

Nomination Hearing for Timothy W. Manning

Chairman Joseph Lieberman

April 30, 2009

We will now move to the second panel for today's hearing and consider the nomination of Timothy W. Manning to be Deputy Administrator for FEMA in charge of national preparedness.

First, let me thank you for your commitment to public service. For many years, Mr. Manning has served in a number of positions directly relevant to national preparedness, most recently as the Director of New Mexico's Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and as Homeland Security Advisor to the Governor. He has also held numerous positions with the New Mexico Department of Public Safety - Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Director of the Office of Emergency Management, Director of the Office of Emergency Services, and as coordinator of hazardous materials. Significantly, he has also had front line experience, working as a fire fighter and rescue mountaineer on a voluntary basis.

With this experience, Mr. Manning would bring to FEMA the perspective of a state official and a first responder, which would help strengthen the coalitions between the many entities involved in preparing for disasters. The current public health emergency surrounding the swine flu demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that in times of crisis, we need response and preparedness officials who know what they are doing and that the functions of prevention and protection must be closely integrated with preparedness and response.

In 2006, following this Committee's extensive investigation into the bungled response to Hurricane Katrina, Senator Collins and I co-authored reform legislation to strengthen the agency so that it would be capable - for the first time in its history - of responding to a disaster as catastrophic as Hurricane Katrina proved to be.

The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act gave FEMA the responsibility to lead our efforts to prepare for and respond to disasters of all kinds – whether a natural catastrophe, a devastating accident, or a terrorist attack. If necessary, FEMA would be able to draw on the many resources and assets of the entire Department. We added

resources for FEMA, elevated its position within DHS, and redesigned its leadership structure.

One of our most important proposals to remake FEMA into a world-class disaster response agency was to rejoin its preparedness and response capabilities, which had been split apart. We don't want FEMA to be in the position again where it is trying to build the kind of teamwork and logistical relief operations among all levels of government in the midst of the confusion that inevitably follows a disaster. This is what happened during Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Manning, if you are confirmed, your key responsibility will be to make sure that this important provision of the Post-Katrina Act will be fully implemented and that FEMA's preparedness capabilities are fully integrated into across all stages of emergency management, including mitigation, response, and recovery. This is central to the nation's homeland security, and I look forward to discussing how, if confirmed, you will work to achieve that.

Catastrophes and disasters – natural and man-made – occur all too frequently. As we all know, we are in the midst of a health emergency

now, and I hasten to add that the federal response has been strong and reassuring.

We must be prepared at all levels of government, at all times, for the next disaster, because it will come, and we don't want to hold any more hearings to ask the question: "Why weren't we prepared." Thank you.

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