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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

All Aboard...For Now

After holding up the House-passed continuing resolution, set to extend funding through March 11, all Senators were back on board this week. Initially refusing the CR after reports that a \$30 million appropriation to HHS was being used to buy clean crack pipes, all existing holds have been released after HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra clarified that information was incorrect and the funding was not providing crack pipes in safe smoking kits. On Thursday night, the Senate passed the CR by a vote of 65-27, sending the bill that will avert a government shutdown to President Biden's desk.

Now that the threat of a government shutdown has been extended for a few more weeks, reports are hopeful for the track of an omnibus spending package in the next few weeks. Leadership on both sides believe that there is a clear path forward and that an agreement will be reached in the near future. NEMA staff is working diligently with appropriators as they develop the final FY22 bill to ensure all state emergency management priorities are addressed.

If you haven't already, make sure you [register](#) for NEMA 2022 Mid-Year Emergency Management Policy and Leadership Forum March 28-31 in Alexandria, Virginia! Register before March 11 to avoid late fees, registration closes on March 18.

Hearings the Week of February 21, 2022

Next week is a district work week, there are no hearings scheduled.

More News from the Nation's Capital...

NEMA Testifies in House T&I Committee on FEMA Priorities for 2022

On Wednesday, NEMA President Erica Bornemann represented the association in front of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, testifying on recommendations for FEMA's 2022 priorities. Other witnesses included Chris Currie, Director of Homeland Security and Justice at GAO and Carolyn Harshman, President of IAEM.

Erica's [testimony](#) included recommendations for streamlining the agency's programs and policies, equity in emergency management, climate adaptation, and NEMA's three recent policy papers on wildfire policy, interagency coordination, and HSGP policy changes.

This hearing, along with statements for the record by others, can be viewed on the [Committee website](#).

GAO Release Report on FEMA Mission and Management Challenges

On Wednesday, GAO released a report that outlined their past work which identified various mission and management challenges the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is facing in four key areas:

- Workforce management
- Long-term disaster recovery efforts
- Potential barriers to disaster assistance and disparate recovery outcomes
- Future disaster resilience and mitigation

GAO has made numerous recommendations in prior reports designed to address the various mission and management challenges discussed in this testimony. FEMA has taken steps to address these recommendations and GAO is monitoring FEMA's ongoing efforts.

You can read the full GAO report [here](#), and a highlight report [here](#).

DHS and Partners to Host Climate Equity Webinar

The Resilience Nation Partnership Network and the Department of Homeland Security's Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships is hosting this month's "Ideation Hour" from 2 - 3:15 p.m. ET on February 23. The event will explore and discuss the many factors behind strengthening climate equity for the whole community. Topics will include:

- Building Climate Literacy: Where Do We Start?
- Fostering Resilience at the Neighborhood Level.
- Building Equity Into Mitigation Actions.
- Promoting Resilience Through Youth Engagement.

To register and for additional event information, click [here](#). Contact FEMA-ResilientNation@fema.dhs.gov for questions.

NIH Release Study Identifying Disparities in Opioid Epidemic

On Wednesday, an NIH-funded study provided a detailed look at one shift in drug use: overdose deaths involving some combination of opioids and stimulant drugs, including cocaine and methamphetamine. The data also reveal extremely troubling racial disparities. Opioid/stimulant deaths among Black Americans have risen at more than three times the rate seen among non-Hispanic white people, especially in Eastern states. In other parts of the country, there's also been a disproportionate increase in these combination overdose deaths among Hispanic and Asian Americans. The study recommends increasing outreach on the use of naloxone for not only opioid users but also for users of crack cocaine and other street drugs.

For additional information on this study and findings, please visit the [NIH press release](#).

CISA Issue Cybersecurity Advisory On Protecting Defense Contractor Networks

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), along with the FBI, and the NSA issued a joint Cybersecurity Advisory titled, "[Russian State-Sponsored Cyber Actors Target Cleared Defense Contractor Networks to Obtain Sensitive U.S. Defense Information and Technology](#)." Over the last two years, compromised entities have included cleared defense contractors (CDCs) supporting the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Space Force, and Intelligence Community programs. In the past several years, both large and small CDCs and subcontractors supporting various defense industries have been observed being targeted for unclassified proprietary and export-controlled information such as weapons development, communications infrastructure, technological and scientific research, and other potentially sensitive details.

In the advisory, the three agencies outline the activities and tactics used by the Russian state-sponsored cyber actors that include:

- Brute force techniques to identify valid account credentials for domain and M365 accounts and then use those credentials to gain initial access in networks.
- Spearphishing emails with links to malicious domains, to include using methods and techniques meant to bypass virus and spam scanning tools.
- Using harvested credentials used in conjunction with known vulnerabilities to escalate privileges and gain remote code executions on exposed applications.
- Mapping Active Directory and connect to domain controllers, which would enable credentials to be exfiltrated.
- Maintained persistent access, in multiple instances for at least six months, which is likely because the threat actors relied on possession of legitimate credentials enabling them to pivot to other accounts.

For more information, visit the press release [here](#).

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

The Hill: [Nighttime Wildfires Growing In Frequency, Intensity: Study](#)
Governing (Opinion): [Crises and Disasters Are 24/7. Dealing With Them Isn't a 9-to-5 Job](#).

HSToday: [Alaska Army National Guard Team Wins Environmental Security Award](#)

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