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THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON: Full Speed Ahead

If you grew-up in a household with a rich military history, you may still refer to your bed as a “bunk” and know precisely what dad means when he wants quiet and tells you and your siblings to “lock it up” and “clear this deck.” If you know what I’m talking about, the intro to this newsletter won’t disappoint...

In the wake of the debt ceiling deal, the House Appropriations Committee took off and it was full speed ahead on moving bills. In just a week we’ve seen action on bills related to Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, the Legislative Branch, Agriculture, Financial Services and General Government, and our very own Homeland Security. [Prepared for sarcasm...] In a shocking twist of newsworthy gossip, most every amendment and procedural motion has been done along party lines.

It’s not all bad news, though. Despite proposed spending cuts, DHS appears to be in good shape at least at this phase of the game. It seems most grants will be held at FY23 enacted levels and there’s even some good language in the accompanying report on pushing FEMA to actually define “resilience” and slowing things like additional increases in the LETPA set-aside. A full summary will be sent to NEMA members upon release of the final documents.

House Approps definitely found it’s “command voice” and made nice progress this week, but with Senate is starting to show some life of its own with the upper chamber’s Appropriations Committee approving allocations for FY24. It will likely be another couple of months, however, before we see spending proposals out of the Senate. Unfortunately, none of this sheds any light on progress for an emergency supplemental. With the DRF continuing to dwindle, and only 12 legislative days in the month of July before the vaunted August Recess, we “remain in a holding pattern” until being told to “move out.” Hooah!

That’s it on thematic puns for this week! Just be glad I didn’t do a submarine theme this week. That surely would have given everyone a sinking feeling. Carry on...

Hearings Next Week

District work period

More News from the Nation’s Capital...

FEMA BEGINS WORK ON ESTABLISHING RESILIENCE ZONES

Some of NEMA’s leadership recently did a call with program staff at FEMA regarding their status in developing Community Disaster Resilience Zones (CDRZ) across the country. This effort came about as a result of a piece of legislation (PL 117—255) NEMA supported during the 117th Congress. Some notes from the call include:

- FEMA will begin identifying CDRZs later this summer. They will focus on communities that are at risk and disadvantaged and the designation will last 5-years.
- While the National Risk Index (NRI) is one of the tools being utilized, FEMA is partnering with other federal agencies to identify the communities. While in concept this sounds similar to existing “Opportunity Zones,” this will be different as there is no nomination process.
- Some benefits of this designation could include adjusted BRIC cost-share, additional TA, and pre-certification of mitigation projects.
- NEMA Leadership on the call identified several issues for FEMA to take into consideration including: There could be unintended consequences (decreased home values, bond rating, or insurance rates) of labeling a community “high risk,” and; states must remain involved in the process and flow of information.

BILL TO ALIGN DISASTER APPLICATION DEADLINE TAKES A STEP

Bipartisan [legislation](#) authored by U.S. Senators Gary Peters (D-MI), Rand Paul (R-KY), and Marco Rubio (R-FL) to create one application deadline for two Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) programs that individuals use for federal disaster assistance has advanced in the Senate. FEMA’s Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) and Individuals and Household Program (IHP) currently have different deadlines, which can cause confusion for disaster survivors who may have trouble tracking when they need to apply for each program. The senators’ bipartisan legislation would ensure these programs have the same deadline to reduce the burden on people who need them to rebuild their lives after disasters. The bill was approved by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee where Peters serves as Chair and Paul serves as Ranking Member. It now moves to the full Senate for consideration. NEMA reviewed the bill, but decided not to endorse at this time pending further discussion on the need of this effort.

DHS ENTERS NEXT PHASE OF CAMPAIGN TO STOP FENTANYL

Following Operations Blue Lotus and Four Horsemen, which stopped nearly 10,000 pounds of fentanyl during their two-month run and led to 284 arrests in those two months, this week [DHS announced](#) the next phase of its surge campaign to target and prevent fentanyl from entering the United States. The next two Operations, “Artemis” and “Rolling Wave,” will consist of multi-disciplined interagency jump teams at strategic locations with an enhanced focus on disrupting the supply chain used in the development and movement of fentanyl.

Operation Artemis, led by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), will leverage intelligence and investigative information derived from Operation Blue Lotus to target the fentanyl supply chain and interdict items required in the production of fentanyl. This work will be supported by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). Concurrently, Operation Rolling Wave will surge inbound inspections at Southwest Border checkpoints, covering every sector and leveraging predictive analysis and intelligence sharing. HSI will continue surging resources to Ports of Entry, where 90 percent of fentanyl is trafficked primarily in cars and trucks, while also increasing its coordination of operations to target the fentanyl supply chain under Blue Lotus 2.0. CBP will run a parallel intelligence and analysis operation, Operation Argus, to provide trade-focused analysis in support of Blue Lotus 2.0 and Artemis.

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

Planetizen: [FEMA Buyout Program Could be Accelerating Segregation](#)

WyomingNews: [Tornado Sirens to be Part of FEMA Review in Congress](#)

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