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**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
Submitted to the House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
United States House of Representatives**

Appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security – Fiscal Year 2012

April 14, 2011

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record regarding the Fiscal Year 2012 budget for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As President of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) I represent the emergency management directors of all 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. Members of NEMA are responsible to the Governors for myriad responsibilities including emergency preparedness, homeland security, mitigation, response, and recovery activities for natural or terrorism-related disasters.

Emergency Management Performance Grants

The highest priority for NEMA within the President's request is funding for the Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG). EMPG assists state and local governments in managing a variety of disasters and hazards providing the only source of federal assistance to state and local government for all-hazards emergency management capacity building. Grantees utilize EMPG funds for personnel, planning, training, exercises, warning systems, public outreach, and other essential functions in establishing effective preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. This program is of considerable economic value to the federal government as all federal funds are matched 50-50 by state and local governments. Such a

matching requirement increases accountability and supplements the impact of valuable federal dollars.

This year, NEMA fully supports the President's requested funding level of \$350 million for EMPG. We appreciate the resource constrained environment, but when compared to other grant programs, the 50-50 match allows EMPG to stand alone as a worthwhile investment of federal funds. In many ways, EMPG offers a cost-savings by allowing states to manage disasters which would otherwise need to be addressed by the federal government without the capabilities provided through this program.

Homeland Security Grant Program

The State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) provides funds to build capabilities at the state and local levels and to implement the goals and objectives included in state homeland security strategies and initiatives in the State Preparedness Report. Funding amounts must remain at pre-consolidation levels, and these grants must be used in support of building an all-hazard capability. We urge the Committee to provide states greater flexibility in use of homeland security funds for all-hazards activities. Such flexibility allows the grant funding to be utilized by each state according to need, existing resources, and capabilities. This flexibility will serve to increase preparedness for all hazards including terrorism. The effort to enhance and build the national emergency response system is a national effort and federal resources should continue at the current level to maintain effectiveness. As the Committee considers funding for the SHSGP, NEMA urges sustained appropriations levels on a multi-year basis to allow for long-range planning, maintenance, and implementation.

Our membership remains concerned regarding the proposed grant consolidation of several programs into the SHSGP account within the President's request. While in theory the proposed combination may appear sound; in practice such consolidation remains impractical. The proposed consolidation would bring these grant programs under the required 80-20 funding split between state and local governments thereby further diluting these programs where state coordination is critical. While FEMA intends to reduce reporting requirements, the proposed consolidation would actually have the opposite effect.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation

The Administration's request of \$85 million for the Predisaster Mitigation Grant (PDM) Program reflects the amount normally available for programmatic activities after Congressionally-directed funding has been allocated out of a \$100 million appropriation. Since fiscal year 2002, PDM has been a competitively awarded grant program. The PDM program continues to be over-subscribed as more projects become eligible than can be funded in any given fiscal year at present funding levels.

NEMA supports the President's request of \$85 million provided the ban on Congressionally-directed funding from the recent reauthorization language is followed. Should targeted funding continue to be a part of this program, we would request appropriate funds above the \$85 million to off-set the programmatic impacts.

Emergency Operations Centers

There remains a shortfall in the ability for states to build, retrofit, and upgrade primary and alternate Emergency Operations Centers (EOC). According to the 2010 NEMA Biennial Survey,

an estimated \$398 million in requirements exist to bridge the shortfall. The current EOC Grant Program is intended to improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities by supporting flexible, sustainable, secure, and interoperable EOCs with a focus on addressing identified deficiencies and needs. Fully capable emergency operations facilities at the state and local levels stand as an essential element of a comprehensive national emergency management system and are necessary to ensure continuity of operations and continuity of government in major disasters caused by any hazard. The continued viability of a strong and robust EOC Grant Program remains in the nation's best interest.

Emergency Management Assistance Compact

Finally, I wish to address funding for the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). When states and the U.S. Territories joined together and Congress ratified EMAC (Public Law PL-104-321) in 1996, it created a legal and procedural mechanism whereby emergency response resources such as Urban Search and Rescue Teams can quickly move throughout the country to meet disaster needs. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and three territories are members of EMAC and have committed their emergency resources in helping neighboring states and territories.

To provide a sense of EMAC's value in the context of search and rescue, in 2005 the year of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma more than 1,300 search and rescue personnel from 16 states searched more than 22,300 structures and rescued 6,582 people. EMAC staff stood ready to offer support recently during the tsunami threat to Hawaii as well. Fortunately the need for mutual aid was never required in Hawaii, but the knowledge it remains available as a state asset is invaluable to emergency response officials.

The capabilities of EMAC remain sustained by the efforts of all the states and would be bolstered by direct support of EMAC. While EMAC currently receives FEMA grant funding, fulfilling NEMA's request for a \$4 million line item appropriation would codify the program for use in future disasters. Please note these funds do not represent an earmark as they provide numerous benefits directly to the states.

As the opportunity is afforded, EMAC intends to develop, maintain, and exercise state and regional mutual aid capabilities, train state and local emergency response personnel who may be deployed through EMAC, support the development of specialized emergency response capabilities among the regions, and ensure EMAC remains a viable resource for the states now and in the future. In my opinion, \$4 million in federal funds stands as a minimal investment for maintaining a proven national emergency response capacity that day-to-day is equipped, trained, and ready to provide critical disaster response resources and support between states. All members of EMAC rely on this asset as a critical tool in their response and recovery arsenal.

Conclusion

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to address these issues critical to the emergency management community. This Committee regularly affirms support for ensuring preparedness for our nation's vulnerabilities against all-hazards with additional investments in EMPG and EOCs. As you develop the Fiscal Year 2012 budget for the Department of Homeland Security, I encourage you to utilize our membership as a resource and continue efforts to build a strong and robust emergency management baseline in our country. Together, we will carry-on the initiatives so thoughtfully developed by this Committee over the years. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of NEMA and appreciate your continued partnership.