

Mitigation Committee Meeting
NEMA Annual Conference, Little Rock, AR
19 October 2010
10:15 am – 12:15 pm

Meeting Minutes

Opening Comments

Chairman Mullen welcomed state directors from the audience to join the Committee table, provided a brief overview of the agenda for the day. Roll was taken and the following members were present:

Jim Mullen, WA	John Madden, AK	Barbara Farr, VT
Tom Sands, MI	Dave Miller, IA	Lou Trammell, AZ
Dave Halstead, FL		

Update on the Pre Disaster Mitigation Program

In the 111th Congress, numerous bills were introduced that attempted to address the much needed long-term reauthorization of the Pre-disaster Mitigation Program. Without attention before the end of 2010, all bills introduced by this Congress will die and will need to be reintroduced by the 112th Congress when they convene in early 2011.

- The Chairman explained that everyone had been hopeful that the PDM issue could be resolved in a compromise between the House and Senate versions of a reauthorization bill.
 - HR 1746 was introduced by Rep. Jim Oberstar (D-MN) back in early 2009 and would reauthorize PDM at \$250M for each FY through 2012.
 - S. 3249 was introduced by Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and would reauthorize the program at an escalating appropriations level, starting at \$180M and topping off at \$200M through FY2015.
- Both bills would also repeal the termination of the program so it would not need to rely on short term reauthorizations. PDM was reauthorized in the FY2010 Appropriations bill and was set to expire on September 30; a short extension was included in the Continuing Resolution.

The Chairman also updated the committee on an issue that had first come about in the report for the Senate Appropriations bill earlier this summer. The report indicated that PDM was funded at \$75 million, or \$25 million below the FY2010 enacted level. The Senate did not include any earmarks of the program. For reference, the House of Representatives draft Appropriations bill funded the program at \$100 million but included about \$18 million in earmarks. Further down in the Senate language, the Committee references a \$230 million “backlog” from previously appropriated PDM funds. The committee is concerned with the pace of obligation after awards have been made under the program. The \$25 million reduction in funding over FY10 may have been a result of this perceived lack of expediency.

- NEMA continues to work with the Legislative Committee to find a compromise that ensures continuation of this vital program.

Update on the Mitigation Alliance

NEMA is continuing to lead the Mitigation Alliance effort. After the March Alliance meeting, conference calls have been held to coordinate with the members and update them on the status. Two more organizations have signed on to the paper and we continue to receive positive feedback. The real challenge will be implementing the recommendations. To help with the continued work outlined in the

White Paper, the Alliance received a sole source contract from FEMA. The Alliance is currently in the planning stages of its next meeting to be held this December through which a more formal organizational structure, mission, vision, and goals will be developed. The Alliance is made up of a diverse group of mitigation stakeholders and represents an invaluable asset in research, policy development, and information sharing.

Guest Presentations

The Committee invited representatives from FEMA's Mitigation Division to address various issues of interest to NEMA's membership. An outline of each presentation is below.

Sandra Knight: Appearing before the committee for the first time since taking the role as Deputy Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administrator for Mitigation back in February. Sandra led with a discussion of a few key initiatives that FEMA has been working on including the Strategic Plan for Mitigation. The three key pillars of the plan include enhancing credibility, advancing sustainability, and valuing people and relationships. The next key issue is the National Flood Insurance Program which has been a hot button issue in Congress for the past few years. Knight informed the committee that Mike Grimm has been chosen to lead a major rethink of the program which will include listening sessions, policy analysis, external shaper meetings, and a final report for Congressional Action. Sandra also addressed a questions relating to the planning cycle for state mitigation plans. Currently the cycle is every five years, but many, including NEMA, have indicated the desire to change that to 5 years. Knight indicated that the Mitigation Division is looking at this suggestion, and is undertaking a comprehensive review. She also let the Committee know that FEMA will be asking for 4 NEMA representatives to serve as subject matter experts for the review team.

Angela Gladwell: Also appearing at her first NEMA conference, Gladwell came to the meeting to give NEMA members an overview of what the Office of Environmental and Historic Preservation does within the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA. Gladwell highlighted the new EHP Strategic Plan which outlines the mission of the Office through 2013. She also indicated that while the program is often seen as a burden or a roadblock to the implementation of key disaster programs, holistic integration of EHP within the States and Regions assures the process will not be cumbersome. Gladwell highlighted major goals for the Office, which includes building sustainable capabilities, strengthening the compliance process, and putting programmatic tools in place to improve the EHP reviews. Gladwell also addressed the backlog in Mitigation funding that was outlined in the Senate Appropriations language and indicated willingness to be transparent as NEMA works with the Hill to figure out a way forward on this PDM issue.

SHMO Update

Mark Stewart from the State of Washington gave a short update on the key issues discussed during the State Hazard Mitigation Officers meeting on the first day of the Conference. The main issues included (1) Mitigation planning and the timeframe for updated plan reviews; (2) Upcoming surveys to address ways in which SHMOs can work better at both the HQ and regional level; and (3) a workgroup that has been established to review the enhanced mitigation planning process. The SHMOs continue to feel the pains of State financial challenges which affect their ability to travel but continue to meet by conference call as often as possible.