

**Chairman Peters Opening Statement As Prepared for Delivery**  
**Full Committee Hearing: Nomination of Deanne B. Criswell to be Administrator, Federal**  
**Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security**  
**March 25, 2021**

Today we are considering the nomination of Ms. Deanne Criswell to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or “FEMA”, a critical part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Welcome Ms. Criswell, good to see you, and your sons RJ and Eddie, here today. Congratulations on your historic nomination, and thank you for your willingness to serve your country again.

FEMA is charged with helping people before, during, and after disasters. The Administrator leads the agency’s efforts to respond to disasters, from hurricanes to historic flooding and wildfires, to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The FEMA Administrator coordinates closely with state and local partners to provide emergency assistance and save lives in times of crisis, and to help communities across the country rebuild and become safer and more prepared for the next disaster.

This is an immensely challenging job, one that demands an experienced, crisis-tested leader. Ms. Criswell, you have over 25 years of emergency management and disaster response experience at the federal, state, and local levels, a record that shows you are well prepared to lead this critical agency.

You have the support of multiple emergency management and law enforcement groups, as well as former FEMA Administrators who served under both Democratic and Republican presidents.

If confirmed, you will take the helm while the nation still faces a historic public health crisis, and FEMA is actively engaged in response and relief efforts. You will play a key role in ensuring vaccine distribution is efficient and effective, and that every community has the resources needed to recover from the pandemic.

As you know, the pandemic is only one of many emergencies that FEMA is facing and will face in the months and years ahead. We are in the midst of spring flooding and heading into hurricane and wildfire seasons, while many communities are still recovering from severe winter storms.

From our earlier conversation, I know you understand that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to disaster response.

I also know you that you understand that we must do more to invest in mitigation, to reduce risk before a disaster strikes. As communities across the nation continue to experience the impacts of climate change, we must work together to mitigate this growing threat.

Ms. Criswell, I look forward to hearing more about your plans to lead this critical agency.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve, and for being here with us today.