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Press Release

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TEMA DIRECTOR PATRICK SHEEHAN TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS ON BEHALF OF NEMA

Lexington, KY – Patrick Sheehan, Director of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), provided testimony on behalf of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management hearing on Wednesday, July 18. The hearing, entitled “Are We Ready? Recovering from 2017 Disasters and Preparing for the 2018 Hurricane Season” was to explore states readiness to effectively respond to future disaster threats.

In his oral statement, Sheehan said that every state, whether directly or indirectly, is involved in the response and recovery efforts related to hurricanes, flooding, wildfires and other events across the country are eager to discuss how such experiences can inform next steps.

He emphasized how FEMA is not a first responder and that beyond any of the federally declared disasters in 2017, state emergency managers handled an additional 22,552 events. Local governments managed another 12,557 events. Without a thriving state and local emergency management system, many of these 35,109 likely would not have received the necessary attention or required costly federal support.

We create this resilient emergency management system by fostering a culture of preparedness to address threats and risks, building capacity, and creating the basis by which states are empowered to assist one another.

Sheehan explained that one of the key ways in which emergency managers build capacity to meet such challenges is through programs such as the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG). EMPG is a critical driver of progress and the program's success is shared by all levels of government and relies heavily on the continued, and decades-long, commitment of Congress. He reiterated NEMA's call to Congress for a 5 percent inflationary increase in the program for which funding has remained stagnant since 2012.

Another critical part of response and recovery to disasters is the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Through EMAC, states share resources with one another for all hazards and all disciplines – leveraging federal grant dollars invested into building capabilities

by utilizing them for national response efforts and taking those experiences back home to improve their own plans and procedures.

A transcript and video of Mr. Sheehan's testimony as well as that of the other panelists is available on the website of the [House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management](#).

For more information on NEMA, contact Karen Cobuluis, Media Coordinator, at (859) 244-8143 or e-mail kcobuluis@csg.org.

[NEMA](#) is the association of professionals dedicated to enhancing public safety by improving the nation's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from all emergencies, disasters, and threats to our security. NEMA is an affiliate organization of The Council of State Governments, headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky.

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