



October 15, 2018

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Frelinghuysen and Lowey:

On behalf of the membership of the National Association of Counties (NACo), National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), and Big City Emergency Managers (BCEM) thank you for your hard work in completing the House's bill and report for the FY19 Appropriation to the Department of Homeland Security.

Overall, we appreciate the consideration shown to the needs of state and local emergency management and homeland security programs within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In the current fiscal climate, we understand the challenges in funding grants and your commitment to the training and exercise programs and the State Homeland Security Grant Program do not go unnoticed. Two issues related to the FEMA grant programs, however, require additional discussion.

1. **Emergency Management Performance Grants.** During the FY18 Omnibus negotiations, and again as you considered the FY19 Senate appropriation for DHS, our organizations came together to request a modest 5 percent increase (\$18 million) for the Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG). Every year since 2011 NEMA and IAEM voluntarily develop a report demonstrating a return on investment of the grant program, yet this program remains level funded since 2012. No other FEMA stakeholders offer this kind of data and feedback. Furthermore, the 2018 Biennial Report done by NEMA highlights a \$116 million shortfall in this program – up from \$90 million in the 2016 report.

EMPG is essential for building and sustaining critical capabilities for disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation across the country. The impact of this program is validated in the 50-50 matching requirement which at least doubles the Federal investment and the professionalism of local and State emergency managers working tirelessly to avoid events from escalating and requiring Federal assistance. The \$18 million requested increase would result in at least a \$36 million impact across the nation.

The 2018 EMPG Return on Investment report completed by NEMA and IAEM and submitted to the Committee in March 2018 provides the best insight into the impact of this program. Beyond those events requiring a federal disaster declaration, 22,552 events required state assets, while local assets supported 12,557 additional local and tribal events. FEMA is not a first responder

during disasters, so without a thriving state and local emergency management system, many of these 35,109 events would likely have required costly federal support. We therefore strongly urge you to consider a nominal \$18 million increase for this vital program.

- 2. Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants and Flood Mapping.** In the FY18 Omnibus, the conferees provided much-needed increases to the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant and Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis (RiskMAP) programs. We were pleased to see the House bill and report reflect these continued levels. Unfortunately, instead of a direct appropriation in the FY19 bill, the Senate maintained these increases come from a \$228 million transfer from the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF). It would be our hope the merits of these programs could stand on their own and not have to come at the cost of reducing funds for state and local government to respond to and recover from a disaster. While we understand the DRF may carry-over some balances year to year, given the ongoing disaster activity across the nation, those funds reduce the need for future supplemental funding and assure disaster victims of the stability of the account. We therefore strongly support your approach to funding these programs.

We appreciate your consideration of these two requests as you begin conference negotiations with the Senate. We remain grateful for your continued support and hope you will find the resources to address these requests. As always, the membership of our associations stands ready to assist you or your staff at any time.

Sincerely,



Nick Crossley, CEM
President, IAEM-USA



Brad Richy
President, NEMA



Matthew Chase
Executive Director, NACo



Barb Graff
Chair, Big City Emergency Managers

Cc: The Honorable Kevin Yoder, Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security