

**Statement**

**Of**

**Marko Bourne**

**Director, Policy and Program Analysis  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U. S. Department of Homeland Security**

**Before**

**the**

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Preparedness and Integration**

**Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental  
Affairs**

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## Introduction

Mr. Chairman, my name is Marko Bourne and I serve as Director of FEMA's Office of Policy and Program Analysis at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am pleased to be here and would like to begin by thanking the Committee for its interest in and continued support for FEMA and its operational readiness. It has been my task to oversee the integration of Preparedness functions into FEMA following PKEMRA and my office continues to oversee all of the agency's strategic planning efforts in an effort to integrate FEMA's directorates to strengthen our operational readiness.

The current operational tempo provides the perfect backdrop to our discussion – highlighting the progress we have made as an organization along with some of the challenges that remain.

Operational readiness at FEMA is constantly evolving as we implement additional improvements in the way we serve the American people. That is why to fully understand FEMA's operational readiness in the future, we must look at the progress we have made over the past three years improving the Agency's operational readiness today.

## New FEMA

In December 2006, Administrator Paulison announced a vision for the New FEMA. He wanted to “regain the trust and confidence of the American people” by transforming FEMA into the Nation's Preeminent Emergency Management Agency.

In order to meet this goal, the Administrator said FEMA must:

- *Strengthen core capabilities, competencies and capacities.* Fostering a national emergency management system and implementing a cohesive national preparedness system by strengthening the foundational building blocks of the Agency.
- *Build strong Regions.* The Region is the essential field echelon of FEMA that engages most directly with State partners and disaster victims to deliver frontline services. It is the Region that builds and nurtures State, local, territorial and tribal capabilities across the spectrum of preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. And it is the Region that leads the Federal response to incidents across the spectrum of all-hazards events. A strong FEMA will rely on strong Regions to build and maintain the trust and confidence of Governors, mayors, leaders in the private sector and the citizens of our homeland.
- *Strengthen our partnership with States.* Response to disasters and emergencies is primarily a State, local, territorial and tribal effort. To build and support an effective national system of emergency management, FEMA must have effective partnerships with State, local, territorial and tribal governments.

- *Professionalize the national emergency management system.* The Nation's ability to marshal an effective response to disasters requires the right people with the right skills. We will work with our partners to build a nationwide system of trained and certified experts skilled in all hazards emergency management – starting right here in FEMA.

FEMA leadership was not alone in charting a new path for the Agency. Congressional passage of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act and the subsequent Appropriations Act provided FEMA with the additional resources and capabilities necessary. With a new path charted, FEMA went to work.

### New FEMA Progress

To begin with, FEMA focused on expanding our capabilities and strengthening our organization. We have placed greater emphasis on Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments that help us to facilitate rapid response, as well as to standardize development of mission assignments prior to and during disaster operations. In 2006, FEMA started with 44 Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments with two Federal agencies. Today that number is 236 with 33 agencies.

On the ground, we are stronger with our new Incident Management Assistance Teams – or IMATs. They are ready to support States within 12 hours, coordinate Federal activities and provide initial situational awareness.

Our new Logistics Management Directorate is working closely to develop a supply chain that is in sync with the private sector. We can better track our resources and thus improve our coordination. We also have contracts and inter-agency agreements in place that improve our capabilities in providing supplies and services, base camp support, evacuations and transportation when disasters strike.

FEMA now has 60 Mobile Disaster Recovery Centers that can be deployed on-site at a disaster to help people get the support they need. FEMA continues to work with all of our 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 have established a National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System and a National Emergency Child Locator Center to help those displaced find their loved ones. We have a new policy to help those with pets. And we remain focused on streamlining and improving the housing and individual assistance programs.

### Improved Planning and a Culture of Preparedness

Our response will only be as good as our planning and preparedness within FEMA and with our Federal, State, local, territorial and tribal partners. When I joined the agency,

we had few full-time operational planners. Today, we have hired operational planners at the FEMA Headquarters and Regional levels to improve our ability to perform sophisticated operational analyses, analyze trends and plan for the response to ongoing and future events.

Our plans incorporate a Gap Analysis review. Last year, working with our State, local, territorial and tribal partners we employed this tool to identify what was needed, should a disaster strike. We use a consistent set of measures and tools to evaluate strengths and vulnerabilities in seven critical areas: evacuation, commodity distribution, sheltering, interim housing, medical needs, fuel capacity along evacuation routes and debris removal.

### Integrated Planning System

Signed by the President in December 2007, Annex I to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8) requires the development of an Integrated Planning System (IPS) to guide integration of planning and synchronization of plans across federal departments and agencies, and to enable integration with State, local, territorial and tribal planning around national and regional scenarios. IPS was designed on the same planning principles established by the State, local, territorial and tribal emergency management community through the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide – 101 (interim) to provide for consistency of process despite different planning requirements.

The development and management of IPS is handled by the DHS Office of Operations Coordination and Planning. FEMA is a key component in the effort and manages several actions associated with its implementation, including development of interagency concept plans for National Planning Scenarios and communication with the State, local, territorial and tribal community.

An interim version of IPS is currently in use by Federal departments and agencies. Currently, FEMA is working with interagency partners on concept of operations development and implementation for both the Period of Heightened Alert and Terrorist Use of Explosives.

Additionally, during this interim period, FEMA has been tasked with coordinating State, local, territorial and tribal input into the development of IPS, to include addressing the method for vertical integration. The resulting inputs will be used to update Comprehensive Preparedness Guide – 101 to maintain consistency between the two systems.

### Strengthened Regions

FEMA has also taken steps to strengthen the regions. First, Administrator Paulison hired experienced emergency management professionals to serve as Regional Administrators. In fact, the ten Regional Administrators have more than 300 years of emergency management experience combined.

Regional coordination has been enhanced through the creation of Regional Advisory Councils and assignment of Department of Defense Coordinating Officers to each FEMA regional office. FEMA has also upgraded its Regional Response Coordination Centers communication capabilities to ensure communications between Washington, the Region, and our State, local, tribal and territorial partners remain strong.

FEMA Regional Offices have also worked with Gulf Coast States to develop evacuation plans. In addition, FEMA has utilized the Catastrophic Planning funds provided by Congress to plan for the catastrophic earthquakes along the New-Madrid fault line and in California. To support these planning efforts, FEMA Regions are actively engaged with State governments in exercises designed to test and validate plans and procedures.

The improvements we have made since 2005 have been substantial, but we still have more work to do to ensure we provide the best possible service to the American people during times of crisis.

### Hurricanes Gustav and Ike

Over the past weeks, New FEMA has been put to the test. Hurricanes Gustav and Ike once again reminded us just how dangerous Mother Nature can be. These two storms brought significant levels of destruction and devastation not seen in three years.

The response and recovery to these two destructive hurricanes has been good but not perfect. No response to storms of this magnitude will ever be perfect. However, the progress made by New FEMA, along with our emergency partners at all levels of government and in the private and voluntary sectors, was both significant and important.

It is too early to provide a full review of our operations in response to these disasters. There are still many people without power or the ability to safely return to their homes. And they are the focus of our continued efforts.

However, there are some important areas of improvement that I would like to share with you today. First and foremost, the level of cooperation and coordination between all levels of government, NGOs, and the private sector was outstanding. The unified command system established for both Gustav and Ike worked well. We all communicated regularly and worked together to resolve issues before they became crises. For example, the benefits of improved pre-incident evacuation planning with our partners on the Gulf Coast were obvious as millions of Americans were able to evacuate in an orderly manner in advance of the storms.

In addition to the improved cooperation and coordination between levels of government, the cooperation and coordination within the Federal government were significantly better. The processes and procedures we put in place worked and made for a more effective Federal response.

The situational awareness among leadership at the Federal, State, local, territorial and tribal levels was also a vast improvement. We had reconnaissance teams on the ground

along with aircraft flying above the affected area providing real-time imagery and reports.

The final reports on Hurricanes Gustav and Ike are still a long way from being written. And FEMA, as it always does, will pour through the lessons learned and improve our operations, as appropriate. However, we are extremely proud of the hard work put in by FEMA and DHS employees over the past three years to create the New FEMA. The long hours spent improving how we operate has ensured millions of people received the kind of disaster response they deserve.

### Operational Readiness

FEMA's future operational readiness is only assured by continuing to build on the progress we have made transforming the Agency. We must continue to strengthen our core capabilities, competencies, and capacities. We must continue to build stronger regions. We must continue to strengthen our partnerships with States. We must continue to professionalize the national emergency management system.

FEMA and DHS employees, with the support of Congress, have worked tirelessly the past three years to create an Agency the American people can be proud of, an Agency they can trust during times of crisis.

The men and women of FEMA, under the leadership of Secretary Chertoff, Administrator Paulison, and Deputy Administrator Johnson, have built a solid foundation for the future of the organization. This foundation has helped FEMA reach a higher level of operational readiness this year than ever before.

The time, however, is fast approaching when the current leadership team will be replaced by a new leadership team. It will be up to this new team, along with the strong and capable cadre of career civil servant leaders at FEMA, to continue building on the solid foundation we have worked to establish.

Change, particularly in leadership, brings uncertainty. That is why FEMA continuously prepares itself for sudden leadership change.

It all starts with FEMA's senior career leadership who has worked hard to prepare itself to step in and fill leadership positions at a moments notice. For the past two years we have aggressively recruited experienced and dynamic career professionals in each of our offices and directorates. We have converted three of our Regional Administrator positions, in our three busiest regions, to career executives. We have placed within each directorate and office a clear chain of command and continue to integrate planning and business functions through updated management directives and coordination councils.

It is a contingency we plan for regardless of the political calendar. Disaster victims want to know that FEMA is there to support their State, local, territorial and tribal governments regardless of political transitions or employee turnover in Washington, D.C. They want to know that we are there to support their family when they need us.

Our career leaders are an extraordinarily experienced and talented group. However, in order to continue building the New FEMA, they must have the right kind of leadership to support them. Our transition planning will provide comprehensive opportunities for the incoming leadership team to quickly come up to speed on the critical issues they will face and the programs they will be administering. The training available to new leadership at FEMA is excellent and we will also provide ample opportunity through discussions and exercise a forum to hone knowledge and skills. There is simply no replacement for years of experience as an emergency management professional. That is why Administrator Paulison has made hiring the best, most experienced leaders a priority. FEMA employees and the American people deserve nothing less.

Our State, local, territorial, and tribal partners also deserve experienced partners at the Federal level. That is why when asked what leadership change over the coming months means to them, the answer should be that the reforms made and the partnerships created must be continued and strengthened. FEMA will take the lessons of Gustav and Ike and continue to refine the way we operate. We will work with our partners, as we always do, to continue improving how we prepare, respond, recover and mitigate disasters together.

Our regional offices will continue to grow as planned, both in size and programs available to our State, local, territorial, and tribal partners. Our planners at both the regional and headquarters level will work like never before with State, local, territorial and tribal planners to improve preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation plans. And our outstanding educational institutions will continue to offer training opportunities to both experienced and new emergency management professionals at all levels of government.

If we have done our job correctly, the only change in operational readiness our State, local, territorial and tribal partners might find over the coming months is a new voice at the other end of the phone or a new face on-screen during a Video Tele Conference.

### Continuity is Key

FEMA is proud of the improvements we have made as an organization over the past three years. The devastation and destruction brought by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike have tested New FEMA. And while some additional challenges and improvements have been identified, we believe the path we have chosen for FEMA is correct. If FEMA is to become the preeminent emergency management organization in the nation, the operational improvements we continue to put in place must not stop.

As we look to the future and how FEMA's operational readiness will be impacted by change and uncertainty, our message is straightforward: We will continue building on the foundation we have built over the past three years. And we will continue striving to make FEMA a more nimble, agile and compassionate organization focused on serving the American people.

Thank you for your continued support and for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.