



a collaborative environment to drive policy, innovate and advance emergency management

January 15, 2021



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

Re-peach

It's been yet another busy week kicking off 2021 in the capital.

As a result of last week's rioting at the Capitol, the House impeached the president by a margin of 232-197 on charges of "incitement of insurrection". The vote also provides him the distinction of being the only president to be impeached twice. The impeachment process will now move to the Senate for a trial, although the chamber is not expected to take it up until after the president has left office. This will leave the Senate with two tasks: conducting an impeachment trial while reviewing Biden's nominees and his initial legislative proposals around response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf stepped down from the position earlier this week and returned to a previous posting within the DHS structure. To close out the administration, FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor was tapped as the new Acting Secretary, with Region IX Administrator Bob Fenton temporarily taking the reins at FEMA (as he did during the last administration changeover). The musical chairs at the Department led to an odd situation this week where Gaynor, serving in an acting capacity himself, granted Wolf the power to ratify measures Wolf legally lacked the authority to enact during the 14 months he led the department in an acting capacity. The latest maneuver echoed moves Gaynor and Wolf took in September, when the then-FEMA head delegated authority to Wolf in the event that he was found serving unlawfully as acting head of Homeland Security.

Deanne Criswell was also announced as President-elect Biden's pick to serve as FEMA Administrator. NEMA will likely be asked in the coming weeks to provide a statement of support for her nomination. If so, NEMA will do so via its established process for evaluating nominees as was recently done for DHS Secretary-nominee Alejandro Mayorkas.

In preparation for the change in administrations, much of downtown DC has been boarded up and streets have been closed. Some have nicknamed the area within the closures the "Capitol Green Zone". Approximately 20,000 National Guard troops from around the nation are expected in the city to provide security for the inauguration.

Hearings the Week of January 19, 2021

[Nomination of the Honorable Alejandro N. Mayorkas to be Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#)

Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs

Tuesday, January 19, 10:00am ET

More News from the Nation's Capital...

House Committee Chairs Urge Biden to Increase Federal Cost-Share

Chairs of several committees in the house, including Transportation & Infrastructure (with oversight of FEMA), Homeland Security, and Appropriations sent President-elect Biden a letter this week urging him to waive all federal cost-share requirements for Stafford Act assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also encourages the repeal of FEMA Public Assistance restrictions placed on reimbursements in the fall. In recommending this, the chairs cite a letter sent jointly by NEMA and a number of other state and local-focused associations expressing our concern over the policy.

The [full letter can be found here](#).

CHDS Webinar: Building Trust in a Disinformation Age

NEMA is partnering with the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) and other organizations on the webinar, *Building Trust in a Disinformation Age*. The webinar focuses on how public service professionals can effectively communicate critical information amidst the rise of disinformation and conspiracy theories.

Panelists include:

- Julie Parker, CHDS and former Senior Advisor for Media, International Association of Chiefs of Police;
- Dr. Swapna Reddy, Clinical Assistant Professor, College of Health Solutions, Arizona State University; and
- Dr. Kristy Roschke, Managing Director, News Co/Lab, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University

The webinar will be Friday, January 29, 2021 at 2:00pm EST. Send advance questions to chds-eeep@nps.edu.

[Register here](#).

PEW Webinars: Advancing Flood Resilience Planning and Policy Development

The PEW Charitable Trusts' flood-prepared communities initiative will conduct a webinar series on opportunities for advancing flood resilience planning and policy development. The first will be January 21, 1:00pm ET, titled *Flood Resilience in the Year Ahead: State Innovation and Opportunities*. Flooding is the U.S.' most frequent and costly natural hazard.

Speakers include:

- Mandela Barnes, Lieutenant Governor, State of Wisconsin;
- Dave Rosenblatt, New Jersey Chief Resilience Officer and Assistant Commissioner, Climate and Flood Resilience, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection;
- Shaun O'Rourke, Rhode Island Chief Resilience Officer and Director of Stormwater and Resiliency, Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank; and
- Dan Lauf, Program Director, Center for Best Practices, National Governors Association.

[Register here](#).

EPA Webinars: Surface Disinfection and Mask Effectiveness for COVID-19

In the coming weeks the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is hosting two webinars focused on COVID-19 research. Thursday, January 21 at 2:00pm ET is *COVID-19: UV-C Devices and Methods for Surface Disinfection*. The webinar will provide information on EPA research focused on disinfecting large spaces, including alternative methods such as ultraviolet light. [Register here](#).

The second webinar is *Effectiveness of Medical and Cloth Masks for COVID-19 Protection*, taking place on Wednesday, January 27 at 3:00pm ET. The EPA is conducting research on testing the fitted filtering efficiency of various face coverings available to hospital workers and the general public. [Register here](#).

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

D Magazine: [How Racial and Gender Equality are Critical for Building Climate Resilience](#)

Washington Post: [Vaccine Reserve was Already Exhausted when Trump Administration Vowed to Release it, Dashing Hopes of Expanded Access](#)

STAT News: [COVID-19 Deaths are the Highest They've Ever Been – and the More Infectious Variant Could Make Things Much Worse](#)

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