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April 18, 2025



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

Awaiting the FEMA Review Council

After several months of waiting for news on the FEMA Review Council established by President Trump's Executive Order (EO) in January, we should finally be getting a clearer picture next week. The EO set a 90-day deadline to hold the first public meeting of the Council, and we're eager for that to kick off. As we await the work of the FEMA Review Council, NEMA has taken several proactive steps to begin to engage with them and share our expertise and priorities.

For example, earlier this week, we [released an open letter](#) to the future Review Council members that provided a series of "conversation starters" and possible solutions for improving the national emergency management system. If you haven't already read it, I strongly encourage you to.

Along with the open letter, we've also developed an [educational primer on emergency management](#). While high-level, the document is intended to help "level set" and ensure everyone is speaking the same language when it comes to emergency management. Over the coming days and weeks, we'll be conducting outreach to the White House, Congress, and our organizational partners to engage in discussions around these ideas. We will also likely be sending out additional communications related to the Review Council—this is only the beginning!

As we noted in our open letter, the entire NEMA membership is ready to assist the Review Council in its mission to bring much-needed reform to the emergency management system. We view this as an opportunity to lean in and help shape the future of emergency management to ensure it remains focused on the people and communities that we all serve.

[Upcoming Congressional Hearings...](#)

None - State/District Work Period

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

FEMA RELEASES UPDATED LOCAL MITIGATION PLANNING POLICY GUIDE

On Tuesday, FEMA announced that they have updated the [Local Mitigation Planning Policy Guide](#), which is now available on the agency's website. The Guide is the official interpretation of the mitigation planning requirements in the Stafford Act and other federal statutes and regulations, including Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations Part 201 Mitigation Planning.

The updated Guide became effective immediately upon the official release.

Changes in the 2025 update include removing requirements related to climate change and equity, in response to President Trump's recent Executive Orders and Secretary of Homeland Security Noem's direction.

FEMA ISSUES UPDATE ON ELIMINATION OF BRIC PROGRAM

On Thursday, FEMA issued an update on the decision to eliminate the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program (BRIC), which it announced on April 4. The update emphasized that as the program is concluding, the FY24 BRIC funding opportunity is cancelled, no applications submitted will be reviewed, and no funds will be awarded.

In addition, FEMA clarified that for all BRIC applications from FY20-23, if grant funds have not been distributed to states, tribes, territories, and local communities, funds will be returned either to the Disaster Relief Fund or the U.S. Treasury. FEMA noted that it is working to develop a new approach to mitigation that is "more responsive to state and local requirements, achieves clear mitigation goals, and results in more-timely obligation of funding."

FEMA will be reaching out and coordinating with recipients on projects. The agency's website will be updated with a full list of projects selected for funding over the last four years. The status will show what is fully obligated, partially obligated and cancelled.

Recipients will be able to complete fully obligated projects that have started construction and will be able to expend all associated funds. FEMA will also obligate management costs associated with partially or fully obligated projects. Fully obligated projects that have not started construction will not be approved and will end.

For phased projects, FEMA Regions will work closely with applicants on already obligated projects to determine the best path forward for those projects. This may include ending the project after the completion of Phase 1 or at another appropriate stopping point. FEMA will not be extending project deadlines without the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the FEMA Administrator's approval. Additionally, management costs will only continue for partially or fully obligated projects

For previous funding cycles, FEMA will cancel all of the BRIC projects selected but not obligated across FY20-23.

DHS PODCAST: EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION INTEROPERABILITY AND COMPATIBILITY

On Wednesday, DHS's Office of Science and Technology (S&T) released a new episode of its podcast entitled "Different Pieces and Systems." The podcast begins with a conversation with Russell Becker, Director of the Science and Technology Directorate's Office for Interoperability and Compatibility, about the systems that power the nation's emergency response. Becker and host Dee Saini discuss challenges agencies face when emergencies cross jurisdictional lines or require multiple disciplines to respond, as well as what S&T is doing to help responders stay connected and keep lines of communication open.

You can listen to the podcast episode [here](#) or on most podcast apps.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES WEBINAR: THE FUTURE OF WORK

The National Association of Counties (NACo)—a long-time NEMA partner—has scheduled a webinar on The Future of Work. With constant change in our countries, states, and national government, as well as economic and workforce issues, the future of work is changing. In this webinar, you can hear from County Administrators and HR experts on creative and innovative solutions on how they are recruiting and retaining employees. They'll identify and discuss best practices for attracting and retaining Generation Y and Z employees as they enter the workforce, among other topics related to employee retention.

The webinar is scheduled for **Thursday, May 1, 2025 from 1:00-2:00 PM (ET)**. To register and view information on the webinar speakers, visit their website [here](#).

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

WLOS: [Rep. Chuck Edwards Releases Report Calling for FEMA Reform, Further Helene Recovery](#)

Homeland Security News Wire: [Helping Strengthen America's Critical Infrastructure](#)

Route Fifty: [Bipartisan Bill Calls for NOAA to Use AI to Forecast Wildfires and Extreme Weather](#)

NPR: [DOGE Cut a CDC Team as it Was About to Start a Project to Help N.C. Flood Victims](#)

E&E News: [Judge Dismisses Trump Effort to Keep FEMA Freeze in Place](#)

AZ Central: [FEMA Ends 'Wasteful' Disaster Aid Program. An Arizona Lawmaker Wants it Back](#)

SC Media: [When the Government Steps Back, Who Steps Up to Ensure Adequate Cyber Defenses?](#)

Axios: [FEMA Cuts Could Devastate Louisiana](#)

NextGov: [MITRE-Backed Cyber Vulnerability Program to Lose Funding Wednesday](#)

E&E News: [Disaster Experts Are MIA Due to Travel Crackdown](#)

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