



You are receiving this information as a member of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA). It is being sent to you as a benefit of membership.

January 24, 2025



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

Try to Keep Up!

If you blinked this week, you probably missed a few big news stories, so I'll try to help you keep up with what's going on in Washington in the first week of the new Trump Administration.

In his first interview after taking office, President Trump indicated that his administration may consider making significant changes to FEMA and the nation's broader EM system. In response to questions about the ongoing LA fires, President Trump emphasized that he'd "rather see the states take care of their own problems" and argued that FEMA complicates disaster response rather than supporting it. These comments have obviously raised a few eyebrows in the EM community, though the White House has not offered any specifics about what changes they may seek to make.

Trump's comments came shortly after a memo was signed by Acting DHS Secretary Benjamine Huffman, which announced the decision to terminate all current memberships on the advisory committees within DHS, effective immediately. In addition to the Homeland Security Advisory Council, DHS has many other advisory committees, including panels that provide guidance on issues including emergency preparedness, critical infrastructure protection, and cybersecurity. The memo did note, however, that DHS invited everyone to reapply to serve on the advisory committees, if desired.

In Congress, there have also been continued discussions around a potential disaster relief package in response to the ongoing, historic LA wildfires—though there seems to be little agreement to be found at this point. Earlier this week, Speaker Johnson (R-LA) stated that he "cannot commit" to disaster relief for California's without strings attached, and that more evaluation is needed to determine before Congress will provide any supplemental funding. There are also reports that some Congressional Republicans support attaching a debt-limit increase to the disaster aid bill, though it's unclear if such a bill could pass the Senate. For his part, House Minority Leader Jeffries (D-NY) has repeatedly argued against conditioning aid for California and stated that attaching a debt ceiling increase to the bill would be a "non-starter." The conventional wisdom is that there is likely to be a significant disaster supplemental to address the California wildfires, but the details are still anyone's guess, as the fires continue to rage.

Finally—though there's plenty more that could be discussed—we're gearing back up to make another attempt at passing the *Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act*. After getting to the one-yard line at the end of last year, before last minute changes to the disaster supplemental stripped out the language, we're working with several Members of Congress to reintroduce the bill in the near-term. We have a significant coalition of partners behind us and we're confident that we'll get it done in this new Congress, whether through regular order, part of a disaster supplemental, or the upcoming budget reconciliation process.

Oh yeah, I should also mention that funding for the federal government under the current Continuing Resolution will expire in just seven weeks...clearly, there's a lot to track and I hope this helps you keep up with the chaos.

[Upcoming Congressional Hearings...](#)

No hearings currently scheduled related to emergency management.

[More News from the Nation's Capital...](#)

DHS AND FEMA SENIOR LEADERSHIP UPDATES

On Monday, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee advanced the nomination of Governor Kristi Noem to become the next Secretary of Homeland Security. After a vote of 13-2, Governor Noem's nomination now awaits a vote from the full Senate floor. Senate leadership has not announced when they plan to hold the floor vote on Noem's nomination, but she is expected to be confirmed without significant issue.

At FEMA, Cameron Hamilton was announced on Wednesday as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator. The day prior, Hamilton officially joined FEMA as the new Associate Administrator for the Office of Response and Recovery. Mary Comans will support Hamilton as FEMA's Senior Official Performing the Duties of Deputy Administrator. She will perform this role, per the FEMA Deputy Administrator Order of Succession, until MaryAnn Tierney returns from her tenure as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Deputy Secretary for DHS. Comans has served as FEMA's Chief Financial Officer since 2017.

As a result of these leadership changes, Tony Robinson—who had previously been acting FEMA Administrator—returned to his role as FEMA Region 6 Administrator.

FEMA ANNOUNCES GRANT PROGRAMS DIRECTORATE WEBINARS

This week, FEMA announced two webinar series facilitated by GPD's Grants Management Technical Assistance (GMTA) Program:

[Webinar: Understanding 2 C.F.R. Part 200:](#)

- FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) is offering virtual training sessions designed to familiarize grant recipients and subrecipients with 2 C.F.R. Part 200, the federal uniform guidance for grants management. Each session will provide an overview of the history, purpose and structure of 2 C.F.R. 200, along with practical tips for navigating, interpreting and applying the regulations effectively. Sessions will also highlight key changes to 2 C.F.R. 200 that became effective in October 2024, ensuring participants are up to date on the latest requirements.
- **Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 4:00–5:30PM (ET)** - [Register Here](#)
- **Thursday, February 13, 2025, 10:00–11:30AM (ET)** - [Register Here](#)

[Webinar: Monitoring Federal Grant Recipients & Subrecipients:](#)

- FEMA's GPD is offering virtual training sessions focused on monitoring federal award recipients and subrecipients. Each session will provide an overview of the monitoring process, including best practices for planning and conducting monitoring activities, identifying and resolving findings, and maintaining effective oversight of grant programs. Participants will also learn strategies to improve program outcomes and compliance.
- **Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 4:00–5:30PM (ET)** - [Register Here](#)
- **Thursday, February 6, 2025, 10:00–11:30PM (ET)** - [Register Here](#)

DHS OIG RELEASES SEMIANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

Late last week, the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) released the Semiannual Report (SAR) to Congress summarizing the work and accomplishments of the OIG from April 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024. The report highlights that during this SAR period, the DHS OIG issued 45 audit and inspection reports containing 140 recommendations to improve DHS programs and operations across a wide range of other high-priority, high-risk areas, including: Pandemic Response; Strengthen U.S. Borders and Approaches; Counter Terrorism and Homeland Security Threats; Secure Cyberspace and Critical Infrastructure; Strengthen Preparedness and Resilience; Preserve and Uphold the Nation's Prosperity and Economic Security; and Champion the DHS Workforce and Strengthen the Department.

The DHS OIG issued several audit and inspection reports under the "Strengthen Preparedness and Resilience" mission area during this reporting period:

- **FEMA's Inadequate Oversight Led to Delays in Closing Out Declared Disasters**, [OIG-24-45](#) The objective of this audit was to determine to what extent FEMA manages the closeout of declared disasters in accordance with Federal regulations and FEMA requirements. The OIG determined that FEMA did not ensure that it closed out disaster declarations in a timely manner. They also identified 26 programs with nearly \$9.4 million in unliquidated funds that remained open beyond their approved periods of performance that could be put to better use.
- **FEMA Did Not Fully Implement the State-Administered Direct Housing Grant Program (REDACTED)**, [OIG-24-41](#) The objective of this audit was to determine to what extent FEMA has implemented the State-Administered Direct Housing Grant Program authorized by Section 1211 of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018. The OIG found that FEMA did not fully implement the State-Administered Direct Housing Grant Program required by Section 1211(a) of the Act. As of March 2024, FEMA had not issued final regulations to fully implement the program. Additionally, FEMA did not implement an effective pilot program.

FEMA LAUNCHES ONLINE DASHBOARD ON RESILIENCE DOLLARS

FEMA has launched an online dashboard showing the obligations of hazard mitigation investments across the nation. The Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and Flood Mitigation Assistance Obligations Dashboard provides greater transparency on the agency's two competitive grant programs. You can access the dashboard [here](#).

The dashboard shows agency data visually and geographically to better communicate progress and allow external stakeholders to get more information on when and where these federal investments are being spent. It includes summary statistics, a dynamic explorer map, data visualizations, and detailed tables for users to gain a comprehensive understanding of hazard mitigation funding across the nation.

The dashboard is hosted on FEMA's Geographic Information System (GIS) online platform and is built from the OpenFEMA data sets already available on [FEMA.gov](#).

[Other News from DC and Around the Country...](#)

The Hill: [Former FEMA Director to Congress: 'Give it Back its Independent Agency Status,' Direct Access to President](#)

Cardinal News: [Virginia's Emergency Response Has Been Hampered by a Lack of Resources for Years--Advocates and Lawmakers Hope 2025 is the Year That Will Change](#)

CBS News: [DHS Terminates All Its Advisory Committees](#)

NY Times: [Cameron Hamilton to be Temporary Head of FEMA](#)

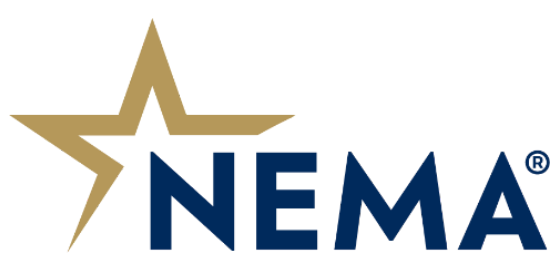
Axios: [Trump Suggests States Should Handle Emergency Response Instead of FEMA](#)

CBS News: [Kristi Noem Fields Questions on Disaster Relief, Border, Terrorism at Confirmation Hearing](#)

Business Wire: [FEMA and the Disaster Recovery Coalition of America Sign Landmark Agreement to Strengthen Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Efforts](#)

Las Cruces Sun News: ['My Staff is Spent': New Mexico Emergency Management Leader Reflects on Year of Disasters](#)

nemaweb.org



Copyright NEMA 2025. All rights reserved.