



July 22, 2022



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON: Temperatures Rise and Covid Flares

Late last week, the House was able to pass the National Defense Authorization Act – passing the torch to the Senate where negotiations will surely continue.

D.C. is not being spared this week, as with most of the country, as our air conditioning units fight the extreme heats that are spanning the country and the globe. These record-breaking temperatures have sparked increased conversation around climate change and the impact it is having on communities across the planet. Additionally, on a trip to the New England area, President Biden reiterated that he would not be making emergency declarations for the heat wave that many states are experiencing at the moment. The President did announce \$2.3 billion, likely in BRIC funding, for communities struggling to deal with this extreme weather.

Being inside in the air conditioning might not be the worst plan, however, with a surge in COVID-19 cases being seen around the country as the BA.5 variant starts to make waves. Included in the most recent wave of COVID-19 cases was President Biden, who tested positive on Thursday morning after experiencing mild symptoms.

Hearings the Week of July 25, 2022

[Fighting Fentanyl: The Federal Response to a Growing Crisis](#)

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Tuesday, July 26, 2022 at 10:00am ET

[A Growing Threat: Foreign and Domestic Sources Of Disinformation](#)

House Committee on House Administration
Wednesday, July 27, 2022 at 10:00am ET

[Enhancing Personnel Resources to Support a Stronger, More Resilient Coast Guard](#)

House Committee on Homeland Security
Wednesday, July 27, 2022 at 10:00am ET

[Assessing CBP's Use of Facial Recognition Technology](#)

House Committee on Homeland Security
Wednesday, July 27, 2022 at 2:00pm ET

More News from the Nation's Capital...

OIG Releases Report on Assessed FEMA PA Alternative Program

This week, OIG created a full assessment on the alternative program for PA. The goal was to assess the effectiveness of FEMA's PAAP for permanent work projects to find if the program sped disaster recovery. Determinations made by the OIG stated that FEMA took slightly longer on average at 35 days to obligate funds for projects; cost estimates provided adequate resources for restoring facilities; most applicants stated they would use the program again; reduced cost tracking and reporting requirements lessened the administrative burden and also leading to potential cost savings; and the independent expert panel was critical in attaining agreement on cost estimates.

The two recommendations provided to FEMA, which they concurred, are:

- OIG recommend the FEMA Associate Administrator of the Office of Response and Recovery assess issues pertaining to the use of Public Assistance Alternative Procedures for projects in Puerto Rico resulting from Hurricanes Irma and Maria and incorporate lessons learned into Section 428 procedures for future disasters.
- OIG recommend the FEMA Associate Administrator of the Office of Response and Recovery assess whether it can or should change aspects of the PAAP program in response to suggestions raised by applicants.

The full report can be found on the [OIG website](#).

FEMA Provides Quarterly Update to the NFIP's Watermark

This week, FEMA released their quarterly Watermark [report](#) on the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Watermark is a quarterly report of the program's financial standing and advances broader efforts to improve the transparency of the program's finances to the public, policyholders, industry partners and government officials. The update presents flood insurance claims and policyholder statistics, fund resources and expenditures for the period ending on March 31.

Watchdog Report on Security Gaps that Leave Vulnerabilities to a Dirty Bomb

On Wednesday, the GAO and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) released a report title [Vulnerabilities Persist in NRC's Controls for Purchases of High Risk Radioactive Materials](#), which highlights security gaps that could be exploited by terrorists and other bad actors to obtain material to deploy a dirty bomb domestically. Such an event could harm the public, contaminate property, trigger mass evacuations, and impose steep clean-up costs.

GAO found vulnerabilities in NRC's procedures for verifying legitimate purchasers of radiological materials and faulted NRC for their continued use of paper licenses, rather than more secure alternatives. GAO also expressed concern that NRC's threat matrix fails to consider the socioeconomic impacts and costs of a dirty bomb, which GAO estimates could be billions of dollars even for a small dirty bomb.

Highlights of the report can be found on the [GAO website](#).

5 Flood Resilience and Adaptation Challenges Offer Opportunities for States

Pew Charitable Trusts published findings recently on community flooding and what states can do to bolster resilience and adaptation as incidents get more frequent and severe. The research conducted in-depth reviews of five states: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, and Washington. The five major findings in this research included:

- Flooding is often only a small component of most plans.
- Most state plans do not meaningfully incorporate social vulnerability, and few include strategies to assist low-capacity communities.
- State plans are often developed under short time frames, and many omit projections of future risk.
- Federal standards for state hazard mitigation planning may not account for specific state needs.
- Resilience planning efforts are often reactive, instead of proactive.

The full article with the details of the research can be found on the [Pew website](#).

GAO Releases Report on Partner Service Opportunities for DHS with WMDs

This week, GAO released a report that highlighted the opportunities that DHS had to increase partner services and employee morale when combatting threats from weapons of mass destruction. DHS works with federal, state, and local partners to address threats by acquiring detection technologies, providing training, and more. As reported in April 2022, state and local partners want more communication with DHS and more regular meetings for partners across all threat areas. Other areas for improvement included acquiring a key radiation detection technology and assessing gaps in radiological and nuclear threat detection capabilities.

The report made four recommendations, including that CWMD coordinate with CBP to reassess the acquisition strategy for replacement radiation portal monitors, specify how often it will convene state and local partners in all threat areas, and specify a plan for reconstituting the capability gap analysis function in the radiological and nuclear threat area. DHS agreed with the recommendations.

The full report and highlights can be found [here](#).

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

HSToday: [Steps CIOs Can Take Now to Modernize Aging IT Systems](#)

National Academies: [Renewing U.S. Infrastructure for Resilience and Equity](#)

GNET: [Terrorist Financing and Technology: Understanding Approaches and Anticipating Risks](#)

[nemaweb.org](#)

