



January 17, 2020



## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

### A Week of Resilience

Often times, it's impossible to determine how prevalent emergency management issues will be throughout the week in D.C. until we have the time to look back and reflect. The second week of January is typically reserved for anticipation of the President's budget request the following month and Congress and their staffs becoming reacquainted with town after an extended holiday absence. This week, however, saw a flurry of activity and represented a time of resilience...resilience for FEMA, NEMA, and disaster survivors.

The emergency management community was finally able to take a sigh of relief as the Senate cleared the nomination of Pete Gaynor as FEMA Administrator by a vote of 81-8 on Tuesday. This development removes a huge distraction for the agency and provides Gaynor a sense of permanence not usually realized with the "acting title." Upon being sworn in, Gaynor penned an [open letter](#) where he laid out his priorities and vision for the agency.

At almost the same time as Gaynor assumed his permanent role in the administration, NEMA Resilience Committee Co-Chairs Russ Strickland (MD) and Mike Dossett (KY) were also in the building meeting with Deputy Administrator for Resilience Daniel Kaniewski. While Strickland and Dossett laid out their vision for the new Resilience Committee, Kaniewski graciously opened-up about how the Agency is handling the subject and welcomed all his senior leadership to go over their priorities for 2020. The discussion was productive and will surely help as the two state directors work with their counterparts on the first Resilience Committee conference call at the end of the month.

Puerto Rico and their recent earthquake hung in the news this week as well. First approved for an emergency declaration, posturing in town took aim at the White House for what was perceived as delays in expanding assistance to a Major Disaster Declaration which ended-up being signed by the President on Thursday. In a stroke of timing or luck, the House Appropriations Committee released the text of a supplemental for Puerto Rico. Additional details are available below. With the National Homeland Security Consortium and NEMA-ASTHO-GHSAC Working Group both meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas next week,

there will surely be more coming next week. Enjoy the long weekend and we'll be back with you next week.

### Hearings the Week of January 20, 2020

*Due to the impeachment proceedings in the Senate, no relevant committee meetings are scheduled at this time.*

*More News from the Nation's Capital...*

#### **HMA Deadline Approaching**

FEMA wants to ensure all grantees are aware of hard deadlines for this year's HMA grant submission and requests for technical support. As a new practice this year, they are implementing a hard stop two days in advance of the application deadline. All applicants must identify any technical issues or concerns by January 29th at 3:00pm EST, and the application deadline is January 31st.

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#### **Puerto Rico Supplemental Released**

On Thursday, the House Appropriations Committee released a \$3.35 billion supplemental bill for Puerto Rico to provide additional support following a series of recent earthquakes.

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#### **FEMA Makes Senior Executive Leadership Announcements**

Last week, FEMA announced several personnel movements within the agency.

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#### **Report and Podcast on Unique R&R Challenges of Wildfires**

In October, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report on the unique response and recovery challenges of wildfires. This week they followed-up with a podcast discussing some of the issues and recommendations.

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*Other News from DC and Around the Country:*

**The Economist:** [The Lessons from Australia's Fires](#)

**Sacramento Bee:** [Officials Furious that FEMA Seeks Money from Wildfire Victims](#)

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