



March 12, 2021



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

Anniversaries

Anniversaries are important to Americans – particularly anniversaries of loss. Memorial Day and September 11 especially provide important markers every year to consider not only what we have lost but how we have changed in light of them. As we come into a period of anniversaries related to the coronavirus pandemic we continue to be confronted by the losses we have sustained and the exhaustion faced by many who have been in response mode for a year or more.

Still, though, the dedicated work of emergency management agencies over the past year has continued to underscore the importance of emergency management before, during, and after a crisis. This was represented in the latest coronavirus relief package passed and signed into law this week. NEMA sent out alerts this week focusing on the relevant sections, including but not limited to \$100 million in supplemental EMPG funding that is not tied specifically to COVID activities; \$50 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund; funeral assistance extended indefinitely; \$400 million for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program; \$350 billion in new Coronavirus Relief Funds; billions in additional funding for vaccine development, procurement, and distribution; and \$3 billion to support communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

With the coronavirus relief package passed, eyes on Capitol Hill turn to the process of confirmations for more of the new administration's nominees, including FEMA Administrator-designate Deanne Criswell. Her hearing is currently expected to take place March 25, although that is subject to change. Discussions are also ongoing related to a potential infrastructure package, but passage may not happen until the fall as Democrats are split on whether or not to seek to apply the budget reconciliation process with infrastructure or to try to pass legislation more traditionally.

Hearings the Week of March 15, 2021

[The Role of FEMA and Emergency Management in COVID-19 Response](#)

Featuring state directors *Curtis Brown (VA)*, *Mark Ghilarducci (CA)*, and *Patrick Sheehan (TN)*

House Appropriations Committee

Tuesday, March 16, 10:00am ET

[The Way Forward on Homeland Security](#)

Featuring DHS Secretary *Alejandro Mayorkas*

House Committee on Homeland Security

Wednesday, March 17, 9:30am ET

[Building Smarter: The Benefits of Investing in Resilience and Mitigation](#)

Featuring state director *Russ Strickland (MD)*

House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

Thursday, March 18, 2:00pm ET

More News from the Nation's Capital...

CISA Emergency Directive: Mitigate Microsoft Exchange On-Premises Product Vulnerabilities

The DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released guidance related to the exploitation of Microsoft Exchange servers. While originally for federal officials, CISA strongly encourages partners to follow the guidance given how widespread the exploitation appears to be and how serious the vulnerability is. Check for signs of compromise and if a compromise is found, assume your organization's network identity has been compromised and begin incident response procedures. Patch immediately if possible.

More information is [available here](#).

DHS OIG Report: Success of Future Disaster Response and Recovery Efforts Depends on FEMA Addressing Current Vulnerabilities

The DHS Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG) published the report highlighting information and actions previously reported by the OIG that FEMA can take to enhance the overall effectiveness of its response and recovery efforts. This is the final in a series of reports after the 2017 hurricane season exposed weaknesses in federal, state, and local governments' capabilities to respond to concurrent disasters. The DHS OIG found a pattern of internal control vulnerabilities, particularly related to Public Assistance grant expenditures. As of September 30, 2020, FEMA had not implemented 98 of the total 115 recommendations made throughout this report series.

[Read the report here](#).

Visual Tool Available to Explore National Response Framework and its Designated Responsibilities

Researchers at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) designed the National Response Framework Policy Landscape Analysis Tool (NRF-PLAT) to visually capture the NRF's hundreds of requirements, recommendations, and auxiliary information. The visualizations can be searched by specific designee, specific role, additional partners/designees, and community lifeline, among others, to assist in delineation of responsibilities in response.

[See the tool here](#).

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

Washington Post: [Senate Confirms Michael Regan to Lead EPA](#)

FedScoop: [FEMA Working to Clarify Cyber Controls](#)

Roll Call: [Planning for a Post-Pandemic Congress Underway](#)

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