

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

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ON THE

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2009 HURRICANE SEASON

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER RECOVERY

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INTRODUCTION

Senator Landrieu, Ranking Member Graham and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery; it is a privilege to appear before you today on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to discuss the Agency, its accomplishments and challenges during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008, and its preparations for the 2009 hurricane season. We appreciate your leadership and commitment to working together as a Nation to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

As you know, the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act established new leadership positions and brought additional functions into FEMA. It has allowed the Agency to continue to strengthen our relationships with Federal, State, Tribal and Local partners and other members of the nation's emergency management community, and has significantly contributed to increasing FEMA's operational capacity to manage all aspects of disasters and emergencies and more effectively support our customers. I commit to continuing to build and empower FEMA, and to continue to improve our ability to meet the needs of the American people in times of disaster. With the help of FEMA's skilled and dedicated staff and our DHS and Federal colleagues, key partnerships with State, Local and Tribal governments as well as the private sector and voluntary agencies, and the support and oversight of Congress, we will meet the challenge.

Building strong and operationally integrated partnerships is paramount to our success. I know how important States, Localities and Tribes are at the front end. They are the first responders. They know best what they need. FEMA is there to back them up and to provide them with support. Secretary Napolitano has made clear her commitment to improving intergovernmental coordination and, almost immediately following her confirmation, she issued an action directive on improving ties with State, Tribal, and Local governments. As a former State Emergency Management Director, I well understand and appreciate the necessity for close collaboration, and to this end, I am committed to strengthening FEMA's ties with our partners, and providing increased clarity regarding our respective roles and responsibilities. As a prime example, we are encouraging every Governor to establish a State-led housing task force to ensure that State, Tribal, and Local governments are empowered and able to take the lead in determining the best and most appropriate housing options to meet the post-disaster needs of the residents in their State.

FEMA must continue to aggressively lead an integrated approach to preparedness that authoritatively strengthens the Nation's ability to address all hazards. The preparedness of our State, Local, and Tribal partners – as well as that of the public, who share responsibility in our Nation's readiness - is critical to our Nation's ability to quickly respond to and recover from disasters and emergencies. Responding to disaster must be a multi-pronged, team approach, and we must continue our collaborative efforts to integrate and build capacity and capability at all levels of government, while fully incorporating volunteer, faith and community-based organizations, and the private sector.

In the past year, FEMA and its partners have been able to respond rapidly and effectively to every disaster we have been called upon to support. So far, in 2009, FEMA has responded to 24

major disasters, five emergencies, and issued 24 Fire Management Assistance Grants. These events included severe storms in Arkansas, Kentucky, and Missouri, and record flooding in North Dakota and Minnesota. The feedback from these States has been universally positive. In addition, we have made dramatic progress improving and accelerating ongoing recovery efforts across the Gulf Coast region, and enjoy a stronger relationship with our partners in those States than ever before.

We now face another hurricane season; and while none of us can predict exactly what Mother Nature holds in store for us, rest assured, we are prepared. We are ready to respond to the next disaster, and I am pleased to outline for you the extensive improvements and preparations we have made to ensure our readiness.

INTEGRATED PREPAREDNESS, READINESS AND RISK ASSESSMENT

FEMA continues, through increased emphasis on training and education, to strengthen and improve FEMA's incident management capability. Our Emergency Management Institute conducted multiple Hurricane Preparedness Courses for all of our coastal Federal, State, Tribal and Local partners. The Agency also conducted five courses at the National Hurricane Conference in Austin, Texas, covering the critical areas of:

- Debris Management;
- Emergency Planning and Special Needs Populations (i.e., persons with disabilities, the elderly, persons with limited English proficiency, etc.);
- Mitigation Planning for Local Government;
- Hurricane Readiness for Coastal Communities; and
- Hurricane Readiness for Inland Communities.

I would also like to emphasize that FEMA has developed and offers over 30 online courses designed to help all audiences better prepare for disaster situations. We have also partnered with the Communications, News, Equipment, and Training program or COMNET through the National Terrorism Preparedness Institute to update an online Hurricane Preparedness module that has been completed by over 27,000 emergency managers from across the Nation.

To enhance the Nation's readiness posture and help ensure that both the National Response Framework (NRF) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) are fully embraced and implemented by emergency management practitioners at every level of government, FEMA has conducted a series of national level exercises. These have included recent Assistant Secretary-level and Cabinet Secretary-level exercises that enabled top leadership to tabletop and discuss the critical dimensions of a catastrophic hurricane scenario. The Agency is also supporting a 5-day hurricane preparedness exercise conducted in Florida, as well as providing support to a Louisiana State Emergency Management Center hurricane preparedness functional exercise. To further support Louisiana, FEMA provided Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program training to State exercise planners to help them develop and evaluate hurricane preparedness exercises. We are also supporting the Honolulu Senior Leaders Seminar and associated

functional exercise. These represent just a handful of the readiness-partnering activities in which FEMA is and will remain engaged.

To further improve our readiness posture, FEMA has established additional pre-coordinated contracts with key sources of private sector support, and we currently have approximately 75 such contingency contracts in our inventory. By establishing these contracts well in advance of an event, competition is used to the fullest extent possible. This allows FEMA to announce these procurements, allows vendors ample time to develop proposals, allows FEMA to rigorously review and evaluate vendor proposals, and lastly, allows FEMA to provide vendor debriefings on the proposals received. Contracts of this type have already proven their operational value. In response to Hurricane Gustav, FEMA activated pre-coordinated ground and air ambulance evacuation services, rail evacuation services, and housing inspection services contracts. In May 2009, FEMA awarded four new Individual Assistance Technical Assistance contracts. For the first time, these contracts have been awarded on a regional, or sector, basis, allowing the individual contractors to better focus their planning, and thereby achieve a higher level of contractor preparedness. During Hurricane Ike recovery efforts, we found that the previous contracts did not produce the desired level of expediency; however, the new sector-based contracting strategy, with its regional focus and built-in readiness requirements, such as pre-approved coordination, playbooks and subcontracting plans, should give us the results and flexibility we need. We are also revamping our base camp contracts to shelter first responders and emergency workers, making them modular and scalable, thus enabling FEMA to be better stewards of taxpayers' money. Additionally, we are working on new and improved Public Assistance Technical Assistance Contracts.

On the oversight front, FEMA has made considerable strides in improving the contract management and oversight aspects of its acquisition responsibilities. It has institutionalized the use of Contract Administration Plans to facilitate efficient and effective contract administration and improve the Agency's post-award contract execution. Contract Administration Plans also promote task order competition, ensuring that services are made rapidly available to meet critical disaster response needs, as well as establish consistent enterprise-wide contract administration processes for our Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives across the country. It also documents the agreements between program offices and our Acquisitions Management Division and will serve as a guide for continual actions related to contract administration.

The Agency has also published the Emergency Acquisition Field Guide, which will ensure that contract specialist personnel can quickly, effectively and appropriately contract for goods and services in an emergency situation. The guide defines the critical elements of an emergency acquisition in plain language so that any member of the disaster support team can understand and apply proper procedures. It includes information on purchase cards, program management, and contracting.

With respect to making our nation more disaster resistant, FEMA will continue its transition to a multiyear mapping effort that requires a review of each flood hazard map every five years, to update and refine the data. This revitalized effort will provide sound and far more accurate flood hazard data, align flood map updates with flood risk assessments to support stronger hazard mitigation planning, and enable broader flood risk communications crucial to a National

reduction in flood risk. FEMA is also partnering with State and Local governments to help develop their capability for managing and maintaining their flood hazard data. The Agency has completed a total of eight listening sessions with State and Local governments in order to learn how to programmatically expand the National Hurricane Program and its suite of product and service offerings, as well as improve its method for program delivery and capability development. In addition, FEMA has established multi-year Post Storm Assessment Inter-agency Agreements with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to minimize delays in conducting post-storm assessments of technical National Hurricane Program products, such as Hurricane Evacuation Studies.

While the initiatives and efforts discussed above are a critical dimension of national preparedness, FEMA and our Federal, State, Tribal, and Local government partners will only be successful if the public is also adequately prepared. All Americans must play a role in the national preparedness and emergency management process, and all Americans must understand and take responsibility for their role in disaster preparedness. This means that each and every family must ensure that they have a plan in the case of a disaster, a plan that asks and answers such questions as: Where is your rally point? Who will you contact outside of the disaster area to let friends and family know you are ok? Is your family's emergency kit stocked, fresh, and ready to go at any time? Taking this philosophy one step further, we should redouble our efforts to encourage all Americans to be proactive, to include such actions as taking an Emergency Medical Technician course, or learning another skill that may help them and their family if and when disaster strikes. And, if a disaster does impact a community, we should encourage every American to check on their neighbors once their own family is safe and secure.

But personal proactivity begins even earlier. Every individual, family and community must take steps now to reduce their own vulnerability to storms by taking concrete actions to mitigate against the effects of a hurricane. These steps could include modest retrofitting actions such as installing hurricane clips to roofs, placing hurricane shutters on windows, and trimming weakened trees around homes and businesses, to name but a few. Through its Citizen Corps and Ready Campaign programs, FEMA is pursuing grassroots strategies to help ensure that the public is prepared.

DHS and FEMA are also collaborating with the President and our Federal partners to help launch programs related to last month's Serve America Act. FEMA is promoting a range of volunteer service activities that further DHS mission areas, including efforts that build hurricane preparedness.

We must continue to not just encourage, but demand a more robust culture of preparedness in America, a culture in which every American takes personal responsibility for his or her own emergency preparedness.

ENHANCED OPERATIONS, PLANNING AND REGIONAL COORDINATION.

For a more effective and seamless response, FEMA is, with the support of Congress, leveraging an enhanced operational planning capacity to develop vertically- and horizontally-integrated

response plans that comply with NIMS and the NRF. One of my major priorities is to more fully empower our FEMA Regions and our cadre of Federal Coordinating Officers, and operational planning will help me achieve that goal.

Since 2007, FEMA headquarters has hired more than 25 operational planners, giving us the capability to perform sophisticated operational analyses, analyze trends, and improve response planning for both ongoing and future events. These operational planners and other staff have enabled us to meet the HSPD-8, Annex 1 requirements for developing interagency plans for prevention, protection, response, and recovery activities related to the National Planning Scenarios and for augmenting capabilities in the FEMA Regions and Area Offices. With this new staff, there is now greater depth and capability to prepare operational plans and conduct crisis action planning to lead and support a national all-hazard emergency management response. We are also expanding our focus on catastrophic disaster planning using Federal plans that have a regional and national focus. Additionally, these plans will be synchronized with urban area/regional plans developed from the Homeland Security Grant Program to prepare for National-level exercises based on the New Madrid Seismic Zone Plans.

FEMA has also provided regional evacuation planning support to the Gulf Coast and East Coast States. Since 2005, FEMA has significantly improved its evacuation planning capabilities. We have completed a Mass Evacuation Incident Annex to the NRF and a supporting supplement is under development. There has also been greater coordination of medical evacuation and assessment of public health and medical community plans. FEMA is more successfully coordinating medical special needs evacuation planning with the Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services, and the States, as evidenced by the successful large-scale medical evacuations from Louisiana during Hurricane Gustav and Texas during Hurricane Ike. Through this coordination with our partners, more than 600 pre-arranged ambulances were available to Louisiana for Hurricane Gustav and 300 of these were quickly transitioned to support Texas for the Hurricane Ike response. Special Department of Defense aircraft were also deployed to help evacuate critically ill patients. For Hurricane Gustav, we implemented the Gulf Coast evacuation plan developed over the past three years in coordination with the State of Louisiana, and helped evacuate more than 2 million people in 48 hours to multiple States using multi-modal evacuation sources, including air, train, and bus. Approximately 2,025 people were evacuated from New Orleans to Memphis on three AMTRAK trains. Air evacuation for an additional 6,104 persons was accomplished on 56 flights from New Orleans to Ft. Smith, Arkansas; Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee; and Louisville, Kentucky.

FEMA continues to provide technical assistance to at-risk Gulf Coast States for hurricane evacuation and transportation planning. For example, FEMA recently convened a Gulf Coast Contra-Flow Conference to further examine evacuation planning and processes. FEMA partnered with the Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and 10 States in the southeast, specifically focusing on transportation, emergency management, public safety, and security requirements. We have also established multi-modal transportation contracts (air, rail, and bus) to provide assistance to States to support evacuation.

FEMA is also working with vulnerable States to identify what additional support they will most likely need in the event of a disaster. We are expanding Gap Analysis Program applications to

collect more data on States' resource availability in order to facilitate a timelier and efficient disaster response. The Gap Analysis Program was developed using a consistent, national approach to determine asset gaps at the Local, State and National levels. The initial focus in 2007 was on eight areas: debris, interim housing, sheltering, evacuation, commodity distribution, medical, and communication, and fuel in 18 hurricane-prone States. The GAP has now been expanded nationwide to address all-hazards, with a focus on the following areas: commodities distribution, emergency debris clearance, transportation and evacuation, sheltering/mass care (general population, special needs, and pets), search and rescue, interim housing, fuel and emergency power, medical (with the Department of Health Human Services), and communications. The All-Hazards Gap Analysis Template is now being applied in all 10 FEMA Regions.

FEMA has been conducting and coordinating a large number of 2009 hurricane season preparedness efforts. Federal Coordinating Officers, or FCOs, have been pre-designated for eight high-risk States: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Working with the States and territories, FCO-led teams help develop and improve Local plans that identify and address gaps in capability, as well as ensure effective and unified incident management. These FCOs also participate at State and regional workshops and tabletop exercises and are participating in the regional hurricane conferences in Texas, the Gulf Coast, Florida, mid-Atlantic and the Caribbean, as well as at the National Hurricane Conference.

But our efforts don't stop there. FEMA is collaborating with hurricane-prone States to develop up-to-date 2009 State emergency communications plans to improve survivability, interoperability, and interoperable of disaster emergency communications during hurricane response. FEMA, along with its Federal, State, and local partners, will develop and implement non-traditional forms of communications for warnings and notifications to the public in order to provide for the widest dissemination possible and reach members of the special needs population who are often underserved in emergency situations due to use of only traditional forms of communication. To this end, accessible communication formats and alternate, relevant languages will be employed. FEMA's support to State and Local governments was evidenced during responses to the numerous hurricanes in the Gulf Coast in 2008. We have also established Regional Emergency Communications Coordination (RECC) Work Groups in a majority of the Regions to facilitate communications planning and response capabilities, and are currently completing upgrades of communications equipment on response vehicles. In addition, FEMA is increasing public messaging on preparedness, evacuation and sheltering plans and developing region-specific playbooks to address such items as organic capabilities, shortfalls, environmental and human threats and catastrophic risks, and planning tools to meet emerging requirements.

FEMA also recognizes the value of social media tools to help the public prepare for and respond to disasters. Tools such as Twitter, Flickr and YouTube are increasingly used by emergency responders, citizens and mass media to gather information and disseminate emergency messages. For example, FEMA has been using Twitter since October, 2008 to offer information about the agency's mission, efforts and perspective. The Agency also launched its YouTube page www.youtube.com/fema in 2008 to provide stories about how its programs work in communities nationwide as they prepared for, respond to and recover from disasters.

In May 2009, FEMA hosted more than 150 representatives from 20 federal agencies at the Government Web 2.0 Best Practices Workshop. The focus of the workshop was to identify workarounds for roadblocks specific to federal communications, as well as to demonstrate initiatives many federal agencies and departments are pursuing to better communicate with partners and the public through social media / web 2.0 tools.

The Agency has strengthened its operational capabilities with Incident Management Assistance Teams, or IMATs, and stronger regional operations. This year, FEMA has IMATs standing by and ready to respond to disasters, or the threat of disasters, at a moment's notice. These teams are full-time, rapid-response teams able to deploy within two hours of notification, and be on-scene at an incident within 12 hours.

IMATs support the State and Local incident command structure through a unified command, coordinate Federal response activities, and provide information about the situation and current conditions to FEMA leadership. Two national-level and four regional-level teams are now operational. The National and Regional IMATs were instrumental in providing on-scene situational awareness during the 2008 hurricane responses. All existing IMATs at the time were deployed to support the responses to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Critical on-scene command, control, and communications support was provided by IMATs for Houma, Louisiana government officials and the Mayor of Galveston, Texas during last year's hurricanes. Additionally, Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces were deployed for hurricane responses and supported search and rescue missions, leading to more than 3,000 rescues in both Louisiana and Texas.

FEMA continues to improve coordination and connectivity with interagency, military, and DHS partners through upgrades to our network of operations centers, such as the National Response Coordination Center, the Regional Response Coordination Centers, and the FEMA Operations Center. These operations centers coordinate and sustain response operations; maintain situational awareness and a common operating picture; facilitate information sharing between FEMA and non-FEMA entities; and provide internal and external stakeholders a consolidated, consistent, and accurate status of ongoing incidents, responses or potential events.

Additional disaster operations preparations for 2009 Hurricane Season include:

- The completion of the Federal Interagency Hurricane Concept Plan and conduct of a tabletop exercise;
- Upgrades to communications equipment on Urban Search and Rescue vehicles and the completion of training on these new capabilities;
- The completion of Regional Hurricane Plans;
- Frequent interagency hurricane preparation meetings;
- The coordination of evacuation planning with DHS to develop capabilities for moving patients and those with special needs;
- The coordination of more refined Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments to better facilitate disaster response support from other departments and agencies.

IMPROVED ASSISTANCE TO AFFECTED AREAS AND POPULATIONS

Under recovery, FEMA is focused on providing assistance in an easily accessible and coordinated manner through simple and effective delivery mechanisms, while also minimizing opportunities for waste, fraud, and abuse. We have expanded our capability to register those in need of aid, and have multiple mobile registration centers that can be deployed to help register disaster survivors who are without access to phones or computers.

In January 2009, FEMA released the National Disaster Housing Strategy, an achievement due in no small measure to this Committee's steadfast leadership and advocacy. For the first time, the Nation has a document that organizes the many planning and operational elements and considerations of disaster housing within a single strategic framework. It is intended to provide a common set of principles that will allow all housing stakeholders, at every level of government, to more effectively employ available resources to meet the needs of disaster survivors. Further, and perhaps most importantly, this Strategy recognizes and reinforces the need for all parties to plan and operationally prepare to play a much greater role in the disaster housing continuum, including the need for States to take the lead role in defining appropriate disaster housing strategies. To this end, on April 6, 2009, then Acting Administrator Nancy Ward appointed Jack Schuback as the Interim Executive Director of the National Disaster Housing Task Force. While serving in this role, Jack will work with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to lead the interagency implementation of the National Disaster Housing Strategy, to include leading national-level disaster housing planning and preparedness efforts. The National Disaster Housing Task Force, as required by the Strategy, is currently finalizing an implementation plan and is hard at work on an initial concept of operations plan.

In April, we released the 2009 Disaster Housing Plan, which describes the specific actions that FEMA will take this year to support State, Tribal, and Local officials in meeting the housing needs of disaster survivors. The plan outlines, for all levels of government, FEMA's framework for commencing a disaster housing mission and it strongly encourages joint planning for disaster housing needs well in advance of a disaster. State-led Housing Task Forces will play a crucial role in shaping an appropriate response. FEMA regional offices are currently working with each State or Territory within their region to establish these State-led task forces. Moreover, we are also finalizing an interagency agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, enabling them to more adeptly support FEMA housing missions.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano is committed to partnering with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to explore opportunities to more expansively engage in and collaboratively support the Federal disaster housing mission. We are working to better align our roles and responsibilities in support of our State and Local partners, which will allow FEMA to focus on the immediate, emergency needs of disaster survivors such as sheltering and interim housing, with HUD employing its expertise in public housing to assume a much greater role in long-term disaster housing. This expertise includes, among other things, providing technical assistance and information on housing opportunities and low-income housing, and determining the accessibility of housing for persons with disabilities through

physical surveying. This alignment of responsibilities is reflected in the National Disaster Housing Strategy.

Should a direct temporary housing mission in support of our State and Local partners arise this hurricane season, FEMA is prepared. We have contracted for new low-formaldehyde travel trailers that will meet FEMA and State standards for indoor air quality and which are superior to any available commercially. We are also contracting for low-emission park models and mobile homes, and expect to award the same in the near term. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, FEMA's air quality standard for direct housing units is comparable to indoor emissions levels found in conventional U.S. homes. Formaldehyde can be found in almost all indoor environments and is commonly used in manufacturing a variety of building products, home furnishings, textiles, medicines, and cosmetics. Construction specifications for FEMA direct housing units have been revised to remove the use of formaldehyde emitting building materials and ensure increased air circulation in units. All housing units are subjected to third party air quality assurance testing prior to acceptance by FEMA. In partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services and its Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Health Affairs, FEMA will continue to seek medical and environmental expertise as necessary to ensure that the health and safety needs of disaster survivors are being met.

In the event of a catastrophic disaster, the Agency is establishing a Temporary Manufactured Housing Unit Supply Contract, which will provide FEMA the ability to sustain disaster housing operations. To expand the Nation's disaster housing options, we are presently analyzing new and innovative forms of alternative housing, and six prototype units have been erected, for controlled testing and evaluation, at FEMA's National Emergency Training Center campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

FEMA will continue to ensure effective recovery and disaster assistance programs that balance the assistance needs and desires of the States, communities, and individuals with the Agency's need to serve as good stewards of taxpayer funds. My goal is to ensure that FEMA's Stafford Act authorized grants and technical assistance programs become a model of effectiveness and efficiency. FEMA will take a fresh look at its underlying authorities and pursue opportunities to improve administrative processes and policies to better match State, community, and individual needs while still safeguarding against duplications of payments and preventing waste, fraud, and abuse.

On the disaster application front, FEMA, in collaboration with a number of Federal partners, simplified and unified the application process for disaster survivors. We have expanded our capability to register those in need of aid by providing mobile registration centers that can be on hand to help those without access to phones or computers, while also strengthening our ability to detect and limit fraud and abuse of the assistance programs.

Additionally, FEMA has undertaken many initiatives to improve implementation of the Public Assistance Program. We have established a Public Assistance Steering Committee comprised of senior Public Assistance staff in each of our 10 regions and 10 State representatives. The purpose of the committee is to serve as the Board of Directors for the Public Assistance Program,

develop the vision, strategies and policies to ensure efficient, effective and consistent implementation of the program. We are also exploring innovative new approaches to speeding up Public Assistance decisions. In Louisiana, to expedite public assistance determinations, we have created a high-level Decision Team to expedite final decisions for approving project scopes and eligible work costs for disputed Public Assistance projects between FEMA and States. Two new joint review teams have been created, comprised of FEMA and State personnel, and they have been successful in quickly and fairly resolving a large number of disputes. These teams have increased transparency and promoted closer coordination between the Agency and our Louisiana partners, and we are likely to replicate these teams when necessary in the future.

Moreover, we continue to work with Federal, State and voluntary partners to build a robust system for evacuation, sheltering and housing, including our collaboration with the American Red Cross to implement the National Shelter System. We are also working with the American Red Cross and other voluntary organizations to ensure that plans, resources and protocols are developed and ready to be implemented during the 2009 hurricane season. The American Red Cross has hired and deployed mass care planners to FEMA headquarters, regions and the Pacific and Caribbean Area offices. FEMA is also finalizing feeding templates with the American Red Cross and other voluntary organizations to be used to support State feeding plans. Additionally, the Agency is completing contracts with food providers that are used by the American Red Cross and other voluntary organizations to ensure that adequate and appropriate commodities are made available to support their relief operations.

FEMA, in partnership with several States that have hosted evacuees, has developed an evacuee support planning guide and concept of operations template. This guide reflects the lessons learned by FEMA, States, and local governments since Hurricane Katrina. It will be a valuable resource for States undertaking planning for large scale mass care operations. In July 2006, FEMA published an interim rule which allowed the Agency to reimburse States, federally-recognized Indian Tribal governments, and local governments for sheltering and evacuation costs incurred to assist individuals displaced by a declared event that occurred in another State. In response to Hurricane Gustav in August 2008, FEMA had the opportunity to test the effectiveness of the interim rule. Based on lessons learned from that disaster, FEMA is updating the regulation and policy for host-State sheltering, as well as revising the Standard Operating Procedures and Frequently Asked Questions guide with input from the States and other stakeholders.

We continue to strengthen and refine the National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System, as well as the National Emergency Child Locator Center, to help those who are displaced after a disaster quickly find their loved ones. In addition, we are in the process of executing a cooperative agreement with National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. We also have a policy to help those with pets, and we are finalizing interagency agreements with U.S. Department of Agriculture for preparedness support for the household pets and companion animals' mission. We are also strengthening our ties and relationships with faith-based organizations that are often among the first on the ground after a disaster, offering aid and assistance to those in need. And, we are renewing Memoranda of Understanding with 11 voluntary organizations.

In the area of Long-Term Community Recovery, FEMA is working to establish a cadre composed of disaster reservists specializing in the redevelopment and restoration of communities affected by disasters. The Agency is also increasing its readiness to provide recovery planning technical assistance to hard hit communities through a pre-coordinated contract. The cadre and technical assistance contract will enable FEMA to better support communities to organize their recovery planning efforts and to establish plans and strategies to manage the community recovery process.

IMPROVING TIMELY DELIVERY OF GOODS, SERVICES AND TRACKING

FEMA is improving logistics readiness by enhancing our capability to provide transparent supply chain visibility and accountability of disaster commodities. FEMA Logistics fully supports one of the Nation's top priorities to ensure the needs of disaster survivors are met in an effective and timely manner.

In preparation for the 2009 hurricane season, we have reassessed the agency's strategic pre-positioned sites and inventories, restocked our distribution centers to pre-Ike/Gustav levels, and established a Logistics fly-away team for disaster support and tactical supply chain/distribution assistance to the field. In collaboration with the Emergency Management Institute, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Guard, Regional, and at least 18 State partners, FEMA developed a web-based independent study course, video and training manual covering standard national Point of Distribution (POD) operations. The video is downloadable and also easily embedded on the websites of state and local partners. The video, POD guide and online test are available at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is26.asp>. Over 3,300 people have registered for training thus far. The video and POD guide may also be ordered through FEMA Publications (1-800-480-2520) at no cost with over 4000 distributed to date.

Our Logistics team has worked diligently to strengthen its business processes and leverage the best practices by enhancing relationships with both the public and private sector partners through various initiatives for a more coordinated logistics response operation. We are synchronizing Emergency Support Function (ESF) #7/ [Logistics Management and Resource Support] business processes with the General Services Administration and systematically fielding Logistics standard operating procedures (SOP) for disaster operations, to include a new comprehensive Donations SOP. And we have significantly improved FEMA's forward leaning posture by putting in place contracts and interagency agreements to provide an enhanced logistics capability which include:

- Total Asset Visibility to track FEMA and partner-shipped supplies in route to the disaster area;
- National bus and ambulance evacuation readiness;
- Emergency meals and fuel (the Defense Logistics Agency)
- Water (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
- Responder Support Camp contract;
- Supplies and services (the General Services Administration);

- Vehicle drivers and fleet management
- Vehicle Maintenance (FEMA-owned and field assets)
- Logistics Management Transformation Initiative (Strategic Planning/Way Ahead)

Currently, all ten FEMA regions have Total Asset Visibility (TAV) system capability to electronically track, in near real-time status, FEMA and partner-shipped disaster commodities. This system has been used to track disaster commodities and resources from FEMA sites during disasters. During the past year, several improvements were identified which will improve FEMA's effectiveness in managing response operations and tracking resources. Additional data sharing capabilities will also be added in fiscal 2009 and 2010 that will improve management of and in-transit visibility over partner shipments.

The Agency has developed a robust implementation plan for the Congressionally-mandated logistics Demonstration Program. The Logistics Capability Assessment Tool, which will better enable State and Local emergency managers to identify logistical strengths and weaknesses and ultimately enhance their readiness. In addition, in collaboration with our State partners, we are developing and refining another highly useful tool called the Resource Requirements Calculator (RRC) which will also assist the States by developing and analyzing key gap information for critical logistical support. Moreover, we are conducting logistics Regional Planning Assistance Team visits to FEMA hurricane-prone regions and resource support coordination visits to their respective States, having just recently visited Texas and Louisiana.

CONCLUSION

Madam Chairman, we are taking aggressive and necessary steps to improve our protection and preparedness posture and readiness, and are creating a more nimble and robust response, recovery, and mitigation capability. As Stated earlier, I am confident that FEMA is prepared for the upcoming hurricane season and all hazards events.

I will continue to work to ensure that FEMA and our Federal, State, Local and Tribal partners are able to meet the needs of the American people in times of disaster, and we will continue to work with the American people to help ensure that they and their families are prepared before disaster strikes.

This Agency has made great strides over the last few years, and with the continued help of my skilled and dedicated staff, the engagement of our partners at every level of government and within the private sector, and with your support, I am confident we will continue to improve. I invite each member of this Committee to visit our headquarters, any of our Regions, or any of our field offices, to meet our incredibly dedicated staff and see first-hand the preparations that are underway to prepare for this hurricane season.

Our success depends on all of us. Preparedness is an ongoing process, one that requires collaborative and continuous conversation with, among others, this committee and the American people. Together, we will succeed by working as a team and as a Nation to build, sustain, and

improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against all hazards.

Thank you. This concludes my testimony, and I am prepared to answer the Committee's questions.