



August 20, 2021



## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

### Game of Chicken

As the saying goes, the hardest part about playing chicken is knowing when to flinch. And that's where we find ourselves these days with the infrastructure and reconciliation packages in DC.

A week ago, the trillion dollar infrastructure appeared to be on smooth waters once the Senate passed it. Storms raged quickly, however, when the House Democratic caucus immediately divided the lower chamber on the issue. The moderates of the caucus feel trying to pass both the infrastructure and reconciliation packages will prove to be too expensive in the end and progressives continue forcing leadership's hand on moving both concurrently to ensure passage of certain social priorities. The stalemate has gone on all week with neither side showing signs of budging.

If passed, a full summary will be completed for NEMA membership, but there are some nuggets (to stick with the "chicken" theme) for the emergency management community including \$1 billion for BRIC, \$733 million for dam safety, \$500 million to capitalize state revolving loan funds (STORM Act), \$3.5 billion in flood mitigation assistance, and \$1 billion for cybersecurity grants.

Perhaps as the lull of August rolls on, an agreement will be found, but until that time, the staring contest continues. NEMA-DC staff will keep you apprised as developments arise.

*More News from the Nation's Capital...*

#### NHSC Hosting Two Upcoming Webinars

As a reminder, the National Homeland Security Consortium (NHSC), which is administered by NEMA, is hosting a pair of upcoming webinars available to the full NEMA membership. Please feel free to register and join as your schedule allows:

*Communicating Effectively in Risk, Crisis, and High Concern Communications*

August 24, 2021 from 2:00 – 3:30 PM Eastern

Click below to register in advance for this meeting:

<https://csg-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqdeutqjkqHtF8k94ag7njh3j2UvY2d6S1>

*State and Local Cybersecurity: Exploring Art-of-the-Possible in the Digital Present and Data Driven Future*

August 31, 2021, from 2:00 – 3:30 PM Eastern

Click below to register in advance for this meeting:

<https://csg-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUucuvpjsvHtBpAeEvLDYemaquVu1Bs-v2>

#### RACIAL JUSTICE IN FEMA

Senators [Jon Ossoff](#) (D-Ga.) and [Tim Scott](#) (R-S.C.) are spearheading a bipartisan effort to open more access for Black property-owners to disaster assistance under FEMA. In a letter earlier this month to Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, the two lawmakers pointed out that FEMA often requires property documentation that many Southeastern Black property owners don't have because they inherited property in less formal channels. That can shut out more than a third of Southeastern Black-owned land from federal disaster assistance, the lawmakers wrote in the letter, released by Ossoff's staff Friday. [Read the letter here.](#)

#### NOAA Listening Session; America the Beautiful

This [preliminary report](#), released by the White House in May, provides recommendations on how the United States should achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030, as directed by President Biden's Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crises at Home and Abroad. NOAA wants to hear from the public at large and all interested stakeholders on how best to achieve the 30-percent goal, based on the principles and recommendations in the report. Below are meeting details for two upcoming listening sessions.

Thursday, August 26

Stakeholder Listening Session Time: 3:00-5:00 PM ET

Dial in: 888-323-9726, Passcode: 890-4233

September 13

Stakeholder Listening Session Time: 3:00-5:00 PM ET

Dial in: 800-857-5743, Passcode: 727-5932

#### FEMA Seeks Public Comment on Proposed Changes to Community Rating System

On August 23, FEMA will publish a notice in the Federal Register seeking public comment on the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. This notices will be to align understanding of flood risk and flood risk approaches and to incentive communities to manage and lower their flood risk.

FEMA will post a [Request for Information](#) to gather public comment about ways for the agency to consider modifying, streamlining and creating innovative measures to improve the Community Rating System program. These efforts aim to help FEMA ensure that the program includes necessary, properly tailored and up-to-date requirements that effectively achieve these goals:

- Reducing and avoiding flood damage to property
- Supporting the insurance aspects of the National Flood Insurance Program
- Encouraging a comprehensive approach to floodplain management

The Community Rating System is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements in the National Flood Insurance Program. The agency is evaluating the Community Rating System's potential to ongoing support of state, local, tribal and territorial community goals and needs around floodplain management. FEMA will host three one-hour webinars to explain the proposed changes and how to provide information for public comment. Anyone interested may [register online](#) and attend a webinar session on:

- 7 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Eastern Time
- 8 1-3 p.m. Eastern Time
- 9 2-4p.m Eastern Time

*Other News from DC and Around the Country:*

CNBC: [FEMA Overhauls NFIP for Climate Change](#)

The Hill (opinion): [With Haiti in Chaos, We Must Rewrite Disaster Aid](#)

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