

Petroleum Shortage Response Planning Workshop

Summary of Workshop Outcomes

February 21 - 22

Atlanta, GA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On February 21st and 22nd, 2018, representatives from 12 states, federal agencies, associations, and other industry partners gathered for a petroleum shortage response planning workshop. The workshop defined the current capacity and practices to respond to a petroleum shortage, served as a conduit to enhance regional coordination to bolster the overall energy resilience, and to identified areas where future planning could enhance existing practices. For a summary of outcomes see [table 1](#) below.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION

The following organizations participated in the workshop:

- **Event sponsors:** United States Department of Energy (DOE) participated in the Petroleum Shortage Response Planning Workshop sponsored by the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO).
- **States participating:** Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.
- **Other participants:** Representatives from the petroleum industry, GasBuddy.

WORKSHOP APPROACH

To begin the workshop and set the stage for the later discussions, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) facilitated a remote presentation for the workshop attendees to highlight the resources available to states to assist in petroleum shortage responses and planning through the agency. Following this NASEO presented a primer on the newly developed *NASEO Guidance for States on Petroleum Shortage Response Planning*. This guidance, along with many supplemental materials are tools are available for download on NASEO's [website](#).

Participants from Florida, Georgia, and Texas discussed lessons learned from the 2017 hurricane season and participated in a scenario-driven discussion of response operations, before walking through a facilitated exploration of where the region currently stands with preparedness for petroleum shortages, where the region would like to be, and how the region could get to the desired level of preparedness and coordination.

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

The following elements represent highest priorities identified through the workshop along with identified opportunities to build on the foundation set by this workshop. The table below offers a complete summary of all strengths and areas for improvement identified by participants.

Public Information

Public information is the top priorities across the states participating in the workshop. Past events have shown the power of media and public perception in either creating a shortage or worsening one, necessitating the ability to not only provide the public with accurate information, but also work to correct misinformation as it pertains the event. Key considerations include:

- **Social media:** Social media, as a public information medium, is ever evolving and requires specialized knowledge to understand trends in its development as well as the ways in which to collect the most information from it as possible and to be as impactful as possible with messaging campaigns. The participating states expressed a need to better understand social media to be empowered to respond quickly and correctly.
- **Joint messaging strategies:** A need to continue to integrate industry and associations into messaging efforts to create a unified public information system was identified. The participating states suggested a public information/crisis communication workshop to develop prescribed messages with emergency management, energy offices, and public information officers for elected officials/government offices.

External Coordination

Participating states have established relationships with industry partners and associations. Participants noted that associations and industry best know their own needs and should be part of an ongoing preparedness campaign and after-action process when an event occurs due to the interdependencies between private-sector plans and public-sector plans. Key considerations include:

- **Public sector relationship building:** Participants felt that further establishing partnerships and relationships between emergency management, energy officials, industry, and other states would enhance the region's ability to respond to a petroleum shortage.
- **Private sector relationship building:** States noted that working with private-sector partners to ensure private sector and public-sector plans are interoperable was a necessary next step to further enhance the capacity for information sharing and operational integration.

Data/Evaluation

Participants stated an understanding that data is critical and had previously identified some avenues to obtain necessary data, including a few novel modes of data acquisition and analysis through private-sector partner (e.g. GasBuddy). Key considerations include:

- **Enhanced visibility and education:** More knowledge of what data is available and how it could be used, as well as best practices for monitoring data. Workshop participants identified having a workshop focused on data would be valuable and of interest to participate in.

- **Common operating picture:** Data visualization to maintain a common operation picture was also identified as need during the workshop conversations. While there are tools for electricity data visualization, there are not yet similar tools for oil and natural gas. The expansion of current platforms, such as Eagle Eye, to include oil and natural gas representation and to integrate into state platforms is an action that would greatly enhance the ability of states to maintain a common operation picture throughout an event involving a petroleum shortage.
- **Guidance navigating regulations to enhance information sharing:** Under public information laws, states are required to share all information with the public, except for the types of information identified in state legislation as exemptions to this practice. Participating states identified the need to understand their state's exemption legislation and further understand what this legislation would mean for sharing data and information across state lines.

Regional Coordination Methods

Several states identified methods to listen into the status of neighboring states to maintain situational awareness, however, there is not a standard plan for regional coordination and/or regional standardization. An additional layer of complication to regional operations lies in the fact that for many states, energy assurance responsibilities are not the sole focus of the identified point of contact. Key considerations include:

- **Limited capacity:** There is frequently a reduced capacity for energy assurance planning and often a knowledge loss from attrition into such roles.
- **Regional coordination frameworks:** Partners identified that building out a regional plan would be beneficial for responding to petroleum shortages, but for this to be truly beneficial, these plans need to be frameworks for states to mold their operations into, instead of a detailed one-size-fits-all plan. The participating states identified using the regularly occurring events such as calls and regional meetings to follow up on these ideas and as a means for furthering these action items and regional collaboration.
- **More validation and exercise opportunities:** States expressed a want to reinstate regional energy tabletop exercises to continue to build the shared knowledge, the partnerships, and the communication between states. Building on these tabletop exercises, states also felt it would be beneficial to execute functional exercises to put the conversations into practice.
- **Integration with evacuation planning and response activities:** States described the importance of integration with evacuation planning and response. Within the attending region, evacuations frequently cross state lines necessitating petroleum readiness and awareness to allow for coordinated efforts in neighboring states to be able to facilitate the evacuation. Actions may include identifying evacuation routes to provide emergency backup power support and incentives for identified gas stations along those routes.

Prioritization/Allocation Decision-Making

During the workshop, participants identified that prioritization of needs in a widespread incident is going to be a challenge and would require collaboration between industry and state partners but were unsure of the methodology for prioritization that would be implemented in different scenarios. Key considerations include:

- **Facilitated discussions and technical assistance:** Several states felt having a third party facilitate the prioritization conversations and setting with applicable state stakeholders would be helpful for achieving established priorities.
- **Elected official coordination:** Petroleum stakeholders need to identify strategies for educating and working with elected and appointed officials. This presents opportunity and challenge, but it must be accounted for.

Workshop Outcomes

The table below offers a complete summary of all strengths and areas for improvement identified by participants.

Table 1 - Workshop Outcomes

Programs/Measures	
Strength	Participants were familiar with Federal and State waivers to assist during response.
Strength	Strong bi-directional communication with locals and amongst regional partners.
Area for Improvement	Petroleum distribution priority setting is difficult for many due to political and coordination challenges. Many decisions are assumed to occur during response.
Area for Improvement	Petroleum stakeholders need to identify strategies for educating and working with elected and appointed officials. This presents opportunity and challenge, but it must be accounted for.
Communications/Information Sharing	
Strength	Generally, petroleum stakeholders understand and practice information sharing between emergency management, energy offices, and other partner agencies
Area for Improvement	Public information is amongst the top priorities across states, includes prescribed messages, integration of emergency management, and public information officers/joint information systems. Should be for both traditional and new media.
Area for Improvement	Social media and rumor control need to be considered for rapid response. The public message needs to be shaped early in the response and Integrated with larger response efforts.
External Coordination	
Strength	Nearly all states possess strong established relationships with industry partners and associations.
Area for Improvement	Opportunity to further integrate industry and associations in unified messaging efforts both during and before events.
Data/Evaluation	
Strength	To make informed decisions, there is a uniform understanding that data from diverse sources on supply and availability for petroleum is critical. Most stakeholders have identified some avenues to obtain information.
Area for Improvement	Through the workshop, stakeholders identified new ways of acquiring data and data analysis through partners (e.g. GasBuddy). However, all need to know more about the data available, how it can be used.
Area for Improvement	Best practices for monitoring practices could be helpful to all participants.
Area for Improvement	Sharing information may be impeded due to state and federal regulations around data protection. Need a more robust understanding of state regulations, federal resources/assistance, limitations.

Regional Coordination

Strength	Identified methods to listen into status of neighboring states to maintain situational awareness, but more is necessary.
Area for Improvement	Acknowledged instances in which incidents would be best handled with collaboration from regional partners. Open to enhancing regional coordination.
Area for Improvement	Do not have a standard plan for regional coordination and/or regional standardization. Regional coordination plans need to be simple frameworks.
Strength	DOE/Energy Assurance Coordinator Program presents opportunity for added coordination, information sharing, and capacity when resources are limited. Focus on industry integration into existing emergency management approaches. Integrate with FEMA when appropriate.
Area for Improvement	Most states have limited capacity to support energy assurance. Role is often a secondary duty.
Area for Improvement	Evacuation planning presents unique and complex challenges for energy assurance, must be specifically considered in instances of mass evacuation.

Interdependencies

Strength	Knowledgeable of the interdependencies and potential cascading impacts across sectors.
Area for Improvement	It's not just infrastructure, it's also planning for human capital that can be challenging.
Area for Improvement	Associations and industry best know their own needs and need to be part of an ongoing preparedness campaign and after-action process.
Area for Improvement	Ensure plan integration between public and private sector.

Prioritization

Strength	Identified that prioritization in a widespread incident is going to be a challenge.
Area for Improvement	Prioritization will have to be a collaboration between industry and state partners.
Area for Improvement	Unsure of methodology for prioritization that would be implemented in different scenarios.
Area for Improvement	Major challenges with both "Minimum Purchase" and "Odd-Even" programs, while an option, most felt public messaging and education is the preferred method of managing scarcity.