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April 25, 2025



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

More Changes on the Horizon

Another week, another potential executive order. NEMA had previously obtained the draft EO that has recently been reported on in the press that aims to create a new agency for wildfire response and other efforts. We've been analyzing the draft EO and working closely with the state EM directors to better advocate for the perspectives and priorities of our members. We will continue to engage with the relevant federal agencies and other stakeholders to ensure our members' voices are heard during this process of changing the federal wildfire system.

Highlights from the draft EO include streamlining rules for private wildfire contractors, reducing or eliminating safety standards for aerial firefighting activity, mandating 30-minute response times for "high fire danger" areas, dissolving the Memorandum of Understanding dated Aug 2, 2024 authorizing the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, and establishing a National Wildland Fire Agency by 2026. The draft EO would also establish a national wildland firefighting task force within 90 days of the signing date, should that occur, that would be "responsible for the coordination and direction of all efforts relating to wildland fires within the United States."

In Congress, the main focus remains on reconciliation. House Republicans have announced that they plan to have their reconciliation package on the House floor on the week of May 19. For those that are unfamiliar, reconciliation is a "fast-track" process that permits Congress to advance certain tax, spending, or debt-limit legislation using different procedural rules. In the Senate, this means that reconciliation cannot be filibustered, allowing it to pass with just 50 votes.

Priorities for reconciliation include increases to the defense budget, the extension of 2017 tax cuts, significant reductions in mandatory spending (Medicaid being the largest sticking point currently), and an increase to the debt ceiling. Relatedly, it has been reported that the Treasury Department will provide Congress with its estimate for when the federal government exhausts its ability to borrow money next week, which will have important impacts on the timeline of reconciliation given the Republican's intent to raise that borrowing limit.

Finally, as many reading this likely noticed, the FEMA Review Council did not hold its first public meeting this week, as called for in the EO that established the Council. We continue to hear conflicting messaging on the status of the Council and maintain our position that significant changes to FEMA should be paused until they've had a chance to complete the work called for in the EO.

[Upcoming Congressional Hearings...](#)

None - No hearings scheduled that are relevant to emergency management.

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

DHS RELEASES UPDATED STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR GRANTS

Late last week, DHS released updated FY25 Standard Terms and Conditions for financial assistance. The applicable DHS Standard Terms and Conditions for grants, cooperative agreements, fixed amount awards, and other types of federal financial assistance are based on the fiscal year in which the financial assistance award was funded. Most of the changes in the recent update—Version 3—are aimed at reinforcing recent Trump Administration executive orders. You can review the updated terms and conditions [here](#), along with previous versions.

NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RELEASES AFTER-ACTION REVIEW OF TROPICAL STORM HELENE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

The North Carolina Emergency Management recently released their [after-action review on the preparedness and response phases of Tropical Storm Helene](#), which was conducted by an independent third party. The report was developed based on interviews and surveys with public safety and emergency response agencies across the impacted communities, as well as the state agency representatives, to gather crucial insights into both the response efforts strengths and opportunities for improvement. The lessons learned from Tropical Storm Helene, combined with the implementation of the recommendations from the report, will be essential in building a more robust and resilient emergency management system for the future.

Notably, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)—which is administered by NEMA—was highlighted as a key success of the response. The after-action review noted that "Strong mutual aid and EMAC support were invaluable to the tireless efforts of county and regional emergency managers and the SEOC." Other successes highlighted in the report focus on effective local alert systems, comprehensive and well-organized search and rescue operations, and the successful rollout and adoption of the Responder Assistance Initiative.

EMAP WEBINARS: BEST PRACTICES AND COMMON TROUBLE AREAS

In the coming weeks, the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) will be holding several webinars focused on best practices related to the EMAP process.

[Webinar Topic: Program Highlights](#)

The webinar will interview the most recently accredited programs and their journey through the accreditation process. Participants will discuss the process, the program's motivations for seeking accreditation, lessons learned, benefits of the process, what programmatic changes were made that enhanced the program, and their plans for maintaining their accreditation. The webinar is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 29 at 1:00 PM (ET)** and you can [register here](#).

[Webinar Topic: Standard Trouble Areas](#)

This webinar will discuss the common trouble areas that are found non-compliant. EMAP will also discuss solutions and best practices that emergency management programs can use to overcome those trouble areas. The webinar is scheduled for **Thursday, May 22 at 1:00 PM (ET)** and you can [register here](#).

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

Information Week: [Will Cuts at NOAA and FEMA Impact Disaster Recovery for CIOs?](#)

News of the United States (NOTUS): ['A Lot of Excuses': Trump's FEMA Uncertainty Is Frustrating Officials Navigating Hurricane Recovery](#)

Governing (Opinion): [FEMA: The Federal Agency We Don't Like Until We Need It](#)

Politico: ['Crazy': Forest Service Cuts Ignite Fear, Fury Over Wildfire Risks](#)

NYT: [When Natural Disasters Hit, People With Disabilities Often Feel Them 'First and Worst'](#)

Bloomberg: [US Feds Mostly Skipped a Major Hurricane-Response Conference](#)

Wired: [FEMA Isn't Ready for Disaster Season, Workers Say](#)

Route Fifty: ['Living Off the Land' A Major Cyber Threat to Critical Infrastructure, Report Finds](#)

Oklahoma Voice: [Trump is Shifting Cybersecurity to the States, But Many Aren't Prepared](#)

Industrial Cyber: [Resecurity Warns of Increased Cyber Threats to Energy and Nuclear Facilities from Hacktivists and Nation-States](#)

HS News Wire: [Next-Gen UAVs Enhance Search and Rescue Efficiency](#)

The Gazette: [AmeriCorps Volunteers Sent Home Amid Federal DOGE Cuts, Eliminating a 'First Line of Defense' in Disaster Response](#)

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**2025
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