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February 14, 2025



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

Change at FEMA

Like everyone else in Washington, the first part of my day is often spent getting up to speed on all the news that has happened in just the preceding few hours. Unsurprisingly, there has been no shortage of updates coming from FEMA in recent days.

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has made first contact at FEMA, making its presence known at FEMA HQ last Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. DHS announced Tuesday that it had fired four FEMA officials, after DOGE head Elon Musk claimed the agency spent nearly \$60 million housing migrants in New York City hotels. The four fired FEMA employees included two program analysts, a grant specialist, and FEMA's CFO, Mary Comans. Comans served as FEMA's CFO since 2017 and had previously served as the FEMA's acting Chief Operating Officer.

We also heard yesterday that the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) will be retracted, rewritten, and reposted. It remains unclear how long this process will take, but we will keep you posted as we learn more. There have been discussions that FEMA has been working on the rewrite behind the scenes, so we're hopeful that the downtime will not be long.

Additionally, despite the OMB rescinding the memo that paused all federal grants, the Executive Order directing some pauses appears to still be in effect—specifically focused on non-governmental organizations (NGO) receiving funding for migrant services. Grant payments to states and local governments, however, have continued.

With all the drama in FEMA, it can be easy to forget about the Congressional drama. On the government funding front...things are not going well. Yesterday, House Minority Leader Jeffries (D-NY) stated that the bipartisan discussions to avoid a shutdown have seem to have ended for the moment. Jeffries accused House GOP leaders of abandoning the discussions, just several hours after House Appropriators stated that they were still at the negotiating table and aiming to prevent a government shutdown on March 14. The exact causes of the pause differ depending on who you ask, with some pointing to Republican infighting and other's noting the complicating role played by the public statements of President Trump and Elon Musk.

[Upcoming Congressional Hearings...](#)

Hearing to Examine the Nomination of Troy Edgar to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Thursday, February 20, 10:00 AM (ET)

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

FEMA EXERCISES BORROWING AUTHORITY FOR NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

This week, FEMA announced that it has exercised its borrowing authority under the [National Flood Insurance Act of 1968](#) to borrow \$2 billion from the U.S. Treasury to pay eligible NFIP policyholder claims. This follows more than \$10 billion in projected payments related to Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

This borrowing action follows payouts in 2024 from several large-scale and back-to-back flooding events. While the NFIP's premiums are usually sufficient to pay claims in years without catastrophic floods, heavy rain events in 2024—including Hurricanes Helene and Milton—caused massive, widespread damage resulting in tens of thousands of flood insurance claims. The NFIP is not designed to pay for multiple catastrophic events in a single year without additional financial assistance. The combined losses from 2024 have depleted the NFIP's funds generated from premiums to pay claims.

Hurricane Helene has received more than 57,400 flood insurance claims totaling more than \$4.5 billion as of February 6, 2025. Based on data as of January 31, 2025, the estimated range for total losses paid in to the NFIP is between \$6.4 to \$7.4 billion. Hurricane Milton has received more than 21,100 flood insurance claims totaling more than \$740 million as of February 6, 2025. The estimated range for losses paid is between \$1.2 to \$2.9 billion based on data as of January 31, 2025.

FEMA's borrowing authority is \$30.425 billion, of which FEMA has already borrowed \$20.525 billion in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina, Sandy, and Harvey between 2005-2017. The debt is now \$22.525 billion. For more information about the NFIP, visit their [website](#).

ANNUAL FEMA OFFER FOR EXERCISE SUPPORT NOW OPEN

FEMA's National Exercise Program provides state, local, Tribal Nation, and territorial jurisdictions with no-cost technical assistance for exercises designed to enhance preparedness and response capabilities. The 2025 exercise support requests can be submitted through **March 3, 2025**. New applicants are strongly encouraged to apply, especially those from underserved jurisdictions.

To learn more, including how to request this technical assistance for exercises, attend the webinar or office hours FEMA is hosting. Register in advance by selecting the links below:

- Webinar: Thursday, **February 20 at 11:00 AM (ET)**: [Webinar Registration](#)
- Office Hours: Friday, **February 21 at 11:00 AM (ET)**: [Office Hours Registration](#)

WEBINAR: NERIS IN ACTION - OPERATIONAL USAGE AND THE ROAD AHEAD

The next National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) webinar, hosted by the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), part of UL Research Institutes, in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T) and the United States Fire Administration (USFA), has been scheduled for **Tuesday, February 18, 2025** from 1:00-2:00 PM (ET). Please [register](#) for the webinar by **Monday, February 17, 2025**.

The webinar is an opportunity to join the NERIS team to see what's planned for 2025 as this system continues its nationwide rollout. Chief Tom Jenkins will share how NERIS is already working on the front lines, break down the path to adoption, and explain how we can all prepare before the January 1, 2026 mandate. There will also be a live Q&A featuring real questions from company officers.

Who Should Join:

- Firefighters and line officers
- Department leaders and trainers
- State and national fire service organizations
- CAD/RMS vendors and tech providers

WEBINAR: HELPING EMERGENCY MANAGERS COLLABORATE WITH GROCERY DISTRIBUTION CENTERS

FEMA is releasing a new FEMA Field Notes video, An Introduction to Grocery Distribution, and a Partnership Guide to give emergency managers an overview of the grocery supply chain, insights into Grocery Distribution Center operations, and action steps to restore the flow of private sector capacity during disasters.

The grocery industry manages the food, beverages and household supplies supporting communities every day. This daily capacity far exceeds what the government and nonprofit organizations can provide during disasters using temporary distribution networks. By supporting the restoration of private sector commodity flows, emergency managers can expedite community recovery and direct government-managed relief supplies to the most at-risk and in-need areas.

Join FEMA and private sector representatives for a discussion of strategies for emergency managers to support restoring the flow of private sector capacity. The webinar is scheduled for **Thursday, February 27, from 1:00-2:00 PM (ET)** at the [Registration Link](#).

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

NBC News: [FEMA Official Ignores Judge's Latest Order. Demands Freeze on Grant Funding](#)

The Hill: [Leaders Squabble. Appropriators Stoic as Shutdown Deadline Approaches](#)

Industrial Cyber: [DHS Warns Chinese-Made Internet Cameras Pose Espionage Threat to US Critical Infrastructure](#)

Politico: [Democrats Are Divided on Government Shutdown Threats](#)

E&E News: [Audit Says FEMA Mismanaged \\$9.6B in COVID Payments to States](#)

The Hill: [Trump Might Be Stuck with Biden's Funding Priorities for Longer Than GOP Hoped](#)

HSToday (Opinion): [Perspective - Thoughts on FEMA's Future](#)

Washington Post: [Kristi Noem Says She Would Recommend Trump 'Get Rid' of FEMA](#)

ABC News: [US Cyber Agency Puts Election Security Staffers Who Worked With the States on Leave](#)

Fox 11: [FEMA Employees Fired Over 'Egregious' Payment to House Migrants in NYC](#)

