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## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

### Focusing on FEMA Reforms

I'm becoming a broken record at this point, but it's been *another* highly eventful week in this new Congress for emergency management--particularly related to reforming FEMA and its role in supporting states and local governments. On Tuesday night, President Trump delivered the first Congressional address of his second term. While FEMA or the recent disasters were not explicitly addressed, the President did speak extensively about the efforts of DOGE to identify and cut funding viewed as wasteful or inefficient. While details about the FEMA Review Council are hard to come by, we're confident that the council will seek to identify areas to streamline the agency and potentially restrict its mission. NEMA is in the process of working to help inform the FEMA Review Council and offer solutions to make federal disaster programs more efficient and effective, with a focus on supporting disaster survivors and building resilience to future disasters.

On the topic of reducing burden, driving down disaster costs, and building resilience, we were thrilled this week when Sen. Hassan (D-NH) and Sen. Lankford (R-OK) reintroduced the [\*Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act\*](#) in the Senate (S. 773). After recently passing the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, NEMA is hopeful that the bipartisan bill will continue to make progress early in the 119th Congress.

After the recent OMB funding pause memo was rescinded, FEMA and DHS have announced that they have instituted additional reviews on all grant payments and obligations to ensure allowability, as permitted by 2 C.F.R Part 200. FEMA and DHS are conducting additional reviews of allocations before releasing funds for all grants. The intent of these reviews, according to the administration, is to ensure that funding is obligated and disbursed in line with the DHS Secretary's direction "so that we can continue to support and prioritize communities and disaster survivors who rely on FEMA for assistance." Refer to the updates below for more information on these reviews.

Finally, with government funding set to expire a week from today, Speaker Johnson (R-LA) now supports a clean, long-term Continuing Resolution (CR) through September 30, 2025. In a reversal, the Speaker recently stated that he plans to wait until FY26 to codify the funding cuts identified by DOGE. This approach better aligns the House with Senate Majority Leader Thune (R-SD), but even if the House can pass the CR with only GOP votes, they will need to get Democratic votes in the Senate to avoid a filibuster. Some Democratic senators are considering backing the Republican-led CR, viewing the bill as less damaging than a government shutdown. There are also those, primarily House and Senate appropriators, who want to pass a short, month-long CR to provide more time to negotiate full-year spending bills and avoid another CR. At this point, despite a lack of any bill language to debate or whip, it seems more likely that the long-term CR approach will win out. Whether it will pass, however, is a different story—we may be headed for a shutdown without a clear exit strategy from either party.

While things in Washington are chaotic at the moment, with the state of affairs changing on a daily (hourly?) basis, we're closely plugged in and think there are opportunities to advance the priorities of our members and make necessary reforms.

### [Upcoming Congressional Hearings...](#)

#### **Regulatory Harm or Harmonization? Examining the Opportunity to Improve the Cyber Regulatory Regime**

House Homeland Security Committee

Tuesday, March 11; 10:00 AM (ET)

#### **Eliminating Waste, Fraud, and Abuse at the Department of Homeland Security: Addressing the Biden-Harris Administration's Failures**

House Homeland Security Committee

Tuesday, March 11; 2:00 PM (ET)

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

#### **HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON THE FUTURE OF FEMA**

On Tuesday, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology held a hearing titled, "[Future of FEMA: Perspectives from the Emergency Management Community](#)." The hearing included testimony from emergency management leaders to discuss the potential reforms to FEMA and challenges facing the emergency management community.

Among the witnesses was Jeff Smitherman, Director of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, who offered critical insights into state-level emergency management and the relationship between FEMA and the states in supporting state and local agencies to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recovery from disasters. Director Smitherman was joined at the hearing by:

- Daniel Kaniewski, Managing Director of the Public Sector at Marsh McLennan and former Deputy Administrator of FEMA's Resilience Directorate;
- Carrie Speranza, President of the U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM); and
- Timothy Manning, Former Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness at FEMA.

The hearing enabled the Subcommittee to hear directly from emergency managers and relevant policy experts, as Congress and the administration consider reforms to FEMA and the agency's role in nationwide emergency management.

#### **FEMA ANNOUNCES MANUAL GRANT REVIEW PROCESS**

Late last week, FEMA announced that it is "taking swift action to ensure the alignment of its grant programs with Secretary Noem's direction." In accordance with this direction, FEMA and DHS are instituting additional reviews on all grant payments and obligations to ensure allowability, as permitted by 2 C.F.R Part 200.

Effective immediately, FEMA and DHS are conducting additional reviews of allocations before releasing funds for all grants. These actions will ensure that funding is obligated and disbursed in line with the Secretary's direction. Upon completion of reviews, approved funding will be processed through the respective grant systems. Per 2 C.F.R. Part 200, payment requests may take up to 30 days to process depending on the size and scope of the submission. If additional information is needed, a request for information will be issued, and the timeline may be extended.

As part of the manual review of a payment request, FEMA strongly encourages recipients to include the following information when submitting new payment requests:

- Will this disbursement go to any subrecipients, and if so, which ones?
- What is the total amount of funds going to each subrecipient?
- What activities will be funded by this disbursement?
- What is the time period covered by this payment request?

For existing payment requests currently in the system, FEMA will reach out if additional information is needed. FEMA emphasized that if the agency does not receive this information, payment requests will not be processed.

#### **FEMA WEBINAR: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FOR RESOURCE CONSTRAINED ORGANIZATIONS**

FEMA's Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Program (CITAP) has announced that it will host a webinar on how staff in resource-constrained emergency management organizations can engage continuous improvement activities to strengthen their organizations, from **1:00-1:45 PM (ET) on Tuesday, March 11**. This webinar will emphasize approaches for continuous improvement outlined in FEMA's [National Continuous Improvement Guidance](#).

For resource-constrained organizations, it can be difficult to find time and budget to engage continuous improvement activities. Simultaneously, continuous improvement can lead to increased efficiency and reduced costs. This webinar will discuss approaches to potentially leverage existing capabilities and add simple tasks to support continuous improvement in emergency management. The webinar will also review resources focused on continuous improvement that are available on the [CITAP's website](#) on the FEMA Preparedness Toolkit.

The webinar is designed for state, local, Tribal Nations, and territorial partners; non-governmental organizations; the private sector; and other entities involved in emergency management functions engaged in continuous improvement efforts. To attend the webinar, register in advance by visiting the [event page](#) and click the "Register" button.

#### **US SENATE CONFIRMS TROY EDGAR AS DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

On Thursday, the Senate voted to confirm Troy Edgar as the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security by a vote of 53-43. Edgar previously served during President Trump's first term as Chief Financial Officer and Associate Deputy Under Secretary for Management as the Department of Homeland Security. In that role, he oversaw financial policy, modernization efforts, and the Department's \$90 billion budget.

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

#### **Scientific American: [Government Watchdog Issues Unprecedented Warning on State of U.S. Disaster Response](#)**

#### **E&E News: [FEMA's Future Up For Debate During House Hearing](#)**

#### **The Hill: [Democrats Digging in Against Full-Year CR as Shutdown Deadline Ticks Closer](#)**

#### **HSToday: [Congressional Hearing to Examine the Future of FEMA and Emergency Management Priorities](#)**

#### **Bloomberg: [Trump Must Release Wildfire Aid, Disaster Relief Funds, AGs Say](#)**

**HSToday:** [Senior Leader Departures Raise Concerns About FEMA's Disaster Readiness](#)

**Homeland Security News Wire:** [As Bird Flu Spreads, Feds Might Undercut States by Firing Scientists, Removing Data](#)

**E&E News:** [House Republicans Urge Overhaul, Not Destruction, of FEMA](#)

**Roll Call:** [Trump's Speech, Spending Talks to Dominate this Week in Congress](#)

**StateScoop:** [Hawaii's Emergency Decision Support System was Funded by FEMA](#)

**DHS S&T Blog:** [Feature Article: Unmanned Aircraft Systems Help Responders in Urban Environments](#)

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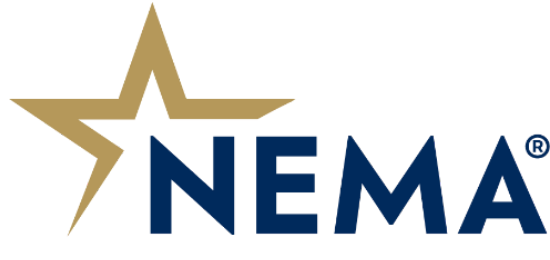
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