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May 23, 2025



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

The Council Begins Its Work

The FEMA Review Council finally met on Tuesday, beginning their work to identify proposed reforms to the agency. This first meeting was primarily focused on introductions and initial remarks rather than detailed policy discussions. The theme of the day, which Secretary Noem stated and frequently repeated (and repeated, and repeated...) is that "FEMA should be eliminated as it exists."

While Secretary Noem's initial remarks hinted at some of the reforms the Council will pursue (e.g., a name change for FEMA, a block grant approach to federal assistance), she made it clear that all ideas for major reform were on the table. Some of the most interesting portions of the meeting—which I highly recommend [you review once meeting minutes are available](#)—came from the current and former state EM directors appointed to the Council. Kevin Guthrie (FL Director), Nim Kidd (TX Director), and Mark Cooper (former LA Director) all offered the critical state government perspective on FEMA reform. We remain optimistic that their participation in the Council will help ensure that any proposed reforms are informed by the realities of state capacity, capabilities, and authorities. Per the Executive Order that established the Council, they now have 180 days to submit a report detailing their recommendations. We'll be following the Council closely and will keep you up to date with what we hear.

Just prior to the meeting of the Review Council, Secretary Noem was on the Hill [testifying before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee](#) about the DHS budget for FY26. Notably, the administration has not yet released a detailed budget request for the department—only the "skinny" budget has been released...we've heard that details are forthcoming but that has been the messaging for several weeks at this point. We're very eager to get those details to better understand which specific grant programs would be impacted by the proposed \$646 million reduction in grant funding. Secretary Noem was asked about this directly in the hearing, but did not provide any clarity.

While the majority of the hearing was focused on immigration-related topics, Secretary Noem was asked several questions about FEMA, including the changes already made to the agency's policies and workforce and the plans for future cuts. She also addressed the actions FEMA is taking to prepare for hurricane season, which is just days away, in light of [recent reports that the agency is unprepared](#) and has not completed key planning efforts. In general, specific details were limited and Secretary Noem's message was very similar to her comments at the FEMA Review Council.

Finally, after weeks of intense and often contentious negotiations, the House passed their reconciliation bill (AKA "one big, beautiful bill") by a vote of 215-214 early Thursday morning. While some—including me—thought it was very unlikely that Speaker Johnson would have it passed by his self-imposed Memorial Day deadline, he managed to pull it off (with some significant assists by President Trump). While there's not much in the bill for emergency management issues, it does include \$500 million for unmanned aircraft systems, \$625 million to support FIFA World Cup Cities (through the State Homeland Security Program [SHSP]), \$1 billion to support the 2028 Summer Olympics (through SHSP), and \$450 million for Operation Stonegarden.

Despite this milestone, there's a long way to go before the bill is signed into law. Attention now shifts to the Senate, which is expected to make substantial changes to the bill. Given the significant time and effort it took Speaker Johnson to get the bill passed in the House by a single vote, it's likely the Senate's changes may make the bill unpalatable to many of the same Republicans in the House that Speaker Johnson spent months persuading. The GOP has given themselves a deadline of July 4 to get the bill through both chambers, which will not be an easy feat. That said, since this bill is a top priority of the President, I think we can expect a lot of pressure on holdouts in Congress to get it done.

[Upcoming Congressional Hearings...](#)

None - State/District Work Period

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

FEMA ANNOUNCES FY24 SAFER AND FP&S NOTICES OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

On Tuesday, FEMA released the Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the FY24 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) grant programs. The notices include pertinent program information such as important dates in the application and grant timelines, program requirements, performance measures, funding eligibility and more.

- [FY24 SAFER NOFO](#)
- [FY24 FP&S NOFO](#)

The application periods for both programs open **May 23 at 9:00 AM (ET)** and will close **July 3 at 5:00 PM**.

FEMA has also announced that applicant development webinars are forthcoming. The webinars will include helpful information to assist applicants in successfully completing their application. This year, application webinars are pre-recorded to allow applicants to view at their convenience. Links to the FY 2024 SAFER and FP&S webinars will be posted soon on the [Assistance to Firefighters Grant Programs Workshop page](#).

CISA/FBI ADVISORY: THREAT ACTORS TARGET U.S. CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

On Wednesday, CISA and the FBI released a joint cybersecurity advisory entitled [LummaC2 Malware Targeting U.S. Critical Infrastructure Sectors](#). This advisory details the tactics, techniques, and procedures, and indicators of compromise (IOCs) linked to threat actors deploying LummaC2 malware. This malware poses a serious threat, capable of infiltrating networks and exfiltrating sensitive information, to vulnerable individuals' and organizations' computer networks across U.S. critical infrastructure sectors.

As recently as May 2025, threat actors have been observed using LummaC2 malware, underscoring the ongoing threat. The advisory includes IOCs tied to infections from November 2023 through May 2025. Organizations are strongly urged to review the advisory and implement the recommended mitigations to reduce exposure and impact.

DHS S&T PODCAST: SETTING STANDARDS FOR TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

This week the DHS Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate released the latest episode of its [Technologically Speaking podcast](#). This episode features S&T Senior Standards Advisor Renee Stevens discussing how setting standards for technology development can actually be a matter of life, death, and national security. Hear how the faith that we put in everyday things (like seatbelts) is directly related to the faith and confidence we put in millimeter wave technology at airport checkpoints, law enforcement ballistic helmets, computers, and the security of artificial intelligence systems. Stevens explains how proper standards-setting protects everyone, from first responders in the field to the American public.

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

E&E News: [Industry Groups Back FEMA as 'Essential' Disaster Agency](#)

Gizmodo: [FEMA Shifts Disaster Burden to States in Wake of Deadly Tornadoes](#)

PBS: [FEMA Will Shift More Disaster Recovery Responsibilities to the States, Acting Chief Says](#)

NY Times: [States and Cities Fear a Disaster Season Full of Unknowns Amid Federal Cuts](#)

The Hill: ['Get FEMA Out of Homeland Security': Former FEMA Director](#)

Politico: [House Republicans Pass 'Big, Beautiful Bill' After Weeks of Division](#)

E&E News: [Meet the 13 People Who Will Shape FEMA's Future](#)

HS Today: [PERSPECTIVE: Who Suffers From Emergency Management Funding Insecurities?](#)

CBS News: [FEMA Rescinds Strategic Plan Less Than 2 Weeks Before Hurricane Season](#)

Wyofile: [Proposed FEMA Change Could Leave Wyoming Towns in Trouble When Disasters Damage Public Infrastructure](#)

ProPublica: [Helene's Unheard Warnings](#)

HS Today: [PERSPECTIVE: Mitigation Works, and So Does the BRIC Program](#)

CPO Magazine: [CISA Warns About Unsophisticated Hackers Compromising U.S. Critical Infrastructure](#)

Politico: [Senate GOP Preps for 'One Big, Beautiful' Rewrite](#)

Industrial Cyber: [House Committee Weighs in on Reauthorization of Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act Ahead of 2025 Expiry](#)

HS Today: [86 Leaders Urge DHS, FEMA to Reinstate BRIC Grant Program](#)

Drop Site News: [Acting FEMA Director's Plan for "FEMA 2.0"](#)



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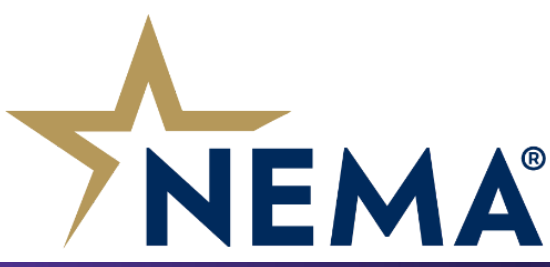
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