

August 12, 2022



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON: Beginning to Bounce Back?

A little light at the end of the tunnel offered some solace this week as the U.S. saw inflation rates drop and continue to see the price tag at the pump decrease as well. While the impacts on spending power are still constraining Americans' wallets – this week offers hope that there will be some reprieve sooner rather than later.

With the flurry of exciting emergency management action from last week behind us, there was a bit of a lull in the rooms of Congress this week – something that we expect to continue in the coming weeks with the recess and midterms. President Biden was a bit busier this week, signing both the PACT Act, relating to expanding health benefits for veterans, and the CHIP Act which provides funding for the production of semiconductors and semiconductor-materials. Currently, there has been no movement on the appropriation bills in the Senate – with continuing resolutions still seemingly likely.

Hearings the Week of August 15, 2022

No hearings.

More News from the Nation's Capital...

OIG Finds DHS Needs Better Strategy to Counter Disinformation

On Thursday, the Office of the Inspector General released a report, *DHS Needs a Unified Strategy to Counter Disinformation Campaigns*, which looks into the Department's current efforts to combat disinformation. DHS does not yet have a unified department-wide strategy to effectively counter disinformation that originates from both foreign and domestic sources. DHS faced challenges unifying component efforts because disinformation is an emerging and evolving threat. The report also attributed some challenges to the continual changes in DHS leadership, which may have hindered the development of top-down strategic guidance for countering disinformation.

The report makes one recommendation, that DHS establish a unified department-wide strategy to effectively counter disinformation on social media. The full report can be found [here](#).

FEMA Release Building Code Adoption Toolkit

This week, as part of the Administration's efforts to increase adoption of up-to-date building codes and increase the resilience of our infrastructure, FEMA released a playbook for jurisdictions looking to adopt current codes. The Playbook is intended for officials interested in increasing community resilience and reducing loss from natural hazards by adopting the latest editions of model building codes. The Playbook equips officials with background and language to help educate decision-makers and constituents on the benefits of adopting and enforcing the latest building code editions. In addition, the publication provides general steps to help navigate the code adoption process and informs about FEMA grants available to support building code adoption and enforcement activities.

You can find the building code playbook [here](#).

OIG Find Oversight Need in FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)

On Thursday, OIG released a report called *FEMA Needs to Improve Its Oversight of the Emergency Food and Shelter Program*, looking into the efficiency of the program. The report objective was to determine to what extent FEMA's oversight of the National Board's administration of EFSP, including CARES Act funding, ensured individuals experiencing emergency financial hardships received aid, in accordance with Federal requirements, to meet program goals. This report resulted in 10 recommendations for FEMA, including was the Agency can collaborate with the National Board to increase oversight and effectiveness. FEMA did not concur with 3 of the recommendations.

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

CISA-FEMA Co-Host Tribal Cybersecurity Grant Program Consultation

Next week, on August 17 from 1:30-3pm ET, CISA and FEMA will be hosting consultations with tribal nations on the new Tribal Cybersecurity Grant Program. The webinar, led by FEMA and CISA senior leadership, addresses cybersecurity risks and threats to information systems owned or operated by, or on behalf of, tribal nations. Tribal governments received \$15 million in fiscal year 2022 funding under the grant program. Additional funding will be available in fiscal years 2023-2025. To review the full agenda and a framing paper with questions for tribal leader consideration, visit [FEMA.gov](#).

CISA Releases Toolkit of Free Cybersecurity Resources for Election Community

On Wednesday, CISA released a catalog of free resources available for state and local election officials to improve the cybersecurity and resilience of their infrastructure. The catalog, *Protecting U.S. Elections: A CISA Cybersecurity Toolkit*, was developed through CISA's Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative (JCDC), which worked with private and public sector organizations, including in the election community, and JCDC alliance members. The toolkit is organized into broad categories designed to help election officials:

- Assess their risk using an Election Security Risk Profile Tool developed by CISA and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission;
- Find tools related to protecting voter information, websites, email systems, and networks; and
- Protect assets against phishing, ransomware, and distributed denial-of-services (DDoS) attacks.

The toolkit of resources and services can be found [here](#).

NOAA Still Expects Above-Normal Atlantic Hurricane Season

Recently, NOAA maintained its Atlantic hurricane season outlook in the mid-season update – standing by the above-normal forecast and expressing preparedness will be key. While the Administration stands by the prediction, the chances of an above-average season have dropped by five percent from 65% to 60%. So far, the season has seen three named storms and no hurricanes in the Atlantic Basin. An average hurricane season produces 14 named storms, of which seven become hurricanes, including three major hurricanes.

The full mid-season update can be found on the [NOAA website](#).

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

Washington Post (Opinion): [The U.S. Disaster Relief System Was Not Built For Our New Climate](#)

CNN: [Why Climate Change Hits Some Communities Harder Than Others](#)

NextGov: [Preventing Wildfires Could Start With Data From Controlled Burns](#)

[nemaweb.org](#)

