster declarations, what steps is FEMA taking to ensure that 10 Regional Offices will have the necessary capacity and resources?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 19a. Serious concern has been expressed with FEMA's recoupment of disaster funds provided to those affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. While the committee understands that these steps are mandated by law I also want to ensure that the process doesn't cause further suffering for those already working hard to put their lives back together.

What steps is FEMA taking to ensure that those who meet hardship criteria receive the counsel they need to have their payments forgiven?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 19b. What is FEMA's process when a recoupment letter cannot be delivered?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 20. The committee remains concerned that the Grants Directorate does not have the staff and resources to optimally manage the full suite of DHS grant programs. In light of the dramatic cuts that have been made to FEMA Grant Programs and that the Grant Program Directorates Budget is based on the amount of grant dollars, what steps is FEMA taking to ensure that the directorate is still able to properly disburse grant funding with a much smaller staff?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 21a. On October 7, 2011 FEMA released the first draft of the National Preparedness Goal, which describes the core capabilities that States and locals must develop and sustain in order to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from numerous threats. But States, locals, and first responders have stated that the cuts to preparedness grant programs have severely hindered their ability to maintain the necessary security and resilience posture.

How will FEMA assess how cuts to preparedness grants will affect State and locals ability to build and sustain the core capabilities needed to protect the Nation?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 21b. What comments have been received from States and urban areas concerned about the erosion of capabilities?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 21c. If so, how will this affect the Nation's ability to respond to man-made and natural disasters?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 22. Fire fighters play an important role in responding to numerous emergencies and leading of the joint response efforts through the use of National Incident Management System. Unfortunately, funding for fire fighters are being drastically cut across the country. Based on fire-fighters current capabilities, how will continued cuts erode our preparedness to responding to natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 23. FEMA has assumed great responsibility for managing several grant programs. It could be argued that FEMA's grant management duties could take focus away from more important preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery duties and would be better managed at DHS headquarters. What is FEMA's opinion of the assessment that grant management duties should be done at DHS headquarters instead of FEMA?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 24. PKEMRA requires the administrator to perform periodic National level exercises that "evaluate the capability of Federal, State, local, and Tribal gov-

ernments to detect, disrupt, and prevent threatened or actual catastrophic acts of terrorism, especially those involving weapons of mass destruction.” In recent years the National Level Exercises (NLE) have covered devastating hurricanes along our Southern Border and a catastrophic earthquake along the New Madrid Seismic Zone. Please provide a copy of reports that show the committee specific examples of lessons learned from these exercises and how FEMA has altered its response and recovery plans to include these new developments.

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 25. DHS’s Nation-wide Plan Review of emergency operation plans found that only 10 percent of State and 12 percent of urban area evacuation planning documents sufficiently address assisting those who would not be able to evacuate on their own. What technical assistance is FEMA providing to States and local governments to improve their plans for mass evacuations, especially assisting those most in need?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 26. Regional offices are continuing their efforts to staff-up to carry out the authorities delegated to them last year. What steps are being taken to ensure all of the ten Regions are using standardized hiring criteria?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 27. This year’s severe storms and flooding have tested many improvements made by PKEMRA to FEMA’s ability to manage response and recovery efforts from multi-State, multi-region events. Please provide the committee examples of these changes and explain what efforts, if any FEMA has made to include the private sector in administering resources to affected areas?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 28. The *National Commission on Children and Disasters* conducted a comprehensive study to examine and assess the needs of children as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters. Their findings emphasize the need to distinguish planning that addresses the needs of children from the larger “special need,” “at risk,” or “vulnerable” population categories frequently seen in Federal, State, and local disaster planning documents. What efforts can be taken to enhance the Nation’s ability to meet the needs of children in disasters?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 29. The vast diversity of our Nation requires that preparedness outreach is inclusive to the needs of culturally diverse communities. Emergency plans should be developed with an understanding of communities’ distinctive needs, particularly as they relate to race/culture, immigrant status, language, and literacy. What has FEMA done to promote outreach in culturally diverse communities and to encourage State and local emergency management agencies to do the same?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 30. Federal law now requires that State and local governments with mass evacuation plans incorporate special needs populations into their plan; however, this requirement does not necessarily ensure the incorporation of all disadvantaged populations due to the fact that State and local governments do not share a consistent definition of special needs. FEMA has begun to utilize the term “access and functional needs” to replace “special needs”. How will this new terminology help with ensuring State and locals fully integrate vulnerable populations into their preparedness plans?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 31. What efforts have been made to coordinate with local entities, such as local governments, universities, and private business, in implementing IPAWS?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 32. What will happen in rural area where people do not have broadband and cannot access internet protocol?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

Question 33. The FCC requires that EAS messages be delivered in both audio and visual and the accessible formats are so expensive they can be inaccessible and seen as unnecessary to most of these citizens. What are your plans on alerting these individuals at affordable costs?

Answer. Response was not recieved at the time of publication.

