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## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

### Reforms and Resilience

While there's still a lot of uncertainty across Washington, at least we know the federal government will not be shutting down...Late last week, the Senate passed the House's Continuing Resolution (CR) by a vote of 54-46, extending the federal government's funding through September 30. Passage of the CR allows FEMA to proceed with FY25 Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) for preparedness grants, extends the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) authorization, and provides an additional \$22.5 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF). This is estimated to be enough to get through the fiscal year without having to resort, once again, to implementing Immediate Needs Funding (INF).

Additionally, on Tuesday, President Trump signed the anticipated Executive Order (EO) focused on resilience that we highlighted in last week's newsletter. The EO notes that "It is the policy of the United States that State and local governments and individuals play a more active and significant role in national resilience and preparedness, thereby saving American lives, securing American livelihoods, reducing taxpayer burdens through efficiency, and unleashing our collective prosperity." Additionally, the EO calls for:

- Development of a *National Resilience Strategy* that articulates the priorities, means, and ways to advance the resilience of the nation.
- Review of national critical infrastructure policy, to develop recommendations for the President on the revisions, rescissions, and replacements necessary to achieve a more resilient posture and shift from an all-hazards approach to a risk-informed approach.
- Review of federal "functions constructs" (e.g. National Essential Functions, Primary Mission Essential Functions, Emergency Support Functions, etc.) and development of proposed changes to the policies outlining the existing framework.
- Development of a National Risk Register to identify, describe, and measure risk to U.S. national infrastructure.

While the EO does not include certain key details, particularly about how state and local governments are expected to fund the investments and other efforts called for in the order, it does seem to signal that President Trump has moved away from his earlier calls to abolish FEMA and will instead focus on reforming the agency.

I'm confident that the new EO, along with *much* more, will be a topic of discussion over the next few days at NEMA's 2025 Mid-Year Forum, which runs from today until Tuesday, March 25, in Washington, DC. We're really excited about the panels, committee meetings, and workshops that we have lined up, and I hope to see many of you there!

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

[Reforming FEMA: Bringing Common Sense Back to Federal Emergency Management](#)  
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee | Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management  
Tuesday, March 25; 10:00 AM (ET)

[Oversight of the Federal Emergency Management Agency: Operational Challenges and Opportunities for Reform](#)

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee | Subcommittee on Government Operations

Wednesday, March 26; 10:00 AM (ET)

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

#### **NEMA JOINS COALITION URGING REAUTHORIZATION OF FIRSTNET**

This week, NEMA joined with 16 other associations in a letter to Congressional leadership supporting the reauthorization of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). Congress created FirstNet to establish a nationwide public safety broadband network. The network gives public safety both preemption and priority on their own spectrum. FirstNet has been used in numerous events by public safety agencies—including active shooter incidents, wildland fires, and hurricanes—and more than 29,500 public safety agencies and organizations are subscribers to FirstNet. Currently, FirstNet is scheduled to be sunset and end operations on February 22, 2027.

As noted in the letter, *"This sunset creates a very uncertain future for the national public safety broadband network and all the advances made in public safety communications since the FirstNet Authority was established. In February 2022, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report, [Public-Safety Broadband Network: Congressional Action Required to Ensure Network Continuity \(GAO-22-104915\)](#). This report found that if Congress does not act, the continued operation of the national public safety broadband network would be jeopardized and could result in significant disruption for first responders who rely on the network for emergency responses."*

#### **GAO REPORT: FEDERAL FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR PORT RESILIENCE**

The James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 included a provision for GAO to review federal efforts to assist ports in enhancing the resilience of port infrastructure to weather-related disasters. [This report](#) describes (1) how the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) consider disaster resilience when awarding funds to ports and the extent funded projects have improved port disaster resilience; and (2) federal efforts to assist port authorities with identifying vulnerabilities and improving resilience.

GAO interviewed DOT and DHS officials and representatives from two port associations and seven selected ports, including site visits to ports located in Louisiana and Mississippi. GAO selected ports based on their level of freight traffic and location. In addition, GAO reviewed guidance and notices of funding opportunities for seven federal grant programs that DOT and DHS identified as relevant. GAO also reviewed federal guidance for conducting risk assessments and disaster resilience frameworks.

The GAO found that DOT and DHS have provided funding opportunities to ports and their surrounding communities through various grants. For seven such grant programs, GAO identified grant selection criteria in 2024 related to natural disaster resilience in recent funding notices for the five competitive programs that used these types of notices. GAO found the extent that the federally awarded projects at ports improved natural disaster resilience is not fully known. According to DOT and DHS officials, a key reason for this is that port projects often result in increased resilience against natural disasters, even if they have a different primary goal such as combatting terrorism or addressing cybersecurity. Officials added that the statutes authorizing federal funding programs do not require the federal agencies to track whether funded projects improved disaster resilience.

#### **FCC SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROPOSED RULE: WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS**

On Tuesday, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [published a proposed rule in the Federal Register](#) that aims to broaden the circumstances in which alert originators may send Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) messages using the "Public Safety Message" classification. The FCC notes that it believes this can allow consumers greater flexibility in how messages are presented on their mobile device, including the potential ability to silence alerts. The FCC is seeking comments on whether subscribers should be empowered to further customize their receipt of WEA messages, as well as additional steps that wireless providers, equipment manufacturers, and operating system developers can take to reduce the rate at which subscribers opt out of WEA.

Comments are due on or before **April 17, 2025**. Instructions for submitting comments are available on the [Federal Register](#) posting.

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

[Route Fifty: A New Path to Recovery: How AI Can Transform Disaster Response](#)

[The Independent: Trump Administration Sued Over Emergency Alert Funding Freeze](#)

[Axios: Hurricane Hunters at Risk of Not Meeting Mission. GAO Finds](#)

[HS Today: FEMA Launches Review of Migrant Shelter Aid](#)

[Axios: FEMA Cuts Could Hurt an Already Fragile Disaster Response in California](#)

[Reuters: Trump Signs Order to Shift Disaster Preparations From FEMA to States. Local Governments](#)

[AP News: Judge Declines to Force FEMA to Release Funds to Upgrade US Emergency Alert System](#)

[E&E News: Trump Backs Away From His Threat to Abolish FEMA](#)

[Bloomberg: Top FEMA Official Signals Staff Cuts, More State Involvement](#)

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