

STATEMENT OF **SENATOR THOMPSON, CHAIRMAN**
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIR'S,
UNITED STATES SENATE

February 13, 2001

The Director of FEMA is one of the most important positions in government and is extremely important to the safety of the public. FEMA is the central federal agency for emergency planning, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. It works closely with state and local governments by deploying federal resources when a disaster occurs, funding emergency programs, and offering technical guidance and training to communities nationwide.

FEMA has coordinated the expenditure of upwards of \$2.8 billion in a single year for disaster relief. Because of the nature of FEMA's mission, the Director will need to assure that we have invested in adequate capacity and resources, and then manage them effectively in order to serve the expected emergency needs of the country. The agency faces a number of management challenges, such as creating a performance-based culture, strengthening internal control deficiencies, performing cost/benefit analysis of information technology investments, and better managing disaster grants.

With strong leadership I believe this agency will represent what the Federal government does best ---facilitate and coordinate assistance to communities in need of support after a natural disaster.