



March 13, 2020



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

Houston, We Have a Problem

With the news this week that Tom Hanks has COVID-19, it seems only appropriate that we all continue to remind ourselves that **FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION**.

But in all seriousness, as cases have continued to escalate this week, we know you are constantly experiencing a deluge of information about COVID-19 in your state and across the country (and world). We at NEMA are here to be a resource for you in any way possible both in times of emergency and steady-state operations.

First up: the **President is expected to declare an emergency** at a press conference at 3:00pm EST today. Reports of what will be said or done range from utilization of the National Emergencies Act to unilateral action under Stafford. We will keep you apprised as the situation develops.

Earlier this week, a staffer in Senator Maria Cantwell's Washington D.C. office (D-WA) was diagnosed with coronavirus, spurring the shuttering of her D.C. office for the week and igniting the start of several other Senate Capitol office closures. **Multiple members of Congress at this point have been or are under self-quarantine**. In addition, the Capitol campus is closed to all but staff and official business until the 31st.

While the public may not be able to trundle the halls, the **Senate has decided to cancel its scheduled recess and remain in session** next week to continue working on an economic relief package to address the outbreak related to the newly announced House legislative package.

The **House legislative package announced today** provides for emergency paid leave benefits, free coronavirus testing, expanded unemployment insurance for furloughed workers, additional flexibility in child nutrition and food stamp funding, and helps states and territories meet their Medicaid requirements.

The **White House has also tasked Admiral Brett Giroir with the role of testing czar** at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to coordinate testing efforts among public health service agencies, particularly between the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The **first EMAC mission for coronavirus is also now active** – as always, we want to thank you all for showing support to your colleagues while still responding to the outbreak in your own states. It's impossible to say it enough – emergency management is a team sport and no one succeeds alone.

Stay Cyber Safe: There have been **reports already of phishing scams using coronavirus** to entice victims to click on links, with reports of impersonations of CDC emails and imitations of the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, among others.

A Note: **The NEMA Mid-Year Forum from March 27-31 is officially canceled** to ensure the health and safety of our stakeholders and partners and allow for all involved to fully focus on any COVID-19 responsibilities they may have for the foreseeable future. In the coming months, we will see what is possible for conducting some of these critical conversations that span emergency management virtually. We thank you for your continued support and engagement and look forward to seeing you in Cleveland!

More News from the Nation's Capital...

Federal Interagency Responses to Coronavirus

Summaries of White House documents for states, localities, and communities; CDC funding (check in with your state health officials about their spend plans!); and SBA disaster loans.

[Read More](#)

GAO: SBA Disaster Loan Processing Timelier, but Improvements Still Needed

In reviewing SBA disaster loan processing for the 2017 hurricanes, GAO found that over 90 percent of applications were processed on time, but more comprehensive risk planning is required for organizational resilience.

[Read More](#)

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

Stateline: [State Action on Coronavirus](#)

JDSUPRA: [Coronavirus: Implications of an Emergency Declaration](#)

Route Fifty: [Coronavirus Quarantines Pose Tough Issues for State and Local Officials](#)

GovTech: [Coronavirus: Two States Divert to Telework – Are Others Ready?](#)

New York Times: [Trump Administration Presses Cities to Evict Homeowners from Flood Zones](#)

nemaweb.org



Copyright NEMA 2019. All rights reserved.