



September 3, 2021



## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

### Mamma Mia, Here I Go Again

In *Good News You Can Use* this week, ABBA (of Mamma Mia! and Dancing Queen fame, among many other hits) announced new singles and an album out in November.

Meanwhile, Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) is likely making much of Congressional leadership say, “Mamma Mia, here we go again” with his publishing an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal this week questioning the size of the reconciliation bill and its potential impacts on inflation. He wants Congress to ‘pause’ and not work to pass the legislation within the month.

This comes as the Senate has been told they have until September 15 to finalize their portions of the blueprint and House committees are moving to start marking-up the reconciliation language and simultaneously push the infrastructure package forward. If you’ll recall, the infrastructure package includes several emergency management priorities, 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.

Democratic Congressional leadership has dedicated much of their time this year to keeping their slim majority united on passing legislative priorities. That does not look likely to change soon.

*As a note: today is my last day with NEMA. It has been an absolute joy to work for all of you on advancing emergency management priorities and sharing (what has hopefully been) useful information for your organizations. I will be leaving to spend a year at graduate school focusing on emergencies and compounding crises – something I know you are all very familiar with by now. I have learned so much from all of you and admire your dedication to preserving people’s safety and helping them recover when disaster strikes. Farewell for now.*

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

#### Changes Announced to FEMA Individual Assistance Policies

FEMA announced that it will now accept a broader range of homeownership and occupancy documentation and expand the forms of assistance offered to survivors. To confirm occupancy, FEMA will now accept motor vehicle registrations, court documents, letters from local schools, federal or state benefit providers, and social service organizations. For homeowners, FEMA will now accept a public official’s letter, receipts for major repairs or improvements, and owners with heirship properties can self-certify and qualify for assistance. Also, Other Needs Assistance (ONA) grants are now available for a limited amount of assistance for homes that were damaged but not deemed uninhabitable. These changes are designed to improve equity in disaster assistance programs. More information is [available here](#).

#### Resilient Nation Partnership Network Virtual Forum

FEMA’s Resilient Nation Partnership Network is partnering with the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) for its Annual Partnership Forum. The forum will take place virtually every Wednesday in October from 12-2:00pm ET. The topics will focus on climate action through the lens of our future vision, when climate moves communities, stories that inspire, and financing climate action. A wide range of speakers are scheduled. [Register here](#).

#### EPA Report Finds Socially Vulnerable Populations Will Suffer Disproportionately from Climate Change

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a report finding that the most severe harm from climate change falls disproportionately on underserved communities that are least able to prepare for and recover from disasters and their impacts. The report quantifies six types of impacts, including those to health from changes in air quality and extreme temperature, disruptions to weather-exposed workers, and flooding threats to property. It found that Black and African American individuals are projected to face higher impacts of climate change for all six impacts analyzed. The report is [available here](#).

#### DHS Serving as Lead Federal Agency Coordinating Efforts to Resettle Afghans

The Department of Homeland Security has been directed to serve as the lead federal agency coordinating efforts to resettle Afghans following the evacuation this summer. Bob Fenton, FEMA Region IX Administrator and Acting FEMA Administrator during Presidential transitions in 2017 and 2021 will lead the Unified Coordination Group. The resettlement process will include COVID-19 testing, isolation, and quarantine if required. Many state and local partners are closely involved in this effort. More information is [available here](#).

*Other News from DC and Around the Country:*

GovExec: [Pandemic Preparedness and Climate Change are Among Federal Research Priorities for 2023](#)  
GAO Blog: [Hurricane Ida Highlights Need for Enhanced Electricity Grid Resilience](#)

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