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May 10, 2024



A Gentle Reminder

Sometimes a gentle reminder is needed to make sure everyone is on the same page. On Tuesday, NEMA President and Maryland Secretary of Emergency Management Russ Strickland delivered that reminder as he spoke at a Congressional briefing hosted by the National Governors Association's Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force. Strickland participated in a panel discussion and Q&A session, during which he highlighted the many challenges facing the emergency management community and the actions Congress needs to take to help address those challenges. As hurricane season and peak wildfire season will soon be upon us (not to mention the looming exhaustion of the DRF), we hope Congress is listening and takes this reminder seriously...

During his remarks, Russ Strickland emphasized that as disasters continue to grow in complexity and frequency, it is critical to remember that all disasters start and end *locally*. Under this framework, FEMA is *not* a first responder. In support of this point, Strickland noted that in 2023, there were 60 events that required a federal major disaster or emergency declaration. During that same period, state and local emergency managers managed 27,299 events without federal assistance. Because of this reality, Strickland noted that it is vital to increase investments at the state and local level to reduce the reliance on the federal government before, during, and after disasters.

Strickland also spoke about the substantial cuts to key preparedness grants made in 2024, explaining that they will have serious impacts on state and local emergency management efforts across the nation. These cuts—coupled with the potential DRF shortfall—will pose significant challenges and require state and local governments to do more with less.

When asked what requests he had for Congress to help address the identified challenges, Strickland was quick to highlight the following:

- Pass the Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act.
- Restore the 10% that was cut from the FY24 budget.
- Increase the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) by \$100 million for the FY25 budget.

Lastly, Russ Strickland used the briefing as an opportunity to call out the important alliance that exists between NEMA, the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), and the Big City Emergency Managers (BCEM). Yesterday, that alliance issued a gentle reminder of its own in a letter sent by the NEMA, IAEM, and BCEM leadership to Secretary Mayorkas, urging him to use all statutory authorities and flexibilities to address the current \$179.5 million shortfall in grant funding and the need for supplemental funding this summer.

UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

Wednesday, May 15; 10:30am
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
[Business Meeting](#)

Wednesday, May 15; 10:00am
House Committee on Homeland Security
[Standing Strong on the Thin Blue Line: How Congress Can Support State and Local Law Enforcement](#)

Wednesday, May 15; 10:00am
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
[Reviewing and Examining the Francis Scott Key Bridge Federal Response](#)

NEWS FROM THE NATION'S CAPITAL

DOD WEBINAR: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CYBERSECURITY

The Department of Defense (DoD) has announced the latest installment of their monthly webinar series: Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity. This webinar, which will take place on May 15th at 4:00pm (ET), will provide state and local leaders with best practices and expertise on how to support sector risk management and contribute to emergency preparedness efforts alongside industry.

This webinar coincides with the recent release of the DoD [Defense Industrial Base Cybersecurity Strategy](#), which seeks to provide an opportunity for states and localities to better partner with the federal interagency. Proactive cybersecurity can execute defense within cyberspace when there is risk to critical infrastructure or national interests. The webinar will feature briefers from the DoD, the White House, and other interagency partners.

You can register for the webinar [here](#).

CISA EXTENDS FEEDBACK WINDOW FOR RULEMAKING ON CYBER-INCIDENT REPORTING

On Monday, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) extended the comment period for new regulations under the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act (CIRCIA) for an additional month. CISA received comments requesting that the agency consider extending the comment period for an additional 30 days, citing the potential impact of this rulemaking on each critical infrastructure sector and the need for additional time to sufficiently review and comment. As a result of this extension, the comment period is now open through July 3, 2024.

On Tuesday, CISA's Executive Director, Brandon Wales, noted that "We are actively hoping that we get good, high-quality feedback from critical infrastructure so that we can make sure that the final rule is as good as it can be, and helps us meet the intent of the program."

The Federal Register initially published the CISA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for public comment on April 4, 2024. Any member of the public, including entities in critical infrastructure sectors and other stakeholders, can provide written comments on the NPRM. Detailed information about the NPRM, including instructions for the submission of public comment, can be found [here](#).

Visit [cisa.gov/CIRCIA](https://www.cisa.gov/CIRCIA) to learn more.

APPLICATION PERIOD TO OPEN FOR FEMA NATIONAL DAM SAFETY PROGRAM STATE ASSISTANCE GRANT

This week, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced that the FY24 spring application period for the National Dam Safety Program (NDSP) State Assistance Grant is tentatively scheduled to open in late May. In a state or territory with an enacted dam safety program, the state administrative agency (or an equivalent state agency) is eligible to apply. Each eligible state or territory may submit only one grant application and the application period is expected to close in July. Pending any unforeseen delays, FEMA anticipates the notification of awards to begin in late August.

As dams age and deteriorate across the nation—and populations living in close proximity to dams continue to grow—the risks of dam-related emergencies are increasing. Through the NDSP State Assistance Grant Program, FEMA seeks to provide financial assistance to states and territories for strengthening their dam safety programs. Under this grant program, states and territories can use funds for the following types of activities:

- Dam safety training for state personnel.
- Increasing the number of dam inspections.
- Increasing the submittal and testing of Emergency Action Plans.
- Enabling more timely review and issuance of permits.
- Identifying coordination with state emergency preparedness officials.
- Identifying dams to be repaired or removed.

- Conducting dam safety awareness workshops and creating dam safety videos and other outreach materials.

For more information, visit FEMA's Dam Safety [webpage](#).

MORE NEWS FROM D.C. AND BEYOND

E&E: [Countries Unite to Fight Worsening Wildfires](#)

Axios: [How the Feds Will Tackle the Software Bug Backlog](#)

GovExec: [Governors Criticize 'Federalization' of National Guard](#)

Information Week: [Mayorkas, Easterly at RSAC Talk AI, Security, and Digital Defense](#)

AccuWeather: [2024 Tornado Tally More Than 100 Higher Than Historical Average](#)

Government Technology: [White House Updates National Cybersecurity Strategy](#)

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