

Opening Statement
W. Brock Long, Nominee
Administrator, FEMA
United States Senate
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
June 7, 2017, 10:00 a.m., 342 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Introduction:

Good Morning Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member McCaskill, and Members of the Committee. My name is Brock Long, and I'd like to start by thanking Senator Burr for his kind introduction. I'm a North Carolina native, a dedicated husband and father, and a passionate emergency manager that has worked in the field my entire career. I am honored by the President's nomination, Secretary Kelly's support, and thankful for the Committee's time and consideration of me to potentially serve as the Nation's next Administrator of FEMA.

I believe that FEMA's mission is one of the most important within the Federal government, and it is a privilege to be considered to lead this agency ultimately charged with saving and protecting lives, and helping communities recover in times of their greatest need. Americans rightfully have high performance expectations of FEMA, and I desire to help the agency further our Nation's collective levels of readiness and resiliency for future disasters. I realize leading FEMA is not an easy task; however, I do not fear the challenge ahead, but rather welcome the opportunity to work with you and our partners to transform our field and make America safer.

Background/Experience:

I'm a diplomatic leader that has dedicated nearly two decades of service to helping communities and organizations prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. My career experience in emergency management is unique. Not only have I held leadership positions in both the public and private sector emergency management organizations, I have also served at the State and Federal levels of government within the field. For the past six years I have been working in the private sector helping communities and private organizations across the Nation achieve a variety of emergency management, public health, and Homeland Security, goals and project initiatives. As a result of my evolving experience, I have my fingers on the pulse of local and state emergency management needs and issues.

I began my career helping the Georgia Emergency Management Agency craft one of the Nation's first innovative school safety programs, and assisted local governments across the state with hurricane and emergency operations planning. I supported statewide response efforts in the State Emergency Operations Center during one of the nation's largest evacuation and mass care events as a result of Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

On the morning of 9/11, I interviewed with FEMA, and eventually was selected to serve as the Region IV Hurricane Program Manager in charge of helping states and local governments design life safety evacuation plans and working directly with the National Hurricane Center to help jurisdictions

interpret risk and vulnerabilities when threatened by tropical systems. I was a part of FEMA when it was at its best in 2004, responding to four major hurricanes in six weeks. I was also a part of FEMA during its worst moment in 2005 when the agency learned that it is only as good as its weakest link and its last disaster.

In 2007, I was appointed by Governor Bob Riley to serve as the Cabinet level Director of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency. During my tenure, the agency responded to 14 disasters (8 of these were Presidentially Declared Events). In 2009, Alabama had more Presidentially declared disasters than any other state in the Nation, and the agency successfully responded to an average of one disaster every three months during my tenure. In addition to natural disasters, I also helped lead Alabama's response during the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Event of National Significance, and was charged with establishing and maintaining the State's Forward Emergency Operations Center and leading Citizen Individual Assistance disaster claims operations. As Director of the Agency, I also served on the Central United States Earthquake Consortium and as a member of the National Advisory Council's Robert T. Stafford Act Subcommittee. Finally, I was in charge of making sure key state agencies developed Continuity of Operations Plans for pandemic events, and managed logistical movement of vaccines to regional distribution sites during the H1N1 Public Health Emergency.

In 2011, I entered the Private Sector as Executive Vice President of Hagerty Consulting, a nationally recognized emergency management and homeland security firm. My private sector experience has been invaluable. Specifically, I was provided an opportunity to roll up my sleeves and work side by side with local, state, and federal emergency managers and private organizations across the Nation to develop and evaluate concepts and planning solutions for, but not limited to, the following areas: Complex attacks, cyber security, Public Health emergencies, evacuations, mass care, Access and Functional Needs, special events, school safety, disaster recovery, mission ready packaging, and program accreditation. This experience has helped me to witness firsthand the issues challenging emergency managers, and exposed ideas for improving our profession from a Whole Community perspective.

Conclusion:

I understand the complexities and expectations involved with serving as FEMA administrator. I believe that the staff inside FEMA and emergency managers around the country ultimately enter the field as a great form of service to their country. Despite the unfortunate and constant criticisms emergency managers often face, I have witnessed them working diligently to collectively strengthen national preparedness and resilience while organizing capabilities to ultimately save lives and help people in time of their greatest need. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely I hope I'm given the chance to lead this extremely dedicated community and improve our field.

Should I be confirmed, I commit to being the agency's biggest champion and to work with Congress, state, local, and private sector partners to innovatively support our first responders to ensure we work together to build, sustain, and improve the Nation's capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

