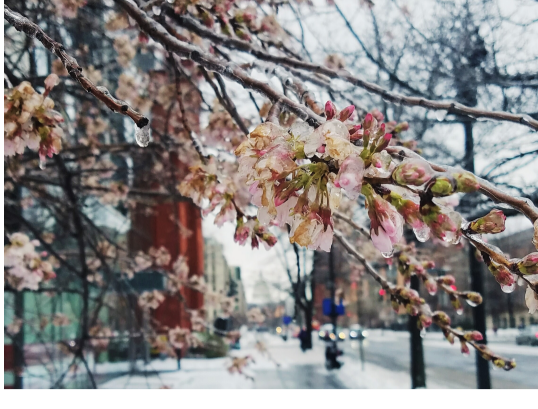




January 22, 2021



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

Ch, Ch, Ch, Changes

This week the nation's 46th President, Joe Biden, was inaugurated. Having previously been Vice President, one assumes he didn't need to spend the time usually required at a new job finding out where the restrooms and the kitchen are and thus was able to immediately get to work signing numerous Executive Orders on a wide variety of issues.

Several of these pertain to emergency management, including the invocation of the Defense Production Act (DPA) to fill supply chain shortfalls related to pandemic response and designing a strategy to domestically manufacture supplies necessary to a pandemic response; increasing the federal cost-share for National Guard activities and FEMA Category B Public Assistance expenditures related to the pandemic to 100 percent moving forward; a mask mandate in federal buildings; establishing a COVID-19 pandemic testing board; ensuring an equitable response and recovery from COVID-19; and developing a strategy to safely reopen schools nationwide. Another EO overturned EO 13807 which revoked EO 13690 which amended EO 11980 (try to keep your eye on the bouncing ball here) and established the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS). We therefore believe FFRMS is reinstated for now. NEMA has specifically advocated for several of these issues. [View the full list of presidential actions here.](#)

The Biden Administration has also developed a Concept of Operations which would, among other things, task FEMA with creating 100 mass vaccination sites nationwide.

On the legislative side, President Biden is advocating for a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package which is already meeting resistance from a bipartisan group of senators, namely the "908 group" which established the last bipartisan agreement. With the political party makeup of the Senate sitting at 50-50, to make any legislation filibuster-proof 10 Republicans must vote for the bill. This is likely to be a tall order for the coronavirus relief package and many other pieces of legislation. An alternate option is to go through the budget reconciliation process, but that requires a narrower focus and is tricky to pull off. For now, at least, it appears the Senate will operate like the agreement laid-out in 2001 when the situation was reversed (where Vice President Cheney was the tie-breaking vote) and both sides appear to be proceeding amicably. Fingers crossed!

Further muddying the waters is the looming specter of a Senate impeachment trial for Donald Trump, with House leadership set to transmit an article of impeachment to the Senate on Monday. Senate Minority Leader McConnell (R-KY) is proposing that the trial not begin until February so as to allow the former president's lawyers time to prepare.

More News from the Nation's Capital...

FEMA Mitigation Grant Programs Applications Due Next Week

On Friday of next week, **January 29, 3:00pm ET**, the suite of FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), and first ever Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program applications are due. Between the programs there is \$700 million in grant funding on the table for states, localities, tribes, and territories.

If you or your staff are experiencing technical difficulties with the FEMA GO portal, these must be communicated to FEMA by 3:00pm ET January 27 via FEMAGO@fema.dhs.gov.

The Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) and additional information [can be found here](#).

Senate Holds DHS Secretary Nominee Mayorkas Confirmation Hearing

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) held a confirmation hearing for President Biden's nominee for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on Tuesday. Top of mind for senators were issues related to the Capitol breach, cybersecurity in the wake of the SolarWinds breach, changes to border security processes under the new administration, and Inspector General reports examining interventions into several visa cases that had the potential to be seen as biased when he was the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) director. The IG found no evidence of wrongdoing.

It is expected that his confirmation vote will be sometime next week. Senator Hawley (R-MO), a member of the committee, has placed a hold on Mayorkas' nomination, making the timeline slightly murkier than for some of the president's other nominees. NEMA has endorsed Secretary-designate Mayorkas for the role.

Watch the hearing and [read his testimony here](#).

OMB Withdraws Trump Administration Rescission Proposal

Last week the Trump Administration released a proposal for the rescission of various expenditures across the federal government. This would withhold the previously authorized full funding for programs including the Office of the Ombudsman for Immigration Detention and the Alternatives to Detention (ATD) Case Management pilot program. This program would create a pilot program for aliens enrolled in ATD at FEMA. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) revoked these proposals this week, allowing the funding to return to the regular apportionment timeline.

View the [OMB official notice here](#).

DHS Pauses Some Deportations for 100 Days

DHS announced this week that deportations will be paused for 100 days with the exception of those who arrived in the U.S. after November 1, are suspected of terrorism or espionage or pose a national security risk, have waived rights to remain in the U.S., or who have been determined removable by the USCIS acting director. The pause is to allow for an internal review of policies surrounding immigration enforcement, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response, however, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has threatened a lawsuit if the department does not immediately rescind this deportation order on the basis of harm to the state of Texas and its citizens. This sets up one of the early legal battles of the Biden Administration.

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

Resources Magazine: [Make Recovery Easier: A Roadmap for the New Administration](#)

Route Fifty: [With Fewer Resources, Rural America Tackles Vaccine Distribution](#)

Columbia News: [Revamp Disaster Management](#)

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