



October 9, 2020



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

Fat Bear Week

Photo: Katmai National Park & Preserve

This week once again marked [Fat Bear Week](#), hosted by Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska. The annual March Madness-esque contest celebrates the park's brown bears and their weight-gain journey to prepare for hibernation. Longtime fans of *Ready Nation: Policy* will know that last year [Holly](#) was crowned the champion, but this year she was blown out of the water by Bear 747 (pictured), who appears to be roughly as big as the aircraft which shares his name. Park rangers reported that this year he is so big, his well-developed belly recently got stuck on a rock as he attempted to climb a hill.

As we in Washington continue along a path of stimulus talks that has more curves than Bear 747, here's a breakdown of the journey as it evolved this week:

Little Deal:

After saying Tuesday that he was ending negotiations on a new coronavirus relief bill, President Trump Wednesday reversed himself. He said in a tweet that he would consider a small deal -

"If I am sent a Stand Alone Bill for Stimulus Checks (\$1,200), they will go out to our great people IMMEDIATELY. I am ready to sign right now. Are you listening Nancy?"

"The House & Senate should IMMEDIATELY Approve 25 Billion Dollars for Airline Payroll Support, & 135 Billion Dollars for Paycheck Protection Program for Small Business. Both of these will be fully paid for with unused funds from the Cares Act. Have this money. I will sign now!"

No Deal:

Roll Call then reported yesterday that Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she would not support a small deal if nothing else was promised -

"Speaker Nancy Pelosi quashed talk of a separate bill to mitigate airline industry layoffs without also aiding other industries and households and funding for schools, nationwide COVID-19 testing and more.

"There is no stand-alone bill without a bigger bill,' Pelosi said at her weekly press conference Thursday.

"Pelosi said she is willing to move airline aid separately but only if there's 'a guarantee' that there will also be a larger package containing aid for state and local governments, schools, testing and contact tracing, as well as unemployment assistance and workplace safety regulations."

House Democrats last week passed a \$2.2T bill that contained such provisions.

Pelosi's announcement seemed to pull the plug on any further negotiations.

To read the Roll Call story: [click here](#)

But wait - there's more.

Big Deal:

Late [Thursday afternoon](#) Bloomberg News reported that President Trump changed his mind again and now wants a big deal -

"The White House shifted tack on Thursday, signaling that the administration is again leaning toward a large-scale stimulus bill after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi pushed back on the idea of individual measures for parts of the economy hit by the Covid-19 crisis.

"Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told Pelosi in a 40-minute call that President Donald Trump wants agreement on a comprehensive stimulus package, according to Drew Hammill, a Pelosi spokesman."

Well - Maybe:

"Meanwhile, White House spokeswoman Alyssa Farah said, 'we've made very clear we want a skinny package,' though she later clarified that position, telling reporters the administration is 'open to going with something bigger.' She reiterated opposition to the \$2.2 trillion plan from House Democrats."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell may have summed up the week the best:

"The discussion from day to day can be confusing for all of us to follow," Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader and the top Republican on Capitol Hill, told reporters at an event in Kentucky. "But we're still engaging and hoping we can find a way forward." ([NYT](#))

If there is to be a deal on a new coronavirus relief bill it must happen soon. Finalizing and passing a negotiated deal through both chambers will take about two weeks and time is growing short.

More News from the Nation's Capital...

Shelters of Last Resort: Webinar on Systems of Congregate Shelter for Homeless and Vulnerable Populations During COVID-19

Next Friday, October 16, NEMA is partnering with the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS), Association for State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), and the CHDS Association on a webinar examining challenges and emerging model practices to provide shelters and longer-term housing options for vulnerable populations during the pandemic.

Panelists will include:

- Justin Brown, Chief, Office of Emergency Management, Washington, D.C. Department of Human Services
- Dr. Donell Harvin, Chief, Homeland Security and Intelligence, Washington, D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA)
- Daniel Malone, Executive Director, Seattle Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) and Co-Convener, Housing First Partners Conference

Moderator: Clark Kimerer, Assistant Chief (Retired) Seattle Police Department and Vice Chair, Seattle Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC)

The webinar will be **Friday, October 16 at 2:00pm ET**. [Register here](#) and submit any questions you have ahead of the session on the webinar registration page or to chds-eeep@nps.edu.

DHS Homeland Threat Assessment Released

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released the first Homeland Threat Assessment (HTA) as part of its commitment to produce an annual report on threats facing the homeland to inform government, private sector partners, and the public made in last year's [Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence](#).

The HTA's findings emphasize cyber threats, Domestic Violent Extremists and other ideologically motivated violent actors, COVID-19 and follow-on impacts to the economy and migration, transnational criminal organizations, and natural disasters as some of the most pertinent facing the nation today.

[Read the full report here.](#)

FEMA Adjusts Consumer Price Index for 2021

It's that time of year again! FEMA provided its annual financial guidance for all disasters declared on or after October 1, 2020 to reflect the 2021 Consumer Price Index adjustment of certain indicators for the IA and PA programs. This year's adjustment reflects a 1.3% increase from inflation.

The following FEMA program amounts have been changed:

- The maximum amount of assistance for both housing assistance and other needs assistance under the Individuals and Households Program is \$36,000.
- The statewide per capita impact indicator under the Public Assistance program is \$1.55.
- The countywide per capita indicator under the Public Assistance program is \$3.89.
- The maximum amount of small project grants under the Public Assistance program is \$132,800.
- The minimum amount for project worksheets under the Public Assistance program is \$3,320

[More information is available here.](#)

South Carolina Governor Signs Legislation to Create Resilience Office, Pre-Disaster Mitigation Programs

On September 29th, South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster (R) signed into law the bipartisan Disaster Relief and Resilience Act, which creates a State Office of Resilience to develop, implement, and maintain a watershed-based resilience plan to respond to flooding and other natural disasters. The law makes South Carolina one of a handful of states to create a dedicated resilience program to address flooding. It also authorizes two new funds dedicated to pre-disaster mitigation activities, including a revolving loan program to assist with buyouts of flood-prone properties and restoring the natural floodplain functions of those lands. This follows recommendations included in a November 2019 report issued by the Floodwater Commission convened by Governor McMaster.

[More information is available here.](#)

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

Bloomberg News: [This Year Has Seen a Record Number of Climate Disasters Costing \\$1 Billion](#)

EDM Digest: [The Financial Value of Proactive Disaster Mitigation](#)

Houston Chronicle: [Rapid COVID Testing Could 'Nip Any Emerging Outbreak Immediately' Experts Say](#)

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