

**MOVING BEYOND THE FIRST FIVE YEARS:
ENSURING FEMA'S ABILITY TO RESPOND AND
RECOVER IN THE WAKE OF A NATIONAL
CATASTROPHE**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS,
PREPAREDNESS, AND RESPONSE**

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

APRIL 9, 2008

Serial No. 110-103

Printed for the use of the Committee on Homeland Security



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

43-752 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2008

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
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MOVING BEYOND THE FIRST FIVE YEARS: ENSURING FEMA'S ABILITY TO RESPOND AND RECOVER IN THE WAKE OF A NATIONAL CATASTROPHE

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS,
PREPAREDNESS, AND RESPONSE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Henry Cuellar [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Cuellar, Lowey, Norton, Jackson Lee, Christensen, Etheridge, and Dent.

Mr. CUELLAR [presiding.] The Subcommittee on Communications, Preparedness and Response will come to order.

The subcommittee is meeting today to receive testimony from the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency on the status of the implementation on the FEMA reforms and to discuss FEMA's preparedness for the next disaster.

Again, good morning, and, first of all, on behalf of the members of the subcommittee, let me welcome our witness. We are glad that you are here to give us an update on how FEMA has been doing on the FEMA reforms.

The hearing today is entitled, "Moving Beyond the First Five Years: Ensuring FEMA's Ability to Respond and Recover in the Wake of a National Disaster."

As many people know, the Department of Homeland Security just passed the 5-year anniversary since its creation. Throughout the month of April, each homeland security subcommittee, as well as the full committee, is taking a look at the Department's vision for 2009 and beyond.

While we want to acknowledge mistakes have been made by the Department over the past 5 years—FEMA has done some of that also—we certainly want to work with you all together to make sure that we learn from these mistakes. Certainly, I know that FEMA has done a good job in many of the areas, and we certainly want to recognize—I am one of those types of chairmen that I want to not only recognize the bad things but also recognize the good things that FEMA has been doing.

We want to make sure that we work with you with the Department to make sure that you have developed a vision beyond the

end of this administration. It is vital that the Department, in light of the critical mission, establish some policies and procedures to ensure that there is continuity in the day-to-day operations during the transitional period between administrations. It doesn't finish on December 31 or in January with a new president. We want to make sure those policies are there to make sure that we continue to whomever might be the new president.

This is especially important for FEMA which role has expanded greatly since the Department was created. On October 4, 2006, President Bush signed into law the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006, which, as you know, made substantial changes to FEMA in the Department of Homeland Security.

It created new leadership positions with clear position requirements, new missions and restored some responsibilities that had been removed. Finally, it enhanced the agency's authority to undertake a broad range of activities before and after disasters occur.

Efficient, timely and effective implementation of the act is critical to homeland security, and it has been a high priority for myself, for Chairman Thompson and the rest of our committee.

Again, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, I believe there has been significant progress that has been made under Chief Paulison and your leadership, and we want to thank you for the work that you have done and your staff to reform the way our Federal Government responds to disasters and to make FEMA a more responsive and effective agency.

I believe that exceptional work has been done in the areas of disaster operations, logistics, strengthening regional offices, to name a few.

I think on a personal note, I mention, at least in my particular district, what happened in Webb County and what happened in Starr County, in my particular district, after we had the floodings, FEMA responded in an excellent way. I talked to my local folks, the mayors and the county judges, and they had high praise for the way that FEMA responded. So at least on a personal note, personal knowledge, I do want to say thank you for the work that you have done.

You all have done exceptional work in the areas that I mentioned, but there are still some challenges that still remain. We still have to look at the progress with emergency housing, public alerts and warnings, contracting and the integration of grants and the agency's various preparedness initiatives. We have concerns, and we want to make sure that we work with you and look at the progress to make sure that we improve in those areas.

So we look forward to hearing your updates on the efforts on this particular area.

So I want to thank again the witness again for the testimony that you will be providing, and at this time, the Chair recognizes the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Dent, for an opening statement.

Mr. Dent.

Mr. DENT. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Last Congress, as you know, this committee was instrumental in the enactment of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006. This legislation required a number of organizational,

programmatic, and policy changes to implement the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina.

This legislation also aims to ensure the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA will be better prepared to respond to future catastrophic events. FEMA began informal implementation of the act last April. Since that time, it has made substantial changes in areas such as logistics management, coordination with State and local government officials and other stakeholders, and establishing guidelines for strategic and operational planning efforts.

The DHS Office of Inspector General issued a report last week entitled, "FEMA's Preparedness for the Next Catastrophic Disaster." As the report details, the inspector general found that FEMA has made moderate or modest progress in all but one of nine key areas evaluated by the report. The report notes, however, that progress has been hindered by "budget shortfalls, reorganizations, inadequate IT systems and confusing or limited authorities."

As this committee continues to exercise its oversight and legislative authority over FEMA and the Department, I hope we pay close attention to the issues that may negatively impact the implementation of these much needed reforms, and I hope that we, as a committee, do what we can to assist FEMA in making progress.

One way we can do this is by urging the next administration, regardless of party, to preserve the current organizational structure of the Department. There have been several major reorganizations of the Department since 2003, as well as other program and funding transfers; it is time to stop moving the boxes around. FEMA and the Department must be allowed time to implement existing requirements and focus on their core missions.

In addition, while it appears that the committee will not consider an authorization bill for the Department this year, I hope we re-institute this policy moving forward.

The end year authorization bill will help ensure our committee has a stronger voice in determining priorities for the budget and for the appropriations process.

I am pleased that we have today Acting Deputy Administrator Harvey Johnson who is with us today to discuss FEMA's progress to date. Among other things, I do look forward to discussing with him how we can best help FEMA continue to strengthen the Nation's preparedness for a catastrophic event.

So, Mr. Chairman, I thank you, and I yield back my time.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you very much.

We do know that other members of the subcommittee are reminded that under the committee rules opening statements may be submitted for the record.

At this time, I do want to welcome our witness, Admiral Harvey Johnson, who is the acting deputy administrator and chief operating officer for FEMA within the Department of Homeland Security. Admiral Johnson came to FEMA in April 2006 after serving as commander for the Pacific area of the U.S. Coast Guard. Admiral Johnson has a wealth of emergency and crisis management experience, including support to the Admiral Thad Allen and the Coast Guard's Hurricane Katrina's response efforts by coordinating and deploying the West Coast resources.

We are pleased to have you present here today, Admiral. Without objection, the witness' full statement will be inserted into the record. I will now ask the witness to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

Welcome.

STATEMENT OF HARVEY E. JOHNSON, JR., ACTING DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. JOHNSON. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Dent, members of the committee. I am Harvey Johnson, acting deputy administrator and chief operating officer of FEMA from the Department of Homeland Security, and I am pleased to discuss the progress that FEMA has made over the last 2 years and describe where we expect to see accomplishments in the years ahead.

The FEMA of Hurricane Katrina is being progressively transformed into a new FEMA that is intent on achieving its vision of becoming the Nation's premier emergency and preparedness agency. To achieve this vision, we have taken on a new operational ethos: To lean further forward to provide more effective disaster assistance to communities and disaster victims. While both of these may sound more appropriate as bumper stickers or feel-good slogans, they have in fact been internalized throughout FEMA, from headquarters to the regions, to disaster sites, and they are reflected in all that we do.

The vision for our new ethos has inspired an organizational restructuring within the headquarters as well as the field. The division once simply called Recovery is now titled Disaster Assistance; one simply called Response is now Disaster Operations; and one that was a branch, not even a division, has been elevated to become the Logistics Management Directorate.

More than simple name changes or moving boxes on a chart, these organizational changes represent a declaration to those inside FEMA and those of our external partners that we have a better fix on who we are and what we do. Every day we become closer to becoming, in fact, the Nation's premier emergency management and preparedness agency.

For the first time the structure of the regional aligns exactly with headquarters to make it easier to effect change and achieve consistency.

In this new vision, we are an agency that is becoming more comfortable thinking and acting in an all-hazards environment, and we are building the skill sets to extend our mission reach into prevention protection just as we are increasingly mastering response, recovery and mitigation.

We are building new operational capabilities in the form of incident management assist teams, operational planners and watch standards in our response coordination centers. These new capabilities broaden our operational reach and give us the capacity to be more alert and to lean further forward.

We are becoming a stronger partner across the Federal departments and agencies, exercising Federal lead and continuity of operations and continuity of government, managing the national exer-

cise system and leading the Federal efforts to improve the alert and warning capabilities and to try to become the Nation's logistics coordinator.

In addition, we have reinvigorated our partnership with the States in major urban areas, improving outreach to Governors, emergency managers and major city mayors, seeking their counsel as we develop policy and bring them into our decision processes during disasters. We have established new contacts with the law enforcement community by selecting former chief of police, Rick Dinse, to be the first law enforcement advisor to the administrator. We now have, for the first time, a disabilities coordinator and a rural and small State advocate.

We have embraced the preparedness mission, as it has been further defined by the Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act and returned to FEMA. With the formal promulgation of both the National Response Framework and the National Preparedness Guidelines, we are extending throughout all government levels and the larger community, represented by the non-profit volunteer organizations and the private sector, a higher call for emergency preparedness among the communities. Both documents establish doctrine, identify objectives and priorities and emphasize the value of planning and exercises as an avenue to achieve heightened state of preparedness across the Nation.

We have also turned a corner in the administration of State and local grant programs where we have narrowed the focus on the grants to better guide, and in some cases direct, where those funds are spent just so that we can have a greater sense of assurance that the investment outcomes will measurably contribute to national preparedness.

Under the leadership of Administrator Dave Paulison, we are focusing our investment and our placement of resources into building the capability in the field closer to the States, the local governments and individual citizens.

Approximately 60 percent of the new positions are being placed in our FEMA regions, and we are passing more authority to the regional administrators. The wisdom of that investment has proven its value as they have expanded their interaction with States and stood alongside each other in disaster responses in California wildfires, the ice storms of Oklahoma and Kansas, the floods in Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and most recently the tornados in Arkansas and Tennessee as well as other disasters.

The differences between FEMA and new FEMA have been evident to disaster victims as well, as they have engaged with FEMA more quickly after a disaster and received assistance faster and with less bureaucracy. It is not uncommon to have the first individual assistance registration and payment of benefit within 24 hours of the president providing a disaster declaration.

Mr. Chairman, I could go on longer in describing the changes in FEMA during the last 2 years and foretell a stronger and more effective new FEMA, but please allow me to make just two more points.

First, the progress that we have made has come with the support and the encouragement of Secretary Chertoff and President Bush. The secretary and the president are personally supportive, as ex-

pressed in the fiscal year 2008 and 2009 budget request, which have been the strongest in more than a decade for FEMA but also in their involvement and advocacy in bringing about a stronger FEMA.

I also wish to thank this subcommittee and the committees at large for your support through oversight, budget appropriations and provision new authorities, all in direct support of a new FEMA.

My final point: To recognize that strength and character often comes through the test of adversity. FEMA has had its share of adversity, and our road to progress has included a misstep on occasion, but through all of this and through all of our changes that I have described, the people within FEMA have persevered, and I would like to add that they have flourished.

They are a dedicated, determined and resourceful lot. They have responded to Dave Paulison's leadership by taking his charge and turning it into reality. It is the people within FEMA that are combined to lead that charge and continue the transformation toward the vision for new FEMA.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these issues, and I would be pleased to answer your questions, sir.

[The statement of Mr. Johnson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HARVEY E. JOHNSON, JR.

APRIL 9, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Dent and Members of the committee, I am pleased to be here today to discuss the progress the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has made over the past 2 years and describe that which we expect to accomplish in the years ahead. FEMA today is better able to fulfill our mission, which is to reduce the loss of life and property, and protect the Nation from all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and man-made disasters, by leading and supporting the Nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation.

The standard operations of FEMA displayed during Hurricane Katrina have been improved. The agency has transformed into a "New FEMA" that reflects the expanded scope of the agency's missions—a mission supported through building a National Emergency Management System that provides for a more nimble, flexible use of national resources. It strengthens the coordination within FEMA elements and with other DHS components, and will enable FEMA to better coordinate with agencies and departments outside of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It will also deliver enhanced capabilities to partners at the State and local levels and engage the capabilities of the private sector. Day by day, FEMA is refining its core competencies while becoming an organization that is valued across all jurisdictions as an engaged, agile, responsive, and trusted leader and partner.

FEMA continually employs lessons learned and makes progress toward our vision of becoming the Nation's preeminent preparedness and emergency management agency. And, we are demonstrating a new ethos as we lean further forward to deliver more effective assistance to communities and disaster victims.

The vision for "New FEMA" was structured around the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) as well as other legislation. This legislation expanded our ability to meet the preparedness elements of our mission. We have also been shaped by the results of 17 specific internal needs assessments that spanned our business functions, logistics, finance, human resources, information technology and communications. Those self-initiated assessments provided a blueprint for our change efforts. The additional reforms uncovered by the needs assessments and the organizational transition of preparedness components into FEMA on April 1, 2007, completed this important phase of our transformation.

The ultimate direction of FEMA has been mapped out in our new Strategic Plan that establishes five strategic goals, identifies overarching themes, and provides

guidance, objectives and implementation strategies. The Strategic Plan has been vital in guiding FEMA's directorates toward enhancing their program development processes.

As we enter the last year of this administration, this Strategic Plan will guide a course that will ensure that we leave FEMA in a better position to serve the American people.

Over the past 2 years, FEMA has displayed its leadership in times of national need. That leadership has been evidenced by the timely delivery of assistance during various disasters, most recently the California wildfires, and also the Missouri floods and the tornadoes that overwhelmed Arkansas and Tennessee.

However, new and reengineered processes, policies, and organizational changes will only take FEMA so far. The force multiplier of our success is the hard work and dedication of our people. The FEMA team is purposefully responding to the challenges of achieving a "New FEMA", whether in the field of logistics, information technology or acquisitions, as operational planners, or as experts able to deliver disaster assistance. These are the people who define FEMA; these are the people who will make the agency the Nation's preeminent preparedness and emergency management agency. We will continue to professionalize and educate our workforce, making it a world-class operation, in terms of competency, diversity, morale, achievement and opportunity for growth. To compliment this capability, FEMA has made it a priority to hire qualified professionals in emergency management to fill senior leadership positions.

The new vision for FEMA is grounded in partnerships that encompass, yet transcend, the emergency management community to include other communities, such as law enforcement, private sector, and those with disabilities. Even within our longstanding partnerships, we are examining the unique needs of rural communities and small States. To that end, FEMA has stood up a Private Sector Office and has also appointed a Small State and Rural Advocate, a Disability Coordinator, and a Law Enforcement Advisor.

BECOMING THE NATION'S PREEMINENT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND PREPAREDNESS AGENCY

I would like to highlight the major steps that FEMA has taken these past 2 years, as well as our plans for further refinement and integration, including the establishment of several FEMA directorates and new initiatives.

Improving Provision of Assistance to Victims/Communities

FEMA regards the protection and preservation of life and property as its top priority. Accordingly, the Disaster Assistance Directorate (DAD) is focused on ensuring the timely and effective provision of essential financial and technical assistance to disaster-impacted individuals, households, and communities is available by efficiently leveraging FEMA's Stafford Act authorities.

In August 2006, the President signed Executive Order 13411 entitled *Improving Assistance for Disaster Victims*. This Executive Order directed Federal agencies, led by DHS, with the responsibility to improve and simplify the application process for individuals seeking Federal disaster assistance. FEMA led an interagency task force in the development and delivery of a Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan (DAIP), which outlines a coordinated, actionable strategy to implement a consolidated and unified disaster application format by December 31, 2008. The President approved this plan in September 2007.

While we are committed to streamlining the process of getting disaster aid to victims, we are also steadfast in our responsibility to be good stewards of the Disaster Relief Fund. To this end, in fiscal year 2007, we implemented new software that maintains data on applicants in mobile homes and communicates real-time data to caseworkers and the auto-determination system. This software prevents duplicate housing payments from being made to applicants already receiving assistance through direct housing.

FEMA has implemented checks in NEMIS that flag "high-risk" addresses such as check cashing stores, mail drops, cemeteries, and jails. Applications with high-risk addresses require an intensive review prior to the delivery of assistance to prevent potential fraud.

Also in 2007, FEMA partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create and pilot the new Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP). This new program is a temporary housing rental assistance and case management program for eligible individuals and households displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This new program's interaction with disaster victims is administered by HUD through its existing national network of Public Housing Agencies (PHAs). Since the partnership began, HUD and FEMA have been working to-

gether to ensure that the transition of responsibility from one agency to the other is completed as smoothly as possible.

Additionally, FEMA has undertaken many initiatives to improve implementation of the Public Assistance Program. We have established a Public Assistance Steering Committee composed of senior Public Assistance staff in each of our 10 regions and 10 State representatives. The purpose of the committee is to serve as the Board of Directors for the Public Assistance Program, develop the vision, strategies and policies to ensure efficient, effective and consistent implementation of the program.

FEMA will continue to refine its evacuee hosting guidance and plans to complete five State hosting plans for large numbers of evacuees. These State Hosting Plans will help adjacent States that may host Gulf Coast evacuees. This effort is designed to synchronize separate State evacuation plans to create a more cohesive and unified effort. Teams engaged with each State, identifying requirements and capabilities, and working to develop a plan that integrates shelter planning with transportation planning. The result of these efforts will be more timely, better organized, and better coordinated evacuation by those with their own transportation as well as for those who need assistance in evacuating by bus or air. FEMA also is completing enhancements to systems that support mass care and housing activities following a disaster. We will implement standard protocols and staff training for long-term recovery planning. FEMA will continue to refine plans and procedures for managing disaster assistance operations under the varying conditions of different catastrophic and extraordinary disaster scenarios.

In fiscal year 2009, FEMA will continue to improve its plans and capabilities for managing mass evacuations and the resulting displaced populations, including additional State and local plans and development and expansion of evacuee tracking systems. The agency will also continue to improve, test and exercise its capabilities for all of its Individual Assistance functions (mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services).

Improving Disaster Operations

Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, FEMA has adopted a more forward-leaning posture, engaged in stronger collaboration and partnerships at the local, State, and Federal levels, and augmented its operational focus, resulting in stronger and more agile disaster response capabilities. FEMA demonstrated these improvements throughout the year in response to events such as the California wildfires, Missouri floods, Greensburg tornadoes, and Hurricanes Dean and Flossie, as well as in exercises such as TOPOFF 4 and Ardent Sentry.

Headquarters and Regional Operational Planners

In 2007, FEMA headquarters hired 15 operational planners—the first time FEMA has hired individuals with this skill set—to provide the capability to perform sophisticated operational analyses, analyze trends, and improve planning for the response to ongoing and future events. Planners are currently being hired in each of the FEMA Regions and Area Offices to provide this same capability in the field. To date, more than half the Regional planners are on board. Additional staff will be hired in fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2009. There is now greater depth and capability to work with State and Federal partners to prepare operational plans and conduct crisis action planning to ensure that the agency can lead and support a national all-hazard emergency management response. Regional planners will receive program guidance from FEMA headquarters and ensure training objectives and qualification standards are met, but will operate under the authority of the regional administrators. At the Regional level, these planners will coordinate the development of coordinated Federal, State, and local operational plans to guide response activities and help build a national culture of preparedness. The operational planners will also facilitate/conduct regional evacuation planning.

Gap Analysis Initiative

One of the major planning accomplishments in 2007 was the GAP Analysis Initiative, which was developed in coordination with the State of New York Emergency Management Office/New York City Office of Emergency Management, and implemented in spring 2007. This project provided FEMA and its partners, at both the State and local levels in the hurricane-prone regions of the country, with shared visibility of asset and capability gaps to determine the level of Federal support potentially needed in responding to a Category 3 hurricane. This information would better ensure FEMA and Federal support to States exactly as they needed it.

During 2007, FEMA worked closely with each of the 18 State emergency management communities in hurricane-prone areas, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, using a consistent set of measures and tools to evaluate strengths and vulnerabilities. We incorporated seven critical areas

in the initial application of the GAP tool for review: debris removal, commodity distribution, evacuation, sheltering, interim housing, medical needs and fuel capacity along evacuation routes. Our initial use of the GAP concept, which proved to be successful in the 2007 hurricane season, will be expanded to cover all hazards and applied nationwide in fiscal year 2008.

In fiscal year 2009, FEMA's Disaster Operations Directorate (DOPS) will continue to work within FEMA and with State partners to develop local, State, and regional operational plans, including incident-specific catastrophic plans that cover the range of prevention, protection, response, and recovery activities for that incident. It will support the development of operational planning capabilities at all levels of emergency management, and operational planning for the National Planning Scenarios. We will also continue to increase national readiness for site-specific catastrophic events, using scenario-driven plan development processes and supporting the development of vertically and horizontally integrated Catastrophic Response Plans using NIMS and the NRF construct.

Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT)

In accordance with PKEMRA, FEMA is developing Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT), a next generation of rapidly deployable interagency national and regional emergency response teams. These new teams will eventually replace existing Emergency Response Teams (ERT) at the national and regional level and the Federal Incident Response Support Teams (FIRSTs). The IMATs are designed to provide a forward Federal presence to better manage and coordinate the national response for catastrophic incidents.

The national teams will have the capability to establish an effective Federal presence that can support the State within 12 hours of notification, coordinate Federal activities and provide initial situational awareness. Teams will be self-sufficient for a minimum of 48 hours to augment potentially scarce local resources. They will be staffed with a core of permanent full-time employees, unlike the ERTs, which are staffed on a collateral duty basis. The teams will be fully compliant with NIMS and Incident Command System (ICS) principles and will train and exercise as a unit. When not deployed, the teams will train with Federal partners and provide a planning, training, and exercise capability to help improve State and local emergency management capabilities. The teams will also engage in consistent and coordinated relationship-building with State, local, tribal, and other stakeholders.

Currently, one National IMAT is operational and ready to respond to any disaster. Three Regional IMATs are planned to be operational by June 2008, the official start of the hurricane season.

Emergency Communications

FEMA is also improving disaster emergency communications and interoperability capabilities. FEMA will be ready to rapidly and effectively respond to protect people and property, to ensure the adequacy of the Agency's own emergency communications capabilities, and to help our State, local, and tribal partners develop or sustain their capabilities.

Under the new FEMA re-organization, DOPS has also created a Disaster Emergency Communications Division. The new division will improve the agency's tactical disaster emergency communications and interoperability capabilities to support all-hazards disaster response and national security emergency requirements. We are in the process of advertising and filling new positions to stand up this new division.

Improving Management of Logistics

Delivering the right material, to the right place, at the right time is one of the most critical missions FEMA coordinates and performs. In April 2007, FEMA elevated its logistics function to create a Logistics Management Division (LMD), and is developing logistics as a core competency. This realignment will transform FEMA's logistics operating capability and enhance logistics management using as a model the Department of Defense strategic level logistics organization.

Following the realignment, LMD has worked diligently to strengthen its business processes and leverage the best practices by enhancing relationships with both the public and private sector through various initiatives for a more coordinated logistics response operation. One such initiative was the Loaned Executive Program. The Loaned Executive Program was launched as a pilot program for DHS and FEMA. Organized through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the United Parcel Service's (UPS) Foundation, the program was designed to bring a seasoned UPS executive into the LMD to share private-sector expertise. The valuable knowledge and input from the loaned executive will help the directorate adopt the best business practices of private-sector logistics companies. LMD also developed and launched the new "National Logistics Coordinator" concept, which favorably enhanced coordination

and execution during the preparations for Hurricane Dean, and responses to the California wildfires, Midwest ice storms and the West Coast winter storms.

Overall, LMD has contributed significantly to FEMA's forward leaning posture by putting in place contracts and interagency agreements (IAA) that provide an enhanced logistics capability such as:

- Logistics Management Transformation Initiative;
- Total Asset Visibility to track supplies in transit;
- National bus evacuation readiness;
- Ready meals and water (IAA with the Defense Logistics Agency);
- Base camp support contracts;
- Single point ordering and tracking for Regions;
- Supplies and services (IAA with the General Services Administration);
- Vehicle drivers and fleet management;
- Vehicle maintenance.

Moving forward, in fiscal year 2009, the LMD will upgrade National Distribution Centers (DCs), which are at the core of FEMA's Supply Chain Transformation effort and are essential to FEMA's fundamental readiness mission. Strategic positioning of national-level assets at DCs enables a proactive readiness approach that relies on stocking the most critical disaster support life-saving and life-sustaining assets at levels required for immediate distribution to disaster victims. The "new FEMA" warehousing strategy will provide the capacity and flexibility to respond effectively and efficiently to the full set of disaster scenarios.

Moreover, in fiscal year 2008/9, LMD plans to pilot test the transformation of logistics management of supplies and services by further engaging the private sector and incorporating industry best practices. In an effort to improve business practices, the LMD has spearheaded a Distribution Management Strategy Working Group, with our Federal, private and NGO logistics partners, to conduct a comprehensive analysis to develop an approved distribution and supply chain management policy. Current contributing members include the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), General Services Administration (GSA), Health and Human Services (HHS), United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), United States Army Core of Engineers (USACE), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Forest Service within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the American Red Cross (ARC).

The analysis includes rightsizing inventory levels and determining the most effective strategic supply and service locations in order to transition into a regional support strategy. The Working Group is considering all critical distribution and supply chain management criteria in developing and executing a coordinated Plan of Action to establish an integrated distribution management strategy for the National Response Framework. Until this analysis is complete, there are no plans to develop additional permanent distribution centers.

Improving the Nation's Alert and Warning Systems

The National Continuity Programs Directorate (NCP), FEMA's arm for building and sustaining the national continuity of operations programs, including national alerts and warnings, has made significant progress in providing continuity guidance and support to Federal, State, and local governments nationwide over the past few years. The NCP is focusing on efforts to augment the existing Emergency Alert System (EAS) with the Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS), to leverage newer communication technologies to improve the Nation's ability to provide warnings and alerts.

EAS was put in place in 1994 to replace the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS), which launched in 1963. In June, 2006, President Bush issued Executive Order 13407 ("Public Alert and Warning System"), establishing the U.S. Government's alert and warning policy and directing a series of actions meant to improve and modernize the Government's ability to communicate rapidly with the American people. The EAS will allow the President to transmit a national alert to citizens within 10 minutes, and it allows State and local government officials to send messages during non-Federal emergencies. IPAWS will leverage digital and satellite technology to expand alerts and warnings from audio to new communication mediums, including text and video available over radio, television, telephones, cell phones, and e-mail.

Preparing the Nation For All Hazards

On April 1, 2007, FEMA renewed its focus on building a culture of preparedness through its integration of the National Preparedness Directorate (NPD), an expanded Citizen Corps Program and coordinated activities with Ready.gov and the Department of Homeland Security. NPD has played an integral role in coordinating several major preparedness initiatives, such as Top Officials 4 (TOPOFF 4), hiring

the newly created Federal Preparedness Coordinators (FPC), and the development of national preparedness and response documents.

In January 2008, NPD coordinated the release of the National Response Framework (NRF), the successor to the National Response Plan (NRP). The NRF establishes a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incident response and incorporates many NRP elements and lessons learned. Incorporating input from hundreds of individuals, organizations, and governmental partners, the NRF provides clear guidance on the integration of community, State, tribal, and Federal response efforts.

Moving into fiscal year 2009, NPD will improve coordination of national exercises with State exercises, and will implement—for the first time—a national planning system that will bring consistency to contingency plans at the local, State and Federal level. By focusing on planning, exercising and evaluations, and more focused applications of grant funding, NPD will measurably lead the Nation to a higher level of preparedness.

With the realignment of the Department mandated by PKEMRA, FEMA is now responsible for managing billions of dollars in grants that build the Nation's homeland security capability. To support this new responsibility, FEMA created a new directorate. FEMA's new Grants Program Directorate (GPD) is working within the greater emergency management framework to make sure we are getting the best value for the investment. In fiscal year 2006, GPD awarded approximately \$3 billion in total grant funds. Since 2003, the Department of Homeland Security has invested over \$23.7 billion in critical funding to our Nation's homeland security community.

During the same time period, GPD was able to improve and build upon relationships with subject matter experts on grant guidance; including TSA, USCG, Infrastructure Protection, and the intelligence community. As a result, in fiscal year 2008, FEMA was able to narrow the focus of grant guidance to better target the application of grant dollars to align with National Priorities and target capabilities established by the National Preparedness Guidelines, approved by the President September 2007.

In fiscal year 2009, FEMA will update the Homeland Security State/Urban Areas Strategies, as necessary, and refine and implement the funding allocation methodology based on risk analysis and anticipated return on investment. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program will begin to collect and use performance measure data to improve program effectiveness. GPD will continue to track State and local grant administration and spending at the State and local level and add additional grant programs to the Grants Reporting Tool as necessary.

By working with States and major urban areas, refining grant guidance, and focusing more directly on the expected return grant investment, these grant programs will continue to increase our Nation's capability to prevent, protect against, and if necessary, respond to and recover from acts of terrorism.

Strengthening FEMA's Regions

One of FEMA's primary reforms made and implemented during 2007, was empowering and increasing the capability and capacity of its regions. As the point of interface with States strengthened, FEMA Regions are essential to deliver on the promise of New FEMA.

One of the most significant initiatives that gives us tremendous value added, is the new package of blended capability in the form of: Federal Preparedness Coordinators (FPC), Regional IMATs, and enhanced Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC). Moreover, FEMA has stood up Grants Management Branches in all 10 Regional offices and has embedded 20 new Grant Management Specialists in the Regions to manage EMPG, MMRS, and Real ID grants. The Regions are also strengthening their ties to partners by the establishment of a Regional Advisory Committee and Regional Emergency Communications Working Group. Both of these new entities greatly expand the opportunity to communicate and exchange ideas with key constituency groups.

The following are just a few highlights of FEMA Regional Offices accomplishments and initiatives:

- In 2007, Regions I, V, VI, IX, and X provided extensive support to their respective Federal Executive Boards. Solid partnerships have been created with leadership from the boards in Hawaii, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, as well as across New England, Texas, the Midwest and Northwest. Each board has established active Continuity of Operations Planning Working Groups supported by membership from representative department and agencies.
- The regional Pacific Area Office, in coordination with the FEMA Logistics Division and Hawaii State and County Civil Defense, successfully completed deployment of the DHS Pre-Positioned Disaster Supplies Program. Regional actions

resulted in the pre-positioning of the 500-person containers and home recovery kit containers on Oahu, Kauai, Maui, and the Big Island.

- In July 2007, FEMA Region X successfully established an Alaska Area Office, as required in PKEMRA. The office is integrated into the Regional operation and provides for situational awareness in Alaska and enhanced capability to conduct effective pre- and post-disaster response activities.
- Region IV Operational Planners participated in the launch of several catastrophic planning initiatives, including the Florida Catastrophic Planning scenario, the New Madrid Seismic Zone, 2007 hurricanes, critical transportation needs planning for Gulf Coast mass evacuation, and pandemic influenza.

Improving Our Core Capacities

FEMA's mission and the expectations of performance and need for 21st century business practices for the Agency have substantially changed in the Post-Katrina environment. In response to PKEMRA and post-Katrina lessons learned, FEMA has institutionalized various organizational and functional reforms. To ensure FEMA's mission success, the Agency immediately began to set the ground work to implement the suggested and mandated reforms. One major step taken was to realign its administrative functional areas to better hone its business practices, enhance its customer services and improve its processes and informational services infrastructure and professionalize and grow the permanent workforce.

In fiscal year 2007, FEMA stood up its Office of Management (OM) to unify and integrate several disparate internal service providers to synchronize their efforts and increase overall administrative program effectiveness, efficiency and cohesiveness, while preserving and advancing service delivery. The new Office of Management oversees FEMA primary administrative functions, including: Acquisitions Management, Disaster Reserve Workforce, Human Capital, Information Technology, Facilities Management, Records Management, and Security. The following are some of the measures OM has taken since Hurricane Katrina to address issues internal to the agency that needed to be improved:

The Office of Acquisition Management is strengthening our capacity to contract for goods and services.

FEMA's Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) has made considerable strides in improving the contract management and oversight aspects of its acquisition duties. FEMA has implemented new policies and requirements on its acquisition workforce, such as improved advanced planning, accurate documentation, workforce training, increased emphasis on market research and greater consideration of small business goals. FEMA can boast that during fiscal year 2007 about 81 percent of its acquisition dollars were competed. This represents a 45 percent increase over fiscal year 2006, when only about 35 percent of FEMA's acquisition dollars were competed. There were three main areas of improvement which led to the above success.

Institutionalized the use of Contract Administration Plans (CAPs) to facilitate efficient and effective contract administration and improve the agency's post-award contract execution. CAPS also promoted task order competition while ensuring that services are available expeditiously to meet critical disaster response needs, while establishing consistent enterprise-wide contract administration processes for the Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTR) in various regions. It also documented the agreements between program offices and OAM and serves as a guide for continual actions related to a contract administration.

Established a Contract Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) Program Office to ensure COTRs have the training, support, and tools needed for effective contract administration. This included the implementation of a tiered COTR certification program to better match COTR competencies to contract complexity and ensuring COTR compliance with DHS and Federal regulations and policy while leveraging best practices.

Published the Emergency Acquisition Field Guide, which will ensure that non-1102 (contract specialist) personnel can effectively and appropriately contract for goods and services in an emergency situation. The guide defines the critical elements of an emergency acquisition in plain language so that any member of the disaster support team can understand and apply proper procedures. It includes information on purchase cards, program management, and contracting.

The Human Capital Division is ensuring that FEMA has the right staff.

In 2007, FEMA's Human Capital Division (HCD) took on the daunting challenge overcoming previous staffing and retention impediments, optimizing its workforce, improving professional development and training programs, and streamlining HCD processes through technology solutions. At the close of fiscal year 2007, FEMA had filled 96.5 percent of its authorized PFT positions. The FEMA Hiring Team was

honored with the Secretary's Award for DHS Excellence for its outstanding contributions toward achieving FEMA's 95 percent hiring goal by June 2007.

Before Hurricane Katrina, FEMA had an authorized permanent full-time staff of 2,200, however, the number of employees actually on board had dropped, in the aftermath of Katrina the approximate number of permanent full-time employees dropped to 1,500. Currently, FEMA has approximately 3,200 employees with an expected total of approximately 4,300 permanent full-time employees by the end of fiscal year 2009. FEMA's goal is to meet or exceed 95 percent of its fiscal year 2008 authorized staffing level by the end of fiscal year. To do so, FEMA has chosen to employ some new recruitment techniques to bring in the best and the brightest to our agency. We are also using staffing services to hire some specialized positions.

FEMA will also improve and develop steps to measure on-boarding, talent management, and developing a corporate footprint on all employees. With these new processes, FEMA will be able to hire faster, have employees trained and ready to perform, and will have an ongoing snapshot of its talent and workforce needs.

To support our hiring efforts, in mid-2007 Congress gave approval to FEMA to convert approximately 110 of our Cadre of On-Call Response Employees (CORE) positions to Permanent Full Time (PFT) positions. Another 390 will be converted in fiscal year 2008 with the remainder converted in fiscal year 2009. As a result of this and other efforts, FEMA has been able to achieve a steadily increasing net gain in Permanent Full-Time (PFT) employees since fiscal year 2005. In fiscal year 2007 alone, FEMA acquired 398 new PFTs, resulting in a net gain in 100 PFT employees for fiscal year 2007. This was a drastic improvement from the net loss of 97 PFTs in fiscal year 2005.

The Information Technology Services Division is bringing FEMA systems into the 21st Century.

FEMA's information systems are the tools that enable every mission and business process for the Agency and serve as the primary building blocks for New FEMA. To this end, FEMA is developing and plans to deploy a consistent architecture that will support information integration for the Agency. By employing new technologies to enhance capabilities and efficiencies of service, FEMA will strengthen and unify its operations and management.

FEMA's Information Technology and Services Division (ITSD) has begun the process of modernization and upgrades to improve information sharing and functionality between six of FEMA's critical systems: National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS), Logistics Information Management System (LIMS-III), Automated Deployment Database (ADD), Total Asset Visibility (TAV), Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), and the Acquisition Management System (PRISM).

In addition, the complete transition of preparedness programs into the FEMA IT system is currently underway, and, to date, we have successfully migrated the legacy Grants & Training IFMIS and Payment & Reporting System (PARS) from the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to FEMA. A plan has been recently completed that will support and guide critical IT improvements with the following strategic goals in mind: (1) To stabilize and integrate IT assets across the agency; (2) to secure the IT environment; (3) to network the agency; (4) to evolve to a "service-forward" organization; and (5) to establish supporting IT policy and governance structure. Once the goals of this plan have been reached the FEMA IT systems will be more robust and allow for more advanced business practices that will gain efficiencies in program offices across the agency.

In fiscal year 2009, FEMA will begin a transition of IT systems and financial resources to the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and continue initiatives such as deployment of a fully compliant electronic records management system; improve help desk efficiency by monitoring both workflow and management escalation; begin Advanced Computer Technology Integration (CTI) system deployment for the Advanced Contact Center Network; and improve the Disaster Housing Inspection Management System security to overcome the vulnerability and risks of using tablet computers in the field that carry personal identification information.

CONCLUSION

Today, I have been able to give you a glimpse into the "New FEMA", and to highlight a handful of examples of the sea of change that is post-Katrina, post-Rita FEMA. The public has increasingly seen a FEMA that is more able to respond, and a FEMA that better promotes and coordinates continued enhancement of preparedness in the United States. Our objective is to regain the trust and confidence of the public and our partners through consistently excellent service.

For the remainder of my tenure, I will work to ensure FEMA continues to be an empowered agency. Each day FEMA will be better able to meet the needs of the American people, both as we heighten preparedness, respond more capably, and lead effectively during the recovery and mitigation phases. This agency has already improved tremendously since my first day on the job. With the support of the skilled and resolutely dedicated FEMA team, I am confident FEMA will continue to improve. My successors and America will be in a far better position because of their work.

In the past year, FEMA has been able to respond rapidly and effectively to the disasters we have encountered. We are more nimble and responsive than we were last year when I appeared before the full committee. While we have not faced another catastrophic disaster, I am confident in saying that we are ready to perform effectively and efficiently during whatever circumstance we may face, catastrophic or otherwise. I appreciated the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you for your testimony.

I would like to remind each member that he or she will have 5 minutes to question the witness.

I now recognize myself for questions.

My first question has to do with transition. As I mentioned a few minutes ago in my opening statement, we want to make sure that, as there is a change in administration, whoever that person might be, is that we establish sound policies and procedures to ensure that qualified professionals stay in place to prevent, detect and respond to threats that face our Nation.

Has FEMA prepared a transition plan? Well, first of all, do you all have a transition team in place? No. 2, have you all prepared a transition plan?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, thank you for that question. I appreciate looking at the transition and how that will impact FEMA, and we have been very concerned with it as well.

Inside FEMA we do have a transition team, and Dave Paulison has already identified Nancy Ward, who is our regional administrator in region IX, as a senior career official who will lead FEMA during the transition until a new administrator is nominated and confirmed.

One of the strengths in our growth in FEMA is the acquisition of more SES positions. We gained 10 SES just in this past year, which is the quota of the Department, and we now have a senior career civil servant behind every political appointee. We are working very, very hard to bring in this new group of SESs who own the programs that we have talked to you about and to make sure that during the transition those will continue at the same pace that we started and in the same direction.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Staffing, I think prior to Hurricane Katrina, FEMA had nearly 1,700 permanent full-time employees. Today, the new FEMA has nearly 3,000 and is authorized over 4,000 for fiscal year 2008. What are the biggest challenges to staffing up FEMA, that is, trying to find the right expertise that is necessary to do your job to find it for those particular vacant positions?

I think we think you all have the added challenge of filling over 1,000 vacancies by September, so could you give us a status on the staffing and making sure that we hire the right people with the right expertise to do the job?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, I think the most important element in growing and achieving new FEMA is to increase the size of FEMA. When Dave Paulison came in as the administrator, you

are correct, we had about 1,500 permanent, full-time people in FEMA, and with the help of the Congress and the budget submitted by the president, we have the chance to get 4,007 by the end of this fiscal year. That is a sizable growth.

We are focused very hard every week on how we are hiring those people. We received through PKEMRA different authorizations for incentives to use in hiring and relocation. We are using every one of those incentives, and we are focusing our staffs on just the process of the Federal Government to hire people.

Every other Thursday we have a staff meeting, and we have a chart, and I would hold every directorate accountable to find out where they are in their hiring processes and what their level of vacancies are. We have mapped out the process so I can tell whether it is the directorate that has got a problem, the H.R. system that has got a problem or it is just time in the queue of waiting for people to apply for a position. So we stay focused every 2 weeks to see what our progress is, and our objective is to be at 95 percent staffing again by the end of this summer.

Some of the challenges are just that a lot of people want to come to FEMA. We once held a—in our building, we held an open sign-up, and 500 people came to apply for 45 positions. So it is not for lack of getting people to apply, but it is a process of getting through the Federal system, getting secured clearances done and those requirements.

I might add that we have also gone to a headhunter firm to hire some of our senior people. It is not good enough just to put an ad on the street. We need to go out and find the right people for FEMA. We are about to name a senior executive service member to lead our National Integration Center, and we found him in a State where he was a recently departed homeland security advisor. He has a Ph.D. and has a link with a major university in the Midwest. That is the caliber of people, leaders, that we are going to bring in as career civil servants into FEMA.

Mr. CUELLAR. Very good. My last question is on citizen preparedness. Again, this is something that is important. As you know, we probably will be filing legislation—I mean, we will have a bill to formalize this program. One of our things we have looked at is funding, not having sufficient funding. Could you tell us what you all are doing on the citizen preparedness effort, because we are going to be hopefully passing this bill soon, at least marking it up, should I say.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, Mr. Chairman, we would certainly welcome that legislation to make permanent our citizens preparation staff, citizens advisory committees. That is a huge return on investment. For a few dollars, to reach out to communities across America and to tie them in closer and to be individually prepared as citizens for disasters is very, very helpful to all of us.

One of FEMA's challenges is to meet the almost unachievable expectations of the American public for service from FEMA, and I think that our citizens staffs can help us in that regard as well to recognize what their roles and responsibilities are and what they should expect from their local government, from the State government and from the Federal Government.

We have a strong staff, a small staff but a strong staff that are highly motivated to reach out to all of our regions, to all the communities and to tie together all of those volunteer groups.

So we would certainly welcome that legislation.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Thank you.

At this time, I would recognize the Ranking Member, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Dent, for questions. Thank you.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Johnson, too, for being here as well.

Recently, the State of Colorado announced that they had hired a permanent State-wide interoperability communications coordinator, highlighting the importance of—at least at the State level—for specific attention to this whole issue of communications operability, interoperability, et cetera.

Could you provide an update regarding FEMA's efforts to ensure and improve the ability to communicate during disaster? Everybody on this committee, and in other committees, are constantly talking about interoperability, and there have been tremendous amounts of moneys invested in that. Where do you see us standing on that today?

Mr. JOHNSON. I think that when we look at the grant funding the first category of grant funding out of the billions of dollars is focused on planning, which we think is appropriate. The second category that spends the most money is on communications, which we think is also appropriate.

In FEMA's role, we are looking at interoperable communications at the first responder level. How can we ensure that the emergency operation centers, command centers, our own joint field offices have good interoperability, and how can we ensure that first responders themselves are able to communicate during a disaster?

For last year's hurricane season, we went to each of the 18 hurricane impact States, the District of Columbia to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico with specific communications teams and sat down with them and worked through a communications plan, a communications architecture and a gap analysis to see what they had for the hurricane season to ensure that among themselves, with the State and with the Federal Government they could communicate very well.

That was a very successful effort, and we are building upon that for this coming hurricane season. We were able to identify specific gaps, and then in our grant guidance for the 2008 season we were able to write in specific grant guidance that would direct Federal dollars to solve those gaps.

So I think we are doing a good job of reaching out at the grassroots level, not dealing at the high level with strategic thinkers but who is really communicating and to work with them to build this communications networks.

Mr. DENT. As part of that overall architecture you just described, has FEMA been working closely with the Office of Emergency Communications within the NPPD to ensure that there is interoperability among personnel at all levels?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir, we have. I think that that is a relationship with NPPD, particularly with the Office of Emergency Com-

munications, that is just strengthened, perhaps more so in the last few months than it has over the last year.

For example, ESF 2, emergency support function 2, is a communications support function for a disaster. We recently partnered with NPPD to completely rewrite that emergency support function and clarified our roles and responsibilities.

As I mentioned, FEMA's primary focus is first responder communications, and OEC's primary focus is dealing with industry for national level systems, telephone systems, other communications systems. So I think we have done a very good job to, sort of, stake out our lanes in the road and then work in a complementary fashion to achieve interoperability, whereas before I think there were opportunities where we perhaps had some confusion in roles. But that is a far better alignment than I think we have experienced in a long time.

Mr. DENT. Well, I think you just answered my question, and you are actually working very closely to improve the ESF 2 initiative. That is good to hear.

I will shift focus now away from communications to evacuation planning. There is really no single office at FEMA that is responsible for Federal evacuation planning and operational efforts. As you are aware, the responsibility resides in many offices—including logistics, disaster operations and disaster assistance as well as the Office of Acquisition Management.

How are you ensuring that the evacuation planning is coordinated across all these offices?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir. I think that is true, and I think even to my opening statement about new FEMA, old FEMA would have had a bunch of silos. That would have been a particular issue. At new FEMA, we do work much better laterally, across our directorates, because each does have a significant role, and we want to make sure they don't overlap each other.

What we are doing specifically, again, in preparation for—we did it in the hurricane season. We had a gap analysis that now we are taking Nation-wide in all of our regions and we have identified six primary factors where we must succeed in order to be successful at a Federal, State and local level for disaster response, evacuation being one of those.

So our gap analysis tool allows us to look from a disaster operations perspective, disaster assistance and logistics, the prime players, and what do they each bring to the table and how do they relate then to local communities, to the State to fulfill that requirement.

Last year, we found that there were gaps in some States that have an evacuation plan, and, more specifically, there were gaps in special needs evacuation. We were able to write into the gap guidance for the EMPG Grant Program this year specifically to require States to spend their grant funding to improve those evacuation plans. So I think we were able to recognize a problem, assess it on a systematic scale and then direct resources to help solve that problem.

Mr. DENT. Finally, on that same vein, what has been done at the State and local level to essentially ensure that communities near these major urban areas that would likely be evacuated—are you

working with States—are capable of receiving these evacuees? I mean, it is important that we talk about evacuation, clearly, from wherever the point of the incident is, but I worry about major incidents in a major metropolitan area and the receiving communities. Are we focusing on that at all?

Mr. JOHNSON. We are, sir. We used our hurricane plan last year to build a template for how should we approach that. For example, we had a plan to move 4,000 people from New Orleans by Amtrak to Memphis, Tennessee. When they arrived in Memphis, working with the State and with the Red Cross, the local counties, we knew exactly what shelter they were going to go to and what transportation they would use to get from the train station to a safe shelter, back to the train station and back to New Orleans.

We used that same template in Memphis, we used it in Atlanta, we used it in Houston, and we used it in Little Rock so that we could evacuate enough people out of the Gulf Coast in a category three or four storm.

That process has now been institutionalized, and we are able to take that through all of our regions and look at the exact same issue, in particularly dense, urban areas. How do we move people out, where do they go, and how do we make sure that they know where they are going and how they are going to be treated when they arrive?

Mr. DENT. My time is up, but at some point I would be interested to see how you have institutionalized this process and could help those of us in the Northeast, particularly from potential evacuation from the New York metropolitan area or from this capital region. I would like to see how you would develop those plans.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. DENT. Thank you.

Mr. JOHNSON. Our national capital region plan, by the way, is a place where we need to apply that. We have an evacuation plan, but we need greater detail to it.

Mr. DENT. Thank you.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Dent.

At this time, the Chair will recognize other members for questions they may wish to ask the witness. In accordance with our committee rules and practices, I will recognize the members who were present at the start of the hearing based on seniority of the subcommittee, alternating between the majority and the minority. Those members coming in later will be recognized in the order of their arrival.

The Chair now recognizes for 5 minutes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands, Mrs. Christensen.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for having this hearing.

Admiral Johnson, when we were setting up the committee and doing the first reauthorization for the Department, I had a question about whether State included State and territories, and you mentioned the small State advocates, so I wanted to know if that small State advocate also was responsible for territories, since we are all small, and also how does that person relate to the region, because, normally we would go to our regional head with different issues?

Mr. JOHNSON. Our small State rural advocate is focused on all small States, territories and rural areas, including Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia. Brock Bierman is the appointee who has that role, and his primary value is, how can he look at the processes that we use and do these processes fairly recognize the particular interest and the particular circumstances of small States and rural areas?

He does get out in the field and has traveled to see some of those issues, but, most importantly, is how do our processes work. So how can we affect the whole system as opposed to trying to solve that one disaster or one issue at a time? So I think he is giving a fair look at that.

Inside our declaration process, we are currently reevaluating the declaration process. We have worked with NEMA, for example, asked comments on that, and within the next month we will be able to talk about changes in that process. But one of the areas of focus is specifically to see how we can better accommodate those concerns for small States, for territories and rural areas.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Okay. Thank you.

In the old FEMA, we had a project called, Project Impact, that the Virgin Islands had really participated in, and I thought it was a great preparedness project, it involved the community, it supported mitigation with funding, and it set up processes, for example, with businesses so that we wouldn't be faced with a situation in a disaster where the businesses are trying to help and there was no mechanism to set up, as happened in the Gulf.

Is there a similar program in FEMA now, and—well, is there a similar program in FEMA now with funding?

Mr. JOHNSON. I have to tell you that I am not familiar with the program, so if I could look into that, I can get back to you later on that.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Okay. Okay, thank you, and I look forward to that—I expect that we will be submitting questions in writing?

Mr. CUELLAR. That is correct.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you.

In going through and preparing for this, we understand that 95 percent of your positions are filled?

Mr. JOHNSON. No, ma'am. We are currently at about 78 percent. We are on a glide path to get to 95 percent. Last year, we maintained 95 percent from June until the end of the fiscal year. We were fortunate in the budget process to gain almost 500 new positions for this fiscal year, and so, of course, the baseline was elevated and our percentage dropped.

But, as I mentioned, we have a glide path. I pay personal attention to it every 2 weeks and hold our senior leaders accountable so that we can get back up to the staffing that we need to be.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Well, FEMA always had many temporary employees who came and worked, went around the country working in disasters and had a lot of experience, and I was wondering, in filling your positions, your permanent positions, did you reach back to some of those temporary employees that had the experience or did you bring on new people with no real FEMA experience?

Mr. JOHNSON. I will give you the positive answer, and I will give you the concern that you will hear as well. No. 1 is that when we

have these new positions we do want our core employees and DAE employees to apply for those positions. They do have years, and sometimes decades, of experience in exactly that position.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Yes.

Mr. JOHNSON. By the Federal Personnel Management System, it has to be a competitive hire. We can't do a direct hire from a DAE or a core individual into a permanent position. So it is the case where they have to compete, and when they do compete there are sometimes preferences and other issues that come into play. So some are concerned that they don't always have an easy path to get that permanent job.

We are taking a look at that. We are discussing it with OPM to see if there isn't some way that we can make that a little bit assured. So it is an issue. It does happen, and we like it when it occurs, but it is an issue.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you.

I expect we will have another round, and my time is almost up, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CUELLAR. All right.

At this time, the Chair recognizes for 5 minutes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for affording us the opportunity for this review ahead of the hurricane season and as we try to evaluate where FEMA has come.

Mr. Johnson, as you are aware, the subcommittee that I chair has principal jurisdiction over FEMA for natural disasters and wrote the Post-Katrina Act. The principal part of that act was the National Response Framework. We had quite an ordeal with the National Response Framework.

We had a hearing on the National Response Framework after there was an outcry from local and State emergency officials that the framework did not meet their concerns. It was very disturbing considering that the National Response Framework was designed to meet the Post-Katrina or the specific Katrina challenges.

We looked at what you produce. It does seem to me that what was produced after you heard the criticism and met with local and State officials were satisfactory.

Now, I need to make sure that the National Response Plan is not just a piece of paper. You have discussed the hurricane plan. I would like to know how the National Response Plan operates, if it does, to help in coordinating for the hurricane season.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am. I do acknowledge our hearings with you on the National Response Framework, and I have to say, again, I think that your hearing itself, your personal involvement outside the hearing process, your staff was very helpful in making sure that in fact that in that process that we did listen more intently to State and local interests. I think, as you comment, the reaction to the National Response Framework has been very, very positive.

In terms of looking ahead, we are doing a lot to roll out the National Response Framework, and I would be glad to provide separately to you what steps we are taking to roll that new framework out. For example, the new course, the 900 level course on the NRF,

and already thousands of people have taken that course to learn more about what the new framework is and how to use it.

For the hurricane season, we are about to sign a memo that will pre-designate our Federal coordinating officers for every State—the 20 hurricane impact States, for the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, District of Columbia—so you will know who the leader is in advance, and they will start very quickly, and many already have, reaching out to the State emergency manager and making those personal relationships in advance of a storm.

The States have been very welcomed with the National Response Framework. They have identified their people who would be in a joint field office. So I think all of the processes that we described will play out in good form, with good compliance this coming summer.

Ms. NORTON. I am pleased to see the plan is being used, Mr. Johnson.

Now, you mentioned coordinating officials. You know I am going to ask you about the running controversy that the subcommittee, our subcommittee, our other subcommittee and the full committee have had and indeed this committee also has had about the confusion between the so-called—this is not simply bureaucracy, if you will bear with me. Those of us who are not familiar with these two officials, it is the principal Federal official and the Federal coordinating officer.

Now, the Federal coordinating officer is a statutory official, and that official is supposed to be on the ground for the Federal Government, for FEMA, in the event of a natural disaster. Then FEMA invented something called the principal Federal official, and so we were paying for two officials on the ground, and the feedback we got from the field was that these people were redundant, caused confusion.

It got to be so bad, as you will recall, Mr. Johnson, that the authorizing committee asked the Appropriations Committee to defund the principal Federal official. If the point post-Katrina was to have somebody, a point person, if you will, on the ground that you went to, not two people and you wonder which one do you go to, then we didn't see why money should be spent on this principal Federal official.

Has the principal Federal official disappeared? I mean, is there one person on the ground in a New Orleans, when we now have to go to a tornado or a flood or is the shadow of this principal Federal official lurking anywhere?

Mr. JOHNSON. Ms. Norton, I would have been disappointed had you not asked me a question about the PFO and the FCO.

Secretary Chertoff personally had a hand in writing the language in the National Response Framework that describes the role of the principal Federal official that still exists and the role of the Federal coordinating officer. Before it was published, the secretary ensured that we went to the head of NEMA, the chairman of NEMA, the president of NEMA, and he personally reviewed the language and found it acceptable. We sought the opinions of others in the emergency management community who all felt that it did a far better job of describing what those two roles were and when they would apply.

Ms. NORTON. What is the necessity for two Federal officials? I mean, you are telling me that despite language in the appropriations, you are telling me that there still exists a funded principal Federal official and a Federal coordinating officer.

Mr. JOHNSON. They both still exist but very specific and narrowed. For example, the NRF acknowledges that the Congress has directed that a principal Federal official not normally be assigned for a Stafford Act event, which, of course is an event where FEMA has the leading role. But it also recognizes in some non-Stafford events that FEMA will have a role there as well.

For example, in TOPOFF 4, which was an IED attack, FEMA led a response organization with our Federal coordinating officer. So it does a much better job of laying out when there is a PFO, it will only be in the most catastrophic or complex events.

Secretary Chertoff has shown a lot of personal restraint. He has never assigned a PFO after Katrina. With hurricanes, with the California wildfires, others, he has never assigned a PFO, because he has confidence in the FEMA Federal coordinating officer who is in charge of the joint field office and is the single person to relate with the State coordinating officer in a disaster.

Ms. NORTON. He is a statutory official.

I am pleased at the restraint. I am not sure if it means there still exists somebody who could be deployed. You would better be very careful if there are two officials on the ground.

But what you describe is somebody who would not be on the ground in a Stafford Act matter, and a Stafford Act matter is, of course, what we are most concerned with, for the most part, because while we have been very fortunate not to have an event, a terrorist event, since 9/11, we have had countless Stafford Act events, which, of course, are hurricanes and floods and—I mean, we just finished a flood. I am not sure it was a Stafford Act event.

But let me take that, the floods we just had. We just had some floods in the Midwest.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. NORTON. Those were not declared disasters, I take it.

Mr. JOHNSON. They were declared disasters, and it was a Federal coordinating officer, a statutory official, who was assigned to those disasters. There are FCOs right now at about 18 different locations around the country assigned to monitor the recovery and disasters.

Ms. NORTON. So those were Stafford disasters.

Mr. JOHNSON. That is correct. There is not a single PFO assigned to any of those events.

Ms. NORTON. All right.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CUELLAR. We are going to go, members, to a second line of questioning.

My question to you is more general. In your eyes, what can we do to help you? Besides funding, what can we do, as a committee, to help you address those issues that we mentioned—emergency housing and public alerts and the other issues, the three issues that we mentioned?

What can we do to help you, because we want to—our style is, we are not confrontational, we want to see how we can work together, because we are trying to fulfill the same goal. You are in

the Executive branch, we are in the Legislative branch, but I think we certainly should work together. What can we do?

Tell us what we can do to help you to make sure that we are not here at the end of the year talking about the same things.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, I think that your role in oversight is a very valuable role. By having this hearing today, by hearings that Ms. Norton just held, by certainly hearings with the chairman, Chairman Thompson, those are all very valuable hearings, because you do convey the concerns that you hear from your constituents, and you keep us on point on those things.

I think I would just offer that in moving from old FEMA to a new FEMA it is the structural changes, it is a cultural change, and those take time. I think to have—as you and I discussed this morning, I think you are patient but yet you are persistent, and I think those things are very beneficial to FEMA.

As we look at these issues, we are finding that there are areas where we may need new authorities, and we have worked with your subcommittee in the past and committees on the large to look at what the authorities might be.

We are learning a lot about how to accelerate recovery in the Gulf Coast. We are, right now, almost near finishing the National Disaster Housing Strategy, and that National Disaster Housing Strategy will point to a number of areas where there needs to be additional flexibility or perhaps additional authorities coming to the Stafford Act.

So I think by your continued focus you point to us the things that are most important to you, listening to your constituents. As we try to fix all of FEMA, we can sometimes perhaps miss the mark, and so I think you are able to do that. I think to provide this forum is very helpful.

Your staffs engage with us, and while sometimes that is an engagement, even castor oil is good for you, that is what is reported, I think staff engagement is very good. You have a professional staff who I think works with us to identify what the key issues are in advance of the hearing or sometimes to avoid a hearing, and I think that becomes very beneficial.

So what comes across is the genuine desire to advance FEMA, not so much the genuine desire to thump on FEMA. There are a lot of people who are willing to thump on FEMA, and so we appreciate the fact that you show the persistence, the guidance and the patience to allow us to make the changes that we need to make.

Mr. CUELLAR. That is the best answer I have heard from a witness. I appreciate it. I do appreciate your staff continuing working with our staff, because, as I mentioned, we are all trying to reach the same goal. So just have your staff continue working with our committee staff and individual member staff—also members, their staff also to make sure we do our jobs and certainly work with you on that.

At this time, I will recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Dent.

Mr. DENT. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thank you again, Admiral Johnson, for your very good and thoughtful testimony here today.

Just real quickly on the Federal preparedness report. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act also required that

FEMA submit a Federal preparedness report. The report is scheduled to be submitted to Congress, I believe, in May.

Could you please discuss some of the major highlights of this report and what plans are in place to use the data to inform processes as you move forward?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir. I think that is the kind of thing, to get back to the Chairman's question, I think this Federal preparedness report will be very, very beneficial to FEMA as it helps to drive and focus our efforts but also very beneficial to the committee and to the Nation.

This will be the first time that there has ever been a national preparedness report. It will be comprehensive, it hopefully will be empirically driven. We want to use data, measurable data so it can be replicated year after year with a consistent methodology.

I think that you will find that it will talk about—it will give a positive report into how we have taken our \$19 billion or \$20 billion in grants over the last 5 years and invested those, how we have taken the National Response Framework and those types of doctrine and leveraged those, how we have used our national capabilities, our Federal capabilities, our target capabilities, how those have been beneficial.

We will assess what our progress is on those, and all of it will show that we have got a good sense of direction, there is progress along the way, and at least at this point we are satisfied that we are on the right road.

We do expect to get that report to the Congress by May and then to reflect it every year afterward.

Now, we just received the State preparedness reports. Some of those reports came from 150 pages, some with 350 pages, and they were due the 31st of March, and all of them came in on time. So that information, as quickly as we can consume it, will, in part, be reflected in the national preparedness report as well.

So I think, again, I think it will be instructive as the first report, and that will help us sort of frame, have we hit the target you are looking for and how to improve that process over the years.

Mr. DENT. Well, thank you, and I guess my final question will deal with the disaster response teams. There are at least six different types of disaster response teams that can be deployed in response to a specific event. Have these teams trained together, and what coordination between these teams is required before and during an incident?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir. There are a number of teams: The emergency response teams, our National Response Coordination Center team, our MERS communications team, our urban search and rescue teams. So there are multiple teams.

What we have been able to do, particularly in this past year, is to focus more on doctrine and writing down for almost our first time in FEMA what is the doctrine, the operating guidelines that these teams use and to make sure they in fact have common and consistent doctrine, use the terminologies and the same processes and procedures. That helps to blend those teams together.

We have also deployed them simultaneously in exercises, which we had not always previously done. So, in fact, in TOPOFF 4, for example, we deployed urban search and rescue teams, the MERS

was deployed, our national response coordination team was deployed. So we are weaving them together in the exercise environment.

Then in disasters, where I think a couple of your staffers were participating in our national video teleconference for disaster, that was a chance to play out again and see these teams in motion. Our first team that provided real-time screening video from the disaster site, beneficial to the State, beneficial to FEMA and beneficial to national situation awareness.

So I think we are focused on that same question: How do we weave these teams closer together so that in fact they do become complementary?

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Admiral. You have been an extraordinary witness. You have been very helpful and informative, so thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Dent.

At this time, I recognize the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands, Mrs. Christensen, for any additional questions.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, I would like to ask a question about emergency housing and how do you see that being fixed in the future. We all know what a disaster it has been. It was in Katrina. I think that FEMA has a role in the very early days after the disaster, but what do you recommend, what are you recommending for the future in terms of fixing the housing problem?

Some people have suggested—I have seen some suggestions that the Department of Health and Human Services, which handles refugee problems, ought to do it, and, of course, HUD, which I don't think performed very well during Katrina either, ought to do it.

So what do you see going forward?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mrs. Christensen, I think you appreciate this issue. I know you do, personally. PKEMRA required us to do the National Disaster Housing Strategy. There's never been one before, and we are late, but we are working on it very intently, and we expect to get it to the Congress in June.

It will point to three specific areas that we think we need to focus on. First, with greater clarity, what is the role of the individual, what is the role of the community, what is the role of the State, what is the role of the Federal Government? I think those became confused in Katrina where the Federal Government almost assumed too much responsibility in too broad of a role. The strategy will talk about that, and it uses the National Response Framework that identifies who is principally responsible for the safety and welfare of their citizens and the roles that fit that.

The second is to look inside housing itself, and there is sheltering, there is interim housing, and there is long-term housing. We do think that FEMA's expertise is in sheltering and interim housing. We think HUD's expertise is in long-term housing. So we talk about that seam between FEMA and HUD. We should do what we do best, they should do what they do best, and both of us should work to do both of those a lot better.

The third area is planning, and a constant drumbeat in FEMA is planning. There is no consistent way to do disaster housing planning in our Nation right now, and so we will talk about in the

strategy and propose that we do develop a planning process that will work at the community level, the State level and the Federal level to do a better job of planning for a normal event, if I can use that term, as well as a catastrophic event.

So I think you will find a lot more detail then here at the end of May, early June when we can submit to you the National Disaster Housing Strategy.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you.

Could you explain the IMAT role to me? I am not sure how they work.

One of the things that we really don't need in a disaster is duplication and confusion over whose role is what. In some ways, the IMAT seems to be doing some of what the logistics team may be doing, and maybe I am not understanding what the IMAT is about. Also, when you have your regional and your local people responding and to have another layer come in and probably doesn't know the players and doesn't know the jurisdiction can also create confusion.

So could you explain the IMAT a little more to me?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am. That is a great question, and what I would like to do is give you, sort of, an overview and then have us meet with your staff and provide a more detailed brief on our IMAT. I think you will like the IMAT when you see it.

What we do in a disaster now is the States like our ER teams, the emergency response teams, and these are a group of FEMA people that respond, that are experts in their area of specialty, logistics, operations, communications, incident management, and they respond, and they augment a State emergency operation center and build the first network to really build that—

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. So do they sit with the emergency person locally around the table? Is that what they do?

Mr. JOHNSON. We deploy them. They can either be deployed to the disaster site or to the State emergency operations center to help the State, either way. We do that with consultation of the State.

The bad thing is these teams are made up of people with a collateral assignment, they are not permanent assignments. So we take 15 people out of jobs that are full-time important jobs to put our best people forward. So we basically draw from the rest of FEMA to support a disaster site, and when you do that time and time again, sometimes simultaneously, you are taking a lot of knowledge and strength out of the rest of FEMA and weaken those regions to support a disaster site.

The IMAT replaces those. It is not on top but it replaces that. These are permanent, full-time people. Each region will have an IMAT, and there are two national IMATs that we will establish this year. So they are full-time people. They are credentialed, so they are trained and experienced and recognized as experts in their field.

They will be tasked to be air deployable, and with less than 12 hours from a disaster occurring, an IMAT should be on scene at either the State emergency operation center or a disaster site. Their job is primarily to begin, first, situational awareness—how you

help the State and FEMA to know what is going on on the ground and to assess what assistance is required.

The States were as nervous about the concept as you are when they first heard about it. As we have talked to them about the professionalism of this team, I think they are excited to see it when we can first roll it out here between now and June.

They will participate in a disaster, they will participate in exercises, and they will conduct training with their State counterparts. So, in fact, when they deploy, it will be with relationships they have built by exercises and training.

I think it is a very strong concept, and we are really excited about it at FEMA. I would like the chance to give you more information about it.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thanks. I will look forward to that.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. It is a little clearer. Thanks.

Mr. CUELLAR. Before I recognize Ms. Norton, let me just follow up on what Mrs. Christensen said, just to make sure we are on the right path. As you know, Chairman Thompson sent you the letter. Were you committed in providing this committee a formalized plan that details the plan to move the 30,000 families still living in FEMA housing into permanent homes and give us a timeframe for when we should expect that?

Mr. JOHNSON. You are talking Gulf Coast, specifically?

Mr. CUELLAR. Yes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir. We are working to move everyone out of a mobile home or travel trailer into a more permanent solution. That permanent solution being perhaps a hotel or motel for a short time and then to a rental unit in Mississippi and Louisiana. The challenge is greater in Mississippi where the housing has not restored as fast as it has in Louisiana.

We want to focus on two groups of people. The first group are those who are health issues because of formaldehyde, those who are perhaps older, respiratory disease, young children, and we are focused on that group first. There's about 15,000, I believe—about 15,000 in that group.

The second group are those who live in a group site or might be a pre-disaster renter who don't have any other long-term housing available. So we are focused on both of those groups.

We think that we can move all of the group site people by June 1, and we think that we can move the rest of those who are health issues through the early parts of summer before the temperatures and humidity really heats up and there may be more problems with formaldehyde.

We have a good action plan. We established a task force that involves Federal, State and local officials. They met twice in Louisiana, and they met last week in Mississippi, and so we are working with the State, with the local counties to identify all available rental units, and we are working with landlords to help them be more receptive to having these households move in to their rental units.

So we have a very well-organized plan. We have a letter of response to the Chairman, and we will be glad to provide your staff with more detail on how we think we can accomplish that task.

Mr. CUELLAR. But the bottom line, Mr. Johnson, one, we will get a formalized plan, and what is the timetable as to when we can get that plan?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir. On our group sites, for example, we are down—from about 85, we are down to about 30 group sites now, and we think we can close all but probably about three by the beginning of June. There are just three locations in the different parishes where there just is not—there are not good housing options available. So we would be glad to talk about them and then give you a timeline on those who have the health issues, as I talked about, our two priority groups.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. So when can we expect the plan?

Mr. JOHNSON. We are actually operating that plan now. Let me find out and get back to you on when we will respond on the letter, and then we would be glad to brief your staff at their convenience.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Just, again, for our staff, give us—go ahead and get a hold of them and then, staff, if there is an issue as to they are taking too long, and I am sure it will be done quickly, just so we can have the plan and when we can expect it. I just don't want for us to have this meeting and then we forget about it and we get caught up with other things. So if you all can just work with staff and the staff will communicate with us.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. We should respond quickly. Every morning, I get an updated metrics chart on where we are for both communities, where we are with hotel-motels, where we are with availability of rental units and how many people have moved, even between 1 day and the next, out of a travel trailer or mobile home. So we would be glad to show you what our operational metrics are and share some of those with you.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, sir.

At this time, I will recognize the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Johnson, perhaps no controversy has been as searing since Katrina as the formaldehyde trailer controversy. Are there any residents still left in those trailers on the Gulf Coast?

Mr. JOHNSON. There are. As I was responding to the Chairman's questions, we still have just under 30,000 households that still reside in mobile homes or travel trailers on the Gulf Coast, and our effort is—

Ms. NORTON. Trailers I am interested in.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. NORTON. The trailers with the formaldehyde, not the mobile homes.

Mr. JOHNSON. In the trailers, I don't recall off the top of my head exactly what the number is, but it is probably—85 percent of that number are in travel trailers. We are working with all those families to move them. We have offered to test those units, and we actually have conducted tests on more than 500 occupied travel trailers. We go back and meet with all those occupants and we describe to them what the test is, we give them the result, and we encourage all of them to move to a hotel-motel right away and into an apartment.

Ms. NORTON. What response are you getting from the urgings to move to a hotel or other temporary housing?

Mr. JOHNSON. Not a very aggressive response.

Ms. NORTON. Why is that?

Mr. JOHNSON. I think some cultural issues. They have lived in that travel trailer, it has been their home. It is close to work, school, their church and their families. Some of them, perhaps, don't quite believe all of the medical reports, despite the information we have provided to them. For a while, there was a thought that if they moved to an apartment, that they would have to be charged rent.

Part of our housing program, as we move people to an apartment, in order to encourage self-sufficiency, we were beginning to escalate their part of the cost of living in an apartment, but we have waived that. Now, anyone who is in travel trailer now does not have to pay any element of the rent when they move to an apartment.

So we have done several things like that to encourage them to make the decision to leave their travel trailer and to move to an apartment.

Ms. NORTON. I think next to work, near work, near family and, of course, the horrific shortage of housing, in New Orleans in particular, may be contributing to this. I just would hope that this controversy would not flare up again, and one of the reasons it may not is if we get to cooler weather.

One of the hypotheses is that in very hot weather this formaldehyde problem emerges when perhaps it does not in other kinds of weather. We certainly should not have any of these people in these homes in the hot New Orleans-Mississippi weather this summer. I mean, if that is still to be shown, we ought to assume, at the very least, that the hot temperatures—and I will say even coming from hot, humid D.C., born and raised, I have never seen anything like New Orleans. So I understand the problem you have.

We are going to be having a subcommittee hearing, a status hearing on New Orleans, in particular. So we will try to get to some of that, because much of that is related to other kinds of housing and you have alluded to HUD and the rest of it.

Mr. Johnson, I got an e-mail from staff on my subcommittee concerning your last answer, and, therefore, I want to clarify this principal Federal officer and principal coordinating officer. This may sound like a lot of ABCs and DEFs, HIGs, but it really is about whether we have straightened out something that has bothered the two committees of the Congress now for some time.

You are correct that the language refers to emergencies, and we are talking about Stafford Act emergencies, and the Stafford Act emergency is neither a nuclear emergency nor a terrorist emergency. It tends to be an emergency, a natural disaster emergency.

Now, the report language was clear that there shouldn't be any PFO funded or any successor—I am looking for the report—PFOs or successive PFOs. I, essentially, want to clarify. We understand about declared emergencies, because that is where the confusion would be monumental.

Are you saying that FEMA does go to other kinds of emergencies, and if there is no Federal official on the ground and therefore when

you talk about some possibility of a principal Federal official you are not talking about a Stafford Act or a declared emergency; you are talking about something else. I am trying to figure out what is that something else where we would find someone on the ground, and would that official find another Federal official on the ground? What is FEMA doing there in the first place if it isn't an emergency of the kind that FEMA usually attends?

Mr. JOHNSON. What the National Response Framework indicates is that there may be a Stafford Act event for, again, I use as the example of a pandemic, where there could be a Stafford Act event but that FEMA may not be in charge of that event. In a pandemic, for example, there will be a principal Federal official. HHS has a very large role in a pandemic, and FEMA will likely not be the lead agency in responding to a pandemic.

Ms. NORTON. Okay. I want to understand this, for the record. If there is no Federal official then on the ground, then you are saying there could be somebody who you are calling the principal Federal official but that is because there is nobody there and because the Federal coordinating official is not there. So there is one person there. That is whom you are calling the Federal principal official?

Mr. JOHNSON. No, ma'am. There will be other Federal officials there. There will be many Federal officials there. But in a pandemic, for example, there will be a principal Federal official, and there will be a Federal coordinating officer. But I believe that we understand better what their respective roles are.

Ms. NORTON. Well, I don't understand what their respective roles are, because it is not a Stafford Act emergency, but, let's face it, a pandemic is a huge emergency, and, yes, CDC and other Federal officials will be there, but that is the same way we handle Stafford Act emergencies. Then the question becomes, who is the lead official where it may be from a different agency, but you are telling me that there could be two FEMA officials on the ground, and one could be the principal Federal official and one could be the coordinating official.

Mr. JOHNSON. Ma'am, let me try one more time. There may be an instance in a Stafford Act, like a pandemic, where FEMA may not be the lead agency. In that case, there will be an FCO there, nonetheless, to represent and fill those responsibilities.

Ms. NORTON. So why do we need a PFO, particularly in the language that said there should be no successor PFOs either?

Mr. JOHNSON. Right. The language still allows the secretary to have a PFO, and it allows the secretary—what it restricts is the secretary's ability to use the PFO in a Stafford Act event, but it doesn't prevent him from having a principal Federal official.

In a law enforcement event, for example—

Ms. NORTON. I don't understand that at all. I don't understand—look, this is about whether or not you are funding two officials on the ground, you are paying for two officials on the ground who represent FEMA. In fact, on the ground, when people don't know either of you, there may be confusion as to who is the point man. That would be the case if you were talking about a pandemic, which was not a Stafford Act matter or whether you are talking about a hurricane, which is a Stafford Act matter.

So I want to know what the two officials do, why and how they do not overlap, who is in charge, if in fact there is a possibility of an event where you would have these two officials on the ground at the same time.

Mr. JOHNSON. When there is a PFO and an FCO both together, and that can still happen, it is very clear, both in the language—it is clear in the National Response Framework, and it is very, very clear, made clear to them, personally, through a number of training sessions and personal discussions with the secretary, with Administrator Paulison, that the FCO is in charge of the operational event. The FCO is in charge of meeting with the State—

Ms. NORTON. Then why do you need the other official there at all?

Mr. JOHNSON. Because in a large catastrophic event that is very, very complex, like a Katrina, like a 9/11, there may very well be—could be some Federal coordination issues that need to be worked out, there is—

Ms. NORTON. Well, I thought that is what the Federal coordinating official—coordinating official—is all about.

Mr. JOHNSON. But there could very well be instances where there are larger non-response issues. There could be investigative issues from the Justice Department and FBI, as was the case 9/11. There are Federal issues beyond the balance of the response and recovery that need to have some Federal coordination. There could very well be a desire on the part of the secretary and—

Ms. NORTON. Is this Federal coordinating official still paid—I am sorry, principal Federal official still paid at the same rate he was paid when we first said you should get rid of him? In other words, if he comes back on the ground, is he still this highly paid Federal official?

Mr. JOHNSON. Are you talking about the PFO?

Ms. NORTON. Yes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, they are paid based on whatever their job is. It is not a full-time job.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, I just think the record shows confusion continues to exist, that we probably still do have in some—nothing has happened yet. You assure me that you have not had this happen—no PFO has been on the ground anywhere since the appropriation language was included?

Mr. JOHNSON. The PFO has not been on the ground on any single Stafford Act event since—

Ms. NORTON. Well, we just had testimony here that we could have an even larger event, perhaps a pandemic, where there would be two people, and I have heard Mr. Johnson try to carve out a role, frankly, for the second official here, and I think we need to look more closely at that.

Mr. CUELLAR. Yes.

Mr. Johnson, we will sit down—I will be happy to sit down with you all, Ms. Norton, if you all want to follow up with a meeting. We will be happy to set it up informal and have a little get together on this.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir, that would be helpful.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Before I pass this on to Mrs. Lowey, let me just make sure I just ask one thing.

On the alerts and the warning issues, what is currently FEMA's role in alerting local residents and businesses that there is a potential disaster approaching? We have seen wildfires in California, tornados in the Midwest. Especially now with the new technology, whether it is cell phones or PDAs, whatever it might be, what exactly are you all doing?

Mr. JOHNSON. FEMA has a project assigned to us in an executive order by the president to lead the IPAWS project, the Integrated Public Alert Warning System, which is basically designed to replace a 50-year-old analog system into the digital world. We actually did pilot projects last hurricane season that allowed us to communicate with individuals in multiple languages, with individuals with disabilities and do it with PDAs, with cell phones and a range of new technological devices.

So we have a project right now over the next 5 years to develop this IPAWS project and field out for the Nation, working with State and local governments, working with industry to field out this integrated system that does take us to the digital age.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Could you provide that, again, to us, our staff, what your plan and how you plan to do this? Again, we would like to sit down and look—

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir. We would be glad to provide a briefing on IPAWS.

Mr. CUELLAR. All right.

Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

At this time, I would recognize the gentlewoman from New York, Mrs. Lowey, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for appearing before us.

The ability of FEMA to respond to future emergencies is directly linked to the ability of FEMA to help prepare local first responders. For that reason, I would like to focus my questions on State and local programs, if I may.

First of all, my first concern, the number of urban area grants. The number of cities that receive Urban Areas Security Initiative grants, as you know, is ballooning. When it began, seven cities received funds. In fiscal year 2008, that number will likely balloon to 60. The Department funds boondoggles in areas that terrorists couldn't find on a map at the expense of real security needs in cities that have been attacked and remain targets.

Every region of the country, I want to make it clear, should receive homeland security grants; however, not every region should receive urban area grants, particularly those that face few, if any, threats.

So my first question is, why has the Department increased the number of areas that receive urban area funds? I am not saying they shouldn't receive some funds for homeland security but why urban area funds?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mrs. Lowey, you are correct that we started with seven tier one, and we still have, I believe, this year was eight tier one cities, and the number of tier two cities did increase from last year to this year, as did the funding level. So I think the no tier one city lost dollars. They may have lost opportunity for more dollars.

You are probably familiar with our risk formula, which we have worked with the Congress and the committees to develop. We go through the risk formula and recognize that across the whole range of risk, that in fact there are a number of significant cities, sizable cities beyond just the tier one cities that do have the potential to incur terrorist risk.

Mrs. LOWEY. But following up on that, I am looking at the numbers. In fiscal year 2006, the Department awarded funds to 35 core cities and 11 sustainment regions, and I was told the purpose was to finish programs in the 11 sustainment regions and then only fund 35 urban area awards in future years. But when the fiscal year 2007 guidance was released, the sustainment regions were almost all back on the regular list again, and this doesn't make sense.

So it seems to me DHS has no clear plan for how to manage the program.

Mr. JOHNSON. Ma'am, I do believe that we have a plan. I do believe that our plan is to go by a consistent risk formula and to assess that risk across the country, recognizing that from year to year, based on intelligence, based on other circumstances, that the risks do change.

I think that we acknowledge, as you do, that the primary risk is in the tier one cities, and we consciously look at the allocation of funds between tier one and tier two and ensure that the tier one cities continue to have sufficient funding to maintain all of the initiatives that they have started that we have reviewed and we have approved in their applications.

Mrs. LOWEY. But they are losing out on additional funding, even though the threat may increase. You are saying, "sufficient." That is questionable. Depends whose judgment, right?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. LOWEY. Let me move on to another problem directly connected to that issue, and this also involves the management of UASI, and it has been that for the second consecutive year 45 percent of UASI funds will be safeguarded for areas not in the top risk tier. That means New York and Washington, DC will compete with one another, while nearly half is held back for areas that face less risk than either of them.

So it seems to me this is truly absurd. As a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, I am keenly aware of the fact that every spending bill has specified that UASI grants are for high-threat, high-population, density, urban areas. It seems to me they should only be going to what DHS labels tier one areas.

So if you can tell me—again, that doesn't mean the other States shouldn't get money in other categories, but what justification does the Department have for awarding nearly half of all funds to areas that aren't high-risk?

Mr. JOHNSON. I guess, again, it is an interpretation of what is high-risk, and it is the desire by the Department, across all the grants and the major urban areas—remember, again, in a major urban area, we are dealing with that just urban area, and all the other programs we deal with at the State level. So the funds get diluted in a number of places.

But when you look at the cities in the tier two, there are a number of significant locations there, and I don't recall them all, I don't have the list with me, but a number of significant locations I think we would recognize throughout the country that do incur risk.

Mrs. LOWEY. Wasn't the program created for high-risk areas?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am, it was.

Mrs. LOWEY. Yes.

Mr. JOHNSON. I guess we can get into is it high or higher and highest, but all my—

Mrs. LOWEY. Oh, come on. Look, I am not thrilled to be in the No. 1 or Washington is pretty close, but if we are in the No. 1 high-threat areas, I am not going to go through the 60 other States. I am not saying they shouldn't get other funds, but providing Washington, DC and New York with additional funds, it seems to me, should be the top priority rather than including all of those 60 other areas, 60 other States, cities in the high-risk category.

So let me just say this: I think you are understanding exactly what I am talking about.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. LOWEY. I can see your response. So I really do think there has to be some additional analysis of how these grants—this is not a pork barrel program. This is for real. We lived through 9/11. We know the threats, and it would seem to me that whether it is New York or Washington, DC, the top tier areas, those eight areas, shouldn't be limited to 50 percent or less, rather, 45 percent, of funds that are specifically dedicated to high-threat areas.

Mr. JOHNSON. I think, clearly, that is a legitimate perspective. Let's talk again as we look at grant guidance for the—the grant guidance is out for 2008. Let's talk again about that, and I mean this involves a lot of decision, a lot of discussion within the administration of what we have proposed. It does represent a desire to elevate at the urban area level the preparedness for any kind of event, all-hazards event. So I think there are other legitimate perspectives as well.

Mrs. LOWEY. Now, I notice you have been a little generous, Mr. Chairman, with the time, so I am going to throw in one—see, you started a bad precedent—I am going to throw in one other quick question.

The big Chairman always calls me, Ms. Interoperability, and I have been very worried about the lack of interoperability. Everyone would agree that the ability for first responders to communicate at the scene of an emergency is vital. However, this year, FEMA did not request any funding for interoperability grants, and, as a whole, first responder grants were flashed across the board.

So given the major cuts for first responder grant programs, what evidence do you have that first responders can now seamlessly communicate to justify slashing the budget for these grant programs? You must have some really good information that I haven't learned about.

Mr. JOHNSON. Part of our logic is that we are just signing out many billions of dollars in interoperability funds, specifically, this year. So as we look at priorities in the budget and try to allocate the funds where we think that they go, we are looking at how

much funds are in the pipeline to fund projects that are still on the drawing board and ready to be implemented.

So there are a lot of dollars in the pipelines to cities and to States, to first responders that they have yet to take on and actualize. So part of our logic is just that, that we have appropriated a lot of money on this, and we need to see those dollars be converted into capability before we appropriate more funds.

Mrs. LOWEY. Now, I would like to know if New York has a whole lot of money in the pipeline that they are not using.

Mr. JOHNSON. Excuse me?

Mrs. LOWEY. Could you share with me if New York has a lot of money in the pipeline that they are not using? I would like to know about it.

Mr. JOHNSON. We can provide to you a status of the funds and how much has been allocated to the States and how much they have drawn down for various projects.

Mrs. LOWEY. Well, it is my understanding, and I am sure if you look down, check your records, all New York money is obligated. So, again, this is not about game playing and pork barrel and making sure everyone has their share. This is a matter of looking at the threat, looking at the need and making sure that those areas that really need it are getting the money.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JOHNSON. Let me just say, again, between funds obligated and then funds expended on some multiyear projects, there is a delta there, and that is what we are taking a look at, and where is the funding in the whole pipeline, and how can we assure that the money gets spent best each fiscal year?

We will be glad to provide additional information to you; yes, ma'am.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mrs. Lowey.

At this time, the Chair will recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Etheridge, for 5 minutes.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Johnson, thank you for being here this morning.

Having served as a county commissioner, a State legislator and a State-wide elected official, a State superintendent, I am sure you understand that when you say, "obligated funds," when the locals know they have got it, they obligate those dollars. They may be in the pipeline.

There are only one or two reasons why they haven't been spent. No. 1, they don't yet have it in their possession or, No. 2, they haven't received the goods so they can draw down the money and pay for it.

So when you talk about it being in the pipeline, it doesn't necessarily mean there is a lot more money going to be spent, it is just that money has already been obligated and they are moving. So I would like to identify myself with my good friend from New York's comments.

Mrs. LOWEY. I appreciate your comments.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you, ma'am.

Let me move to one other point, because our first responders are our first people on the scene, but after Hurricane Katrina, the

White House report recommended that DHS should make citizen and community preparedness a national priority.

So my question goes with this: As we take the lead—if they are talking about them taking the lead in the Community Preparedness Division within FEMA, the National Preparedness Directorate, having served as a former State school chief, I know something about what that means, because our schools are the place where children spend most of their daytime. They also become places where shelter in place becomes depending on the kind of problem.

But my concern is this, and I hope you would comment on it, because equally important when we talk about emergency management officials, they don't always integrate schools in their planning. They use them for sheltering in place or when they are needed.

So my question is this: I have introduced legislation today to help solve this problem. So my question to you is, how has FEMA worked with schools to determine the needs of schools that ensure that the materials that they have developed within the Department are useful to administrators?

No. 2, do you know how much of these resources are being used? What is FEMA doing to ensure that school officials are involved in the emergency planning process, because you and I know if you aren't involved in planning, you aren't likely to get any money. That is pretty much a guarantee.

How is FEMA helping schools address their emergency plans when they need them through grants, because, you know, we have authorized that they should be eligible? How much grant funding has gone to schools?

Mr. JOHNSON. Those are all good questions that I would be glad to help have the staff provide some more detailed answers, if that would be acceptable to you, and I will comment overall.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Okay. If you would, when you make them to me, make sure that every member of the committee, along with the chairman, get that, please, sir.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir. In general, I guess I approach it from several different perspectives. No. 1, is involvement of the schools in planning emergency preparedness predominantly the role of the State, and so we want to encourage—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I agree with that except for the fact that it was included in legislation last year and the White House to make sure they were engaged with DHS.

Mr. JOHNSON. So we need to work—as I mentioned previously, we are focusing more on planning and defining planning in FEMA and the Department and the Federal Government than we ever have before. We are probably within weeks of announcing an integrated planning system that for the first time in the Nation will have people plan with the same processes, whether you are in New York or Florida, Maine or California.

By the way, the process will include—we have worked with NEMA and IEM, and we will use a planning guide developed at the State level as part of this Federal planning system. So it won't be imposed on the States as something they have not been party to.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. It will be best practices.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Okay.

Mr. JOHNSON. Second is our Community Preparedness Program. We do reach out to schools through our community programs. We have a program where we provided radios to schools, all public schools in America, for disaster warnings and disaster alert. So we are focused on that and want to work stronger with the States. I would be interested to see your legislation.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you, and I hope you will take a look at that, because I think it is important. What we are looking at with this is making it integrated so they are involved in the planning process at the local level as it moves up. I think that is critically important.

On that point, in New York, when 9/11 hit, people tend to forget there were a number of schools adjacent to the site that were impacted directly, and no one thought about that issue, and if they were involved in the initial process, some of those things could be averted. So I think that is the critical piece.

Let me move very quickly, because my time is running down, and if you have covered this—and, Mr. Chairman, I am sorry I was late, I was in another meeting—the deal with hurricanes. Other States get a lot of attention from hurricane preparedness, but North Carolina, I think, is probably the third or fourth most likely State to be hit. Part of it is because of our proximity on the East Coast, we sort of stick out. Then I think it is important that we prepare.

Last year, Administrator Paulison sat before us for 2 weeks before the start of the hurricane season, and I am happy that he said much needed to be done. Right now, we have got 2 months before the next season hits us, and we have the National Response Framework in place, and FEMA, I think, is in a lot better shape, I hope, than it was with Katrina, but I do remain concerned.

So let me ask you a couple of very quick questions. One is, are we prepared for the 2008 season? I recognize you do the best you can, but I would like to know where we are. Particularly, one of the biggest lessons that I think we have to learn from Katrina was the difficulty we had in coordination, not only between government levels but also with non-government organizations, or NGO's, as we might say. Now we have the NRF, which is supposed to provide standardization for incident management so that Federal, State and locals can work more effectively together.

How confident are you that we will be able to integrate the different groups when we are called upon for a national situation, and what steps are being taken to ensure a smooth coordination of communication—getting back to Mrs. Lowey's issue—and clear command structures for this response?

Now, I know in Katrina we carried in-communications simply because it was destroyed. I hope we never have that again, but I would be interested to know—that is a critical piece, as we all know, because if you can't communicate, we got real problems.

Mr. JOHNSON. Our broad area by your questions. Let me comment, first, that North Carolina is probably a top three or four States that could be impacted by a hurricane, but it is also one of

the top three or four States in the Nation in preparedness. Doug Hoell, who is your emergency manager, should be commending—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Doing a marvelous job. Thank you.

Mr. JOHNSON [continuing]. His staff for that. We are prepared, and preparing even more, for the hurricane season this coming summer. As you may recall, last year, we introduced our gap analysis, which we had not done before. The gap analysis gave us a baseline of all the 20 hurricane impact States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands as to how they prepared they were. We are engaging with States even now to rebuild on that foundation and assure ourselves at the level of their capability and what might be needed from the Federal Government.

In that process, communications is a key. So we do have our communications team, as I had mentioned in a prior question, that is going to each State, including North Carolina, to coordinate with them and find out what are the gaps, if any, in first responder emergency communications. We can provide that assessment to you separately.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you.

Mr. JOHNSON. The National Response Framework, I think, has done a great job of laying out how we will coordinate and communicate far better in disasters today than we did in Katrina. So I think that you will see that those States, particularly the hurricane States we are working with intently, are very familiar with the National Response Framework.

We have Federal coordinators who have identified to reach out to all of the State SCOs, to the emergency managers to make sure we build those relationships early so there won't be any strangers come hurricane season.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your patience.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Etheridge.

At this time, I would ask for unanimous consent from the committee to allow Ms. Sheila Jackson from the State of Texas to be able to participate and ask questions.

Hearing no objections, so allowed.

At this time, the Chair will recognize the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for your kindness and that of the Ranking Member, and let me also thank you for your leadership on this issue in holding this hearing and your staff.

Also, I thank you for allowing my office to work with your staff on, I think, an important legislative initiative that addresses the question of how we can work better and make various tools that the Department of Homeland Security has, in particular FEMA, working with the issue of evacuation.

So I want to thank you for your leadership and would look forward to meeting with you on some issues on this matter.

Let me thank the witness, and my questions will be focused on this question of how we can do better from Katrina.

The good news is that you do have experts on the ground that will probably be on the ground through the hurricane season of 2008 in the latter stages of this administration's leadership. I think

Director Paulison, having been a firefighter and certainly coming from the Gulf region, brings some instructive insight into this area.

One of the crises of Katrina, and I also met with the Lieutenant General that led the forces shortly thereafter in Katrina who we know deserved our appropriation. What resources do you have for pre-deployment? That was, I think, the Achilles heal in Katrina. You were not there to evacuate the disabled, the elderly, the poor, and you were really, in the Texas phrase, "A day late and dollar short."

Do you have, in essence, pre-deployment funds that says, "We are in hurricane season, we are tracking Hurricane Roxanne, and that hurricane has a likelihood of hitting the Gulf or elsewhere." How quickly, how much resources do you have for your troops? When I say, "troops," the resources to get on the ground.

Mr. JOHNSON. Part of our gap analysis process is to get just to that point, to deal with Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, to identify if a category three or above storm approaches their coast, what are the requirements in order to effect an evacuation, sheltering, transportation plan, and how are they positioned to get those resources? Is there a gap, and if so, what is the Federal responsibility in that gap?

Ms. JACKSON LEE. How close are you to having this document, having this format?

I, frankly, believe, Mr. Chairman, that I would suggest you, the full committee, but, in any event, it would be interesting to have a hearing on those plans—

Mr. JOHNSON. Right.

Ms. JACKSON LEE [continuing]. If you are putting them together.

Mr. JOHNSON. We are. We are working with Texas, specifically—there are two areas in Texas. As you know, the Rio Grande Valley is of great concern if a hurricane were to go there, as Hurricane Dean was programmed to go, projected to go last summer. So we are working with Texas to reevaluate their—I have forgotten the name of the plan, but it is a major plan that looks at the Rio Grande Valley.

Then second is when you get to the eastern coast of Texas, and so they have basically looked at whether a hurricane goes in one direction. Bill Peterson, our regional administrator, and Tony Robinson, are working hand in hand with Jack Colley and those in Texas to look at those plans and identify those requirements.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, let me just say this—and I have two quick questions, and I want to try to move on—but in all those fine individuals whose names I know, we have worked together, what I would offer to say is that we want to make sure that there is no disconnect, that the Federal Government and the State, and as well members who have relevant jurisdiction to be able to know the bricks and mortar of your plan.

I would like to actually hear it laid out and, as well, to assure us that the plan impacts the places—for example, no one ever thought Rita would go as far up the coast as it did. We are still smarting from the fact that Rita went into the woods and to rural areas that it was not expected. I think that we have to be in front of the game, and I don't think we were, and I want to have the confidence that we are.

I would like to really see the plan, and I think if you have a plan that impacts Texas, certainly that whole Gulf region should be included, and the key is, boots on the ground. Red Cross, FEMA and others on the ground pre a disaster hitting can avoid so much.

The other point that I hope that we will be addressing is the question of Citizen Corps as the framework. It is a good framework, but it doesn't totally work. Citizen Corps can be in a community, dominate it by local jurisdiction and have the population that are Hispanic, African American, poor, Asian and others. Language difficulty, seniors, low-income areas are not engaged in Citizen Corps.

I think that requires a strong assessment. In fact, I would like to see an audit of your Citizen Corps around the country to be able to understand what they do and what their outreach is. Do you have any input or—not input but any assessment on making sure that Citizen Corps—because they are funded, and they sit, sort of, at the top of the jurisdictional head and really don't trickle down. They are supposed to be the base of help, volunteer help to a certain extent, in communities.

Mr. JOHNSON. Two things: First, we would be very happy to provide you our hurricane plan over the next several weeks; second; the Chairman indicated that legislation might be forthcoming that would authorize Citizen Corps, which now is not an authorized program in FEMA. So I think as I indicated to the Chairman, we would welcome that legislation.

Third, I think your comments about the limitations of Citizen Corps, quite frankly, are the first time I have heard those comments. So I am interested to find out the answers too. So let Dave Paulison take a look at that and come back to you and talk about Citizen Corps and whether or not we feel it is giving you the right part of the community.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, let me go back a question. As I indicated, I congratulated the Chairman for his leadership on this issue. We had Director Paulison in my community looking at these issues of hard to reach areas—senior citizens, poor, language difficulties, and I think it was evident that many of the people had not even heard of Citizen Corps, didn't have an understanding of how to evacuate in flood-prone areas.

So I throw the question back to you: Do you think that is a problem if we have a structure, even though it might have been voluntary, that a lot of these places really are not connected to the best way out and some kind of connectedness any time of a disaster hitting?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, I think it is a problem, and Administrator Paulison came back and pressed—if that is the right word—certainly an impression after the visit with you in Houston and has begun to ask those same questions. So, again, we have a program that is not authorized and it is not funded extensively. It is perhaps enough to get down to those levels in all the major areas where it needs to do that. So I think we need to do an assessment of Citizen Corps on where it needs to be.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me associate myself, in concluding with Congresswoman Lowey and Congressman Etheridge—Congresswoman Lowey on the grants. I do believe risk is an issue. I do

think we should be continually monitoring the definition of risk so that we don't leave our places that need to be concluded.

Then with respect to my committee, the subcommittee that I work on has infrastructure protection, but I think this legislation that is coming out of this committee, along with the school protection, is key to the extent of safe and place, and I don't think we have enough sites, and I do believe it is important to have a funding source that helps communities reinforce physical structures to make them places that can be considered, if you will, in the line of fire, and I hope that you would consider that in our ongoing discussions.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. With that, I yield back, and I thank the Chairman very much for his indulgence.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Ms. Jackson Lee, for your expertise also.

I think we are ready to conclude. I just would like to just make sure that the things that I mentioned, that we need to followup the plans on the alerts and the housing and the other efforts and also to followup what Mrs. Lowey and Ms. Norton and Ms. Jackson Lee and anything that Mr. Dent also brought up. If you can just work with our staff so we can go ahead and follow up on that.

Again, to conclude, we are pleased in many ways what FEMA has done. We appreciate your leadership and your staff's work on that. I know that in some areas we need to work on those, but, again, I do want to emphasize that we do recognize the good strengths that you have provided us.

So at this time, I want to thank the witness for the valuable testimony and the members for their questions. The members of the subcommittee may have additional questions for the witness, and we ask you to respond as soon as possible in writing to those questions.

Hearing no further business, the hearing is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:43 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN HENRY CUELLAR OF TEXAS FOR HARVEY E. JOHNSON, JR., ACTING DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

APRIL 9, 2008

Question 1. Prior to Hurricane Katrina FEMA had nearly 1,700 Permanent Full-Time employees. Today, the “new” FEMA has nearly 3,000 and is authorized for over 4,000 positions for fiscal year 2008. Efforts to “staff up” in several agencies in the Department have been challenging and I commend FEMA for working to meet these challenges over the past several years. That being said, FEMA has a challenge of filling over 1,000 vacancies by September. What I’m most concerned with is where the staffing levels will be at FEMA over the next year and the next 5 years. It is imperative that FEMA have a laser-focus on recruitment, retention, and career progression strategies and plans.

What are the biggest challenges to staffing up FEMA—is it finding the expertise necessary for the vacant positions? Is it due to delays in processing for security clearances? How can these challenges be best addressed?

Answer. FEMA is aggressively recruiting Nation-wide to meet its fiscal year 2008 ceiling of 4,007 permanent full-time positions. The biggest staffing challenge to FEMA is being able to accept and process applications from the increasing volume of interested and talented applicants who desire to work in a growing and dynamic Federal agency. For example, FEMA has already received approximately 26,000 hard copy applications for vacant positions during the First and Second Quarters of fiscal year 2008. One of our biggest challenges is sorting out the pool of applicants to find the most qualified applicants. To address this challenge we are employing a dual approach for recruiting and staffing the agency. First we are using the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Service Center (contractor support) for the staffing of 390 4-Year CORE conversions that were authorized by Congress. Second, we are using the Office of Personnel Management’s USA Staffing services (automated hiring system) for the 443 newly authorized positions. FEMA is working with DHS to implement an automated hiring system that will remove the need for processing paper applications and give the agency greater flexibility in receiving and processing applications in support of the staffing process.

The FEMA security office is currently involved in all stages of the recruitment and selection process which should prevent security processing delays. However, due to the backlog for security clearance processing in the Federal Government overall, FEMA’s ability to move quickly has been somewhat compromised.

Question 2. Members of the committee have expressed concerns that the fiscal year 2008 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance contains provisions that restrict the use of grant funds for personnel costs. While, the Implementing the Provisions of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, permits grant recipients to use up to 50 percent of their grant funds for any combination of personnel activities (including overtime and backfill costs), the Guidance attempts to impose far lower caps on personnel spending.

Can you explain why FEMA has not complied with the law?

Answer. Section 2008 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act, Public Law 110–53, specifies that “not more than 50 percent of the amount awarded to a grant recipient under section 2003 or 2004 in any fiscal year may be used to pay for personnel, including overtime and backfill costs, in support of the permitted uses under subsection (a).”

It is important to understand that the Department views personnel costs in two different areas: overall personnel costs (e.g., hiring for planners, grants management personnel, or exercise managers) and organizational personnel costs (e.g., fusion center analysts). As such, the Department has different caps for the allowability of

these two personnel categories. Because the Department was allotted the flexibility of allowing “not more than,” it chose to remain consistent with previous years’ guidance and chose to continue capping overall personnel costs at no more than 15 percent of a grantee’s State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) or Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) award. For organizational costs, the Department allows 15 percent under the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) and 25 percent under the UASI. Taken together, the Department has given States up to 30 percent of the SHSP award for combined personnel costs, and up to 40 percent of the UASI award for combined personnel costs.

Question 3. As you know, FEMA uses mission assignments to request disaster response support from other Federal agencies. According to a March 2008 report by the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General, mission assignment policies, procedures, training, staffing, and funding have never been fully addressed by FEMA, creating misunderstandings among Federal agencies concerning operational and fiduciary responsibilities. In addition, the report says FEMA guidelines regarding the mission assignment process are vague.

Do you dispute the finding of the report?

If so, what has FEMA done to enhance the management of mission assignments?

Answer. The March 2008 report by the DHS Inspector General report implied that it was not until November 2007 that FEMA initiated an ambitious project to re-engineer the mission assignment (MA) processes, relationships, and resources involved in management of Mission Assignments. In fact, this process was initiated in the Spring of 2006 (post-Katrina) when FEMA developed revised guidance for Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments (PSMA) and worked with the Department of Defense and other Federal Departments and Agencies to improve the PSMA to facilitate more rapid responses during disasters. In the past 3 years, FEMA and its Interagency partners have expended a considerable amount of time and effort to improve procedures and resources available to manage the MA and PSMA processes. For example, in 2006, FEMA had a total of 44 PSMA which were limited to the Department of Defense and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In 2007 this number was increased to 183 PSMA with 28 Federal Departments and Agencies. Most recently, the number has increased to 223 with 31 Federal Departments and Agencies. PSMA support ranges from heavy-lift helicopters from the Department of Defense, to generators from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to Disaster Medical Assistance Teams from HHS, and Emergency Road Clearing Teams from the U.S. Forest Service. By expanding the development of PSMA over the past 3 years, FEMA is now better prepared to support tribal, State and local governments in disaster response.

In the fall of 2007, at the direction of FEMA Senior Leadership, an internal MA Work Group (MAWG) was established to further enhance the management of MA and improve existing processes. In collaboration with national and regional response partners, the MAWG was tasked to develop new procedures to provide greater visibility and financial oversight, increase specificity and accountability, and improve the efficiency of MA processes. The MAWG initiated a review of MA procedures including conducting interviews with FEMA and Interagency stakeholders, determining gaps, and developing recommendations to improve all aspects of the MA process. To ensure the credibility of the review, the MAWG engaged a wide range of interdisciplinary partners. In the review, the MAWG also considered MA project management, governance, training needs, limiting factors, and resource constraints.

In collaboration with our stakeholders, the MAWG determined that ensuring adequate staffing levels to manage the MA process to ensure proper fiduciary and programmatic issues at the Headquarters and Regional levels is a major issue. Another recommendation emerging from the review was to establish the MA process as an official program within FEMA. These recommendations have been implemented and a formal MA Program with additional staff has been created in FEMA’s Disaster Operations Directorate. Additional efforts to improve the efficiency of the MA process include the development of a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual to explain and streamline the process for issuing MAs. The MA SOP outlines the policies, procedures, and processes that FEMA uses to interact and coordinate with other Federal Departments and Agencies and organizations when responding to disasters. It provides response and recovery personnel with detailed information and guidance for executing MAs during declared emergencies or major disasters. The SOP documents changes and improvements to the MA process that help ensure compliance with NIMS and ICS and the PSMA Approval Process. In addition, a procedure for issuing PSMA has been completed and is now available in an Operating Draft PSMA Catalogue. The Catalogue contains directions for use, comments, and improvements and a listing of all PSMA. Additional potential PSMA are in various stages of development.

As part of our improvement activities, MA training has been increased at Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and in the FEMA Regional offices. Seven courses were conducted on MAs in fiscal year 2007 and more than a dozen courses have been held in fiscal year 2008. Additional courses are planned. The Disaster Operations MA Program, in conjunction with EMI, is assisting in the development of a MA Training Plan, including a “train the trainer” course and exercise cycle to meet future needs. An additional resource, a FEMA intranet-based MA Web page, is also planned. As part of PSMA improvement processes, training is available for FEMA staff and staff from other Federal Departments and Agencies at EMI and on-line.

With the new Program and dedicated full-time positions, FEMA continues to improve its incident management capabilities through more effective coordination of Headquarters and Regional MA efforts.

Question 4. FEMA has gone through enormous reforms since Hurricane Katrina. Many of the reforms were mandated by Congress. Others were initiated internally by the Department. However, proposals continue to be occasionally put forward—both in the Congress and on the election trail—to reorganize yet again by stripping FEMA out of DHS. Other substantial changes such as making the FEMA Administrator have a term of 6 years have also been suggested.

Having served as a senior official within FEMA for the past 2 years, do you believe FEMA can “work” within the Department of Homeland Security or should we make it an independent agency?

What do you see as the pros and cons of FEMA being a part of the Department of Homeland Security?

Answer. Let me state clearly that FEMA is already working effectively as part of the Department of Homeland Security and has made, and will continue to make, great progress in implementing the necessary reforms. The key consideration at this time is that FEMA is in the midst of a number of major initiatives to address the remaining challenges, initiatives that continue to make significant progress because of continuing support from the Department, the administration and the Congress. FEMA and the Department have undergone a number of major reorganizations over the last 5 years, and we don’t need another significant reorganization that will throw the agency into turmoil for an extended period and interrupt the progress being made in operational capabilities while we have to sort through the incredibly complex administrative challenges that would be necessary to support such a change. FEMA needs a significant period of organizational stability so we can complete the program improvements underway without the distractions that another major organizational change would entail.

It must also be stressed does not that the Department of Homeland Security’s leadership is committed to providing FEMA the support it needs to complete its transformation to the New FEMA. In addition, the Department of Homeland Security and its more than 180,000 employees are well situated to provide FEMA with needed support to address catastrophic disasters. During Katrina, thousands of DHS staff deployed to support FEMA’s disaster response and recovery operations both in Washington and the field. Such deployments are much easier to implement when we are part of the same Department and report through the same chain of command, than they would be if FEMA were separated from the Department. Add to this that numerous foundational documents of our national approach to Homeland Security, such as the National Response Framework, are based on FEMA being part of the Department and one can see that taking FEMA out of the Department would once again throw into disarray the whole national effort to prepare for a coordinated Federal/State/local/private sector response just as we are starting to see real progress in the understanding of their respective roles by the various levels of government.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. BOB ETHERIDGE OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR HARVEY E. JOHNSON, JR., ACTING DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Question 1. After Hurricane Katrina, the White House Report recommended that “DHS should make citizen and community preparedness a national priority.” Taking the lead in this effort is the Community Preparedness Division within FEMA’s National Preparedness Directorate. As the former North Carolina schools superintendent, when I think of community preparedness, I think of the critical role that schools play in our communities, not only as places of learning, but also as the place where our children spend the majority of the day and as facilities that will be looked to for shelter-in-place and other emergency needs. I also know that emergency planners do not often think of schools or consult with them when they’re making plans.

I know that FEMA has some school-specific resources and online courses, but—after conducting a survey of school principals in my district—I’m not sure that these materials are getting to the school administrators and planners who need them. Equally importantly, I am concerned that emergency management officials do not integrate schools into their planning. I have introduced legislation today to address the needs of schools, and I would like to hear your assessment of how FEMA is helping schools prepare for emergencies.

How has FEMA worked with schools to determine the needs of schools ensure that the materials that have been developed are useful to administrators?

Do you know how much these resources are being used?

What is FEMA doing to ensure that school officials are involved in the emergency planning process?

How is FEMA helping schools address their emergency planning needs through grants?

How much grant funding has gone to schools?

Answer. FEMA is working to provide support to schools and youth to strengthen preparedness in a variety of ways.

FEMA works closely with our partners at the Department of Education to provide support to schools and youth to strengthen preparedness and response skills. Please visit the new Department of Homeland Security Web site, www.dhs.gov/schoolpreparedness to see the catalogue of DHS resources that are focused on school preparedness. Examples of the online school resources include, *Building a Disaster-Resistant University* which is FEMA’s guide to making colleges more resistant to disasters, *Preparing Your School for a Crisis*, published by the U.S. Department of Education which is designed to assist schools and communities with either creating a new or updating an existing crisis plan and *Ready.gov for Kids* which is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s national public awareness campaign.

Within FEMA, the Community Preparedness Division, the Grants Programs Directorate, and the Emergency Management Institute coordinate to provide resources and strengthen the integration of schools and youth in preparedness at all levels including national, State, local and tribal preparedness planning, education and outreach, and training and exercises.

The integration of schools in community preparedness is a priority for FEMA’s Community Preparedness Division and Citizen Corps, the Division’s grassroots strategy for community preparedness. The Citizen Corps mission is to unite communities to prepare for and prevent emergencies, respond quickly and safely when needed, and to recover with resilience. Over 2,300 Citizen Corps Councils Nationwide bring government and nongovernmental community leaders together to identify priorities, integrate resources and train and exercise response skills with both first responders and volunteers. School representatives and youth program leaders are critical participants on these Councils to integrate school emergency plans with community plans, coordinate public alert systems, and to educate, train and exercise the school community and the community’s children on disaster preparedness and response.

Furthermore, community preparedness, which includes school preparedness, is integrated across 10 of the fiscal year 2008 DHS preparedness grants. Since school preparedness is a priority of the Community Preparedness Division, the Citizen Corps Program (CCP) grant guidance, which is one of four grant programs under the Homeland Security Grant Program, explicitly makes school preparedness an eligible use of grant funds. For example, CCP grant guidance specifically states that training “should be delivered with specific consideration to include all ages, ethnic and cultural groups, person with disabilities, and special needs populations at venues throughout the community, to include schools¹ . . .”. The CCP grant guidance gives States the flexibility to identify annual priorities based on their needs. In recognition of the critical role of school preparedness, States and local communities around the country are using these funds to hold school preparedness seminars for students and teachers, provide CERT training for school administrators, teachers, and students, print preparedness education and outreach materials for schools, and assist local schools in developing their school preparedness plans.

On the national level, Citizen Corps has partnered with the Department of Education to enhance school administrators, teachers and students connection to emergency managers and Citizen Corps Councils. The Department of Education is one of twenty-five National Citizen Corps Affiliates which expand emergency responder and non-governmental resources and materials available to States and local communities. One initiative closely collaborated on by Citizen Corps and the Department

¹ Fiscal year 2008 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance and Application Kit, Page 44–45.

of Education is the “America is Safer when our Schools are Safer” NOAA Public Alert Radio Distribution Program. In an effort to improve public alerts and warnings for schools, the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA’s Citizen Corps, the Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools and the Department of Commerce’s NOAA provided 97,000 NOAA Public Alert Radios to every public school during 2005–2006. In addition, to providing schools with the potentially life-saving NOAA Alert Radio, connecting State and local emergency management and school leadership is an important goal of the “America is Safer when our Schools are Safer” distribution. The initiative has promoted closer integration by outreach to emergency managers and education leaders through conference and through the project Web site that provides resources, information on training opportunities and tools to connect emergency managers, Citizen Corps Councils and schools.

FEMA Regional Offices also implement initiatives to provide FEMA resources and support to integrate schools in preparedness at State and local levels. For example, FEMA Region I is implementing a region-wide school-based preparedness education project in collaboration with the State Emergency Management Authorities and State Education Authorities. The Student Tools for Emergency Planning (STEP) initiative is a preparedness education project targeted to the 4th grade level where students will be taught basic preparedness and strategies for dealing with various types of emergencies and will act as agents to share this awareness with family members. Students will build emergency kits with their families and build a communications plan with their families. In 2008, STEP will be piloted in 29 schools and 11 districts across New England, with schools representing each of the 6 New England States. FEMA will provide Teacher Guides, DVDs, copies of student handouts, refrigerator magnets, demonstration emergency kits, and student starter kits for all schools participating in the pilot year (2008–2009 school year). Teachers will dedicate between 1 and 5 hours of classroom time implementing STEP. Student and teacher evaluations administered after STEP completion will measure its effectiveness.

At the State and local level, Citizen Corps Councils and five identified Partner Programs work with first responders at all levels to provide education, training, and preparedness activities for the community. As one of the Citizen Corps Partner Programs, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates community members about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response. CERT covers life-saving skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their community. The CERT Program has expanded in recent years to include guidance for CERT training delivered to teens and on campuses. In addition, the CERT Program has been utilized by States and municipalities to prepare schools by training both parents and faculty. For example, the State of Mississippi is providing all school administrators with CERT training as part of the State’s support for preparedness for schools.

The twenty-five Citizen Corps Affiliates offer additional resources for public education, outreach, and training. Many Affiliates provide age and grade appropriate preparedness curricula for schools and children. Several Affiliates, including The Save a Life Foundation and the American Red Cross, provide first aid skills to youth throughout the country. Another Citizen Corps Affiliate, The Home Safety Council, promotes “Get Ready with Freddie” which introduces children to the importance of both safety and reading. Additionally, the American Red Cross “Masters of Disaster” programs and the National Fire Protection Association “Risk Watch” programs: Natural Disasters and Unintentional Injuries teach students how to prepare, respond and recover from disasters and household hazards.

With regards to the question about how much grant funding has gone to schools, funding provided to educational institutions by program is provided below. One caveat, some of the funding represented in this chart is sub-granted to educational institutions for the primary purpose of training first responders, which could end up being used for funding activities which may not be strictly characterized as school preparedness activities (e.g., training on the National Incident Management System (NIMS)).

[Amount in Dollars]

Reporting Period	SHSP	LETPP	CCP	UASI	EMPG	MMRS	BZPP	Total
2004 Total	12,664,964.87	2,835,207.31	351,136.72	2,315,963.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	18,167,272.07
2005 Total	11,797,476.90	1,292,158.00	30,190.00	6,106,347.35	58,831.34	237,592.00	1,208,944.50	20,721,540.09
2006 Total	7,276,981.62	2,413,113.19	55,412.00	1,180,453.00	25,700.00	226,521.75	0.00	11,178,181.56
2007 Total	4,122,844.00	520,039.62	7,000.00	8,086,427.01	0.00	245,237.75	0.00	12,981,548.38
Grand Total ...	35,862,267.39	7,060,518.12	443,738.72	17,689,190.53	84,531.34	699,351.50	1,208,944.50	63,048,542.10

Question 2. My State of North Carolina is one of the third or fourth most likely States to be hit by a hurricane. The report released by the Inspector General this week said FEMA has made moderate progress in those preparedness goals most applicable to the 2008 Hurricane season as moderate, but was only barely in the moderate category. The IG was particularly critical of FEMA's failure to capitalize on the relatively weak hurricane seasons since Hurricane Katrina to bolster its big picture strategy and infrastructure. I am especially concerned about FEMA's ability to understand all of the assets at its disposal; its ability to engage in scenario planning; and its ability to preplan optimal delivery routes and alternatives. The many actors that would be called into service in a disaster include FEMA assets as well as those controlled by NGO's, State responders, emergency and health care responders, and the private sector, just to name a few, and coordination needs to happen before, not during, a disaster.

Logistics is critical to preparedness. What organizations, companies, and State responders have been consulted by FEMA's Logistics division? Please provide details as to the nature of the consultations, what information was gleaned from each, how that information has been incorporated into FEMA's logistics planning, and what type of feedback has been provided back to each enterprise.

What steps has FEMA taken to ensure that, in developing situational awareness about potential emergencies, it has access to comprehensive data and can also fully integrate that data into its strategic planning?

I understand that FEMA has made progress in its ability to track assets during its response to an emergency, both its own and that of cooperating private and non-governmental agencies. However, "tracking" assets only gives part of the picture. For example, predictive modeling and optimization before a disaster, could provide FEMA insight to help develop response plans determine which response efforts are most efficient. Can you describe the technologies and methodologies that FEMA has used in preparing for the 2008 Hurricane season? What are the Agency's plans for the integration of advanced capabilities and technologies for its future preparation?

Answer. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) 2006 directed FEMA to develop an efficient, transparent, and flexible logistics system for procurement and delivery of goods and services necessary for an effective and timely response to disasters and to develop a Demonstration Program with regional and local governments in the formation of innovative public & private logistical partnerships and centers to improve readiness. FEMA is to "partner with State, local, and tribal governments and emergency response providers, with other Federal agencies, with the private sector and with nongovernmental organizations to build a national system of emergency management that can effectively and efficiently utilize the full measure of the Nation's resources . . ." Section 503(b)(2)(B) of Title 5 of the 2007 DHS Appropriations Act (Public Law 109-295).

In the spirit of PKEMRA, the FEMA Logistics Management Directorate developed the National Logistics Coordinator (NLC) Concept. FEMA conducted the first National Logistics Coordination Forum on March 27, 2008. This forum initiated the development of a charter and operating doctrine for the National Logistics Coordinator concept. This is a high-level initiative with participants including DOD/NORTHCOM, other Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, FEMA Regions and State and local governments. The FEMA National Logistics Coordinator (NLC) will serve as the Single Logistics Integrator during National disasters and special events. The National Logistics Coordinator (NLC) will:

- Coordinate domestic emergency logistics planning, management and sustainment capabilities;
- Promote the strategic logistics collaboration of other Federal agencies, public and private sector partners, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders;
- Improve disaster logistics readiness, responsiveness and preparedness for both Stafford Act and non-Stafford Act disasters.

Distribution Management Strategy Working Group.—The Logistics Management Directorate established a Distribution Management Strategy Working Group in September 2007, with its Federal, private and non-governmental organizations logistics partners, to conduct a comprehensive analysis and develop a comprehensive distribution and supply chain management strategy. Partners in this group include GSA, DOD United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)/Defense Logistics, American Red Cross (ARC), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Health and Human Services (HHS) and others. The Resource Management Group (RMG) was established as a sub-working group to collaboratively source critical disaster commodities with a view of acquiring these commodities from the most economical, expeditious partner source. This group began its mission by concentrating on the supply chain of the two life-saving commodities, water and emergency meals.

The Logistics Management Directorate, Plans and Exercises Division is aggressively employing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Predictive Models to develop logistics support plans to address the State gaps analyses.

USE OF MODELING TO IMPROVE DISASTER RESPONSE READINESS

Modeling is an essential element of FEMA's planning efforts and enables planning for different circumstances and data sets. For example, FEMA is coordinating with the DHS Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate to adapt modeling tools to the specific circumstances of large metropolitan areas. Many tools, including HAZUS (Hazards U.S.), utilize a standard figure for population per square mile, often resulting in skewed data for areas with high-rise apartment buildings. The work with S&T is focusing on adapting these modeling tools to variable situations. FEMA's current planning efforts relative to hurricanes rely heavily on existing modeling tools such as:

- HurrEvac (Hurricane Evacuation) to enable tracking hurricanes and assist in evacuation decisionmaking;
- SLOSH (Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes) to enable estimates of storm surge heights and winds resulting from historical, hypothetical, or predicted hurricanes by taking into account pressure, size, forward speed, track, and winds;
- HAZUS (Hazards U.S.) established by FEMA to assess risk and forecast losses based on population characteristics and the building environment;
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers modeling tools which rely on geo-spatial capabilities to provide hurricane disaster estimates of debris volumes; water, ice, and commodity needs; and the number of people within the households likely within hurricane force winds; and
- NISAC (National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center) advanced modeling and simulation capabilities to analyze critical infrastructure interdependencies and vulnerabilities.

In addition to the above-mentioned modeling, FEMA also implemented a Gap Analysis Tool in 2007. The Gap Analysis Tool provides FEMA and its partners at both the State and local levels in the hurricane-prone regions of the country a snapshot of disaster response asset gaps to determine the level of Federal support potentially needed in responding to a Category 3 Hurricane. Seven critical areas were incorporated in the initial application of the Gap Analysis Program (GAP) for review: debris removal, commodity distribution, evacuation, sheltering, interim housing, medical needs and fuel capacity along evacuation routes. During 2007, FEMA worked closely with each of the 18 State emergency management communities in hurricane-prone States, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, using a consistent set of measures and tools to evaluate strengths, gaps, and vulnerabilities. As the Gap Analysis process evolved over the summer of 2007, there was a steady decrease in the initial shortfalls and vulnerabilities identified in the seven critical areas. Also, the results of the GAP Analysis process facilitated a more coordinated FEMA/State response to Hurricane Dean and Tropical Storm Erin in 2007. Although FEMA's initial use of this very successful tool was used for the 2007 Hurricane Season, the Gap Analysis Tool and program is currently being expanded to cover all hazards and will be applied Nation-wide.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

In order to perform its disaster response mission, FEMA maintains multiple disaster response operations centers, teams and assets that play a key part in coordinating and providing disaster response assistance. Based on lessons learned and on-going assessments, FEMA is diligently enhancing these capabilities.

FEMA manages a network of operations centers to coordinate and sustain response operations; maintain situational awareness and a common operating picture (COP) for DHS and FEMA leadership; facilitate information sharing between FEMA and non-FEMA entities; and provide internal and external stakeholders a consolidated, consistent, and accurate status of on-going incidents, responses or potential events. The key components of this network are the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) in FEMA Headquarters; the Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC) located in each of the 10 FEMA Regions; and the FEMA Operations Center (FOC) located at the Mt. Weather Emergency Operations Center (EOC); and the five strategically located Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) Operations Centers (MOC).

The NRCC is FEMA's multi-agency center that functions as the operational component of the DHS National Operations Center (NOC) to provide Federal coordina-

tion of disaster response operations and emergency management program implementation. The NRCC maintains situational awareness links with a large number of operating nodes and centers at all levels of government such as: State EOC(s); selected local EOC(s); regional DHS components; regional ESF EOC(s); State Fusion Centers; Joint Terrorism Task Forces; Headquarters and Regional department and agency operations centers; and other key operating centers. The NRCC supports disaster response and resource planning; monitors potential or developing disaster events; supports regional and field component operations; and coordinates national-level disaster response activities and resource allocations for DHS and FEMA.

FEMA is upgrading NRCC capabilities with the installation of a new Emergency Management Information Management System (EMIMS). EMIMS is a Web-based software system that will provide greater support to the NRCC, RRCCs, and JFOs in managing disaster operations and information flow, maintaining situational awareness, and coordinating information sharing. One of the initial goals with EMIMS is to incorporate the expanded Radiological Dispersion Device (RDD) capabilities list into EMIMS as a password protected resource module. Ultimately, with the capability provided by EMIMS, vital statistics on the location and content of RDD teams can be geo-coded into the system and continuously updated by the department/agency responsible for the team and used on a real time basis by the interagency community. A longer term goal is to use EMIMS to create a larger national asset database of all Federal response teams for all-hazards. This larger database would also be password protected and available to the interagency community for use to support disaster response.

Supporting the NRCC are 10 RRCCs, regionally based multi-agency coordination centers that perform a complementary role to the NRCC at the regional level. Operating in each of the 10 FEMA Regions, the RRCC provides situational awareness information, identifies and coordinates response requirements, supports response operations, performs capabilities analysis and reports on the status of Federal disaster response operations. RRCCs maintain close links with the State, Regional, and local EOCs; State Fusion Centers; Joint Terrorism Task Forces; Regional DHS components; Regional ESFs; DoD and Interagency Operations Centers; adjacent Regions and MOCs; and JFOs.

Collectively, the NRCC and RRCCs have three main functional responsibilities: situational awareness, notification/activation, and coordination of response and recovery operational support, focused either nationally or regionally as appropriate. Both NRCC and RRCC operations are scalable, depending on the nature and magnitude of the event. FEMA's multiple disaster response teams and assets can also be immediately deployed to support State and local disaster response operations and provide situational awareness and help develop a common operating picture.

QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER CHARLES W. DENT OF PENNSYLVANIA FOR HARVEY E. JOHNSON, JR., ACTING DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

STATE PREPAREDNESS REPORTS

Question 1. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act required States submit reports on their level of preparedness for a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other man-made event. All 56 States and territories have submitted their State Preparedness Reports.

Can you address some of the trends that were identified as part of this effort in terms of the state of national preparedness?

What were the top three areas that will require the greatest attention by FEMA, working with its State counterparts?

Answer. As required by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA), each State/territory has submitted an annual report on its level of preparedness to FEMA. These State Preparedness Reports (SPRs) generally address:

- Compliance with key national policy and strategy frameworks;
- Estimated current capability levels and the resources (monetary and non-monetary) estimated to achieve identified target levels.

The collected SPR reports also describe State accomplishments building capabilities and how States intend to increase all-hazards preparedness in the future. FEMA is currently in the process of reviewing the reports to analyze overall Nationwide trends as reflected in the reports, identify general areas for increased attention, and inform broader assessments of national preparedness. The analysis will also identify how States are interpreting the National Priorities and setting milestones for their completion; investigate whether similar or neighboring States share

similar capabilities, targets, and initiatives; and identify and analyze reported quantitative data. We will be able to identify specific trends by July 2008, once we have developed the summary and findings report of our analysis on the State Preparedness Reports. At that point, we will be in a better position to also identify the top areas that will require the greatest attention by FEMA as it works with its State counterparts. FEMA's SPR summary and findings report will contain the results of this SPR analysis effort, and produce findings regarding States' accomplishments, capabilities, goals, and resource needs. Approximately 3 weeks later, we will have completed the development of a summary and findings briefing for Congress, as well as recommendations to revise and improve future SPR guidance, aimed at reducing redundancy and improving clarity in fulfilling reporting requirements.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS SYSTEM TOOL

Question 2. In a briefing given to the committee staff in February, it was stated that field tests of the "National Preparedness System tool" began in October 2007 involving approximately 160 participants from 10 States and 34 jurisdictions in seven FEMA regions. Nine field tests were completed by December 2007. Currently, the National Preparedness Directorate is analyzing the results and drafting a lessons learned report.

Please describe the National Preparedness Directorate "tool."

How is the tool used to assess a State or local area's level of preparedness?

How will the results of this tool be used to inform future planning and priorities?

Answer. Building on the Target Capabilities List DHS is developing a streamlined approach to measure capabilities—essentially using jurisdictional tiers to define who needs to be prepared and at what level of capability. This effort will help jurisdictions understand, based on particular risk factors, what they need to do to enhance their capabilities and meet performance objectives through planning, training, and exercising.

In order to build an effective Comprehensive Assessment System, the National Preparedness Directorate's Office of Preparedness Policy, Planning, and Analysis (PPPA) has evaluated its entire existing suite of evaluation systems, including the NPS, with the aim of integrating best practices of current processes to provide a streamlined, effective approach to assessing capabilities at all levels, including State and local areas. All current assessment systems are being integrated into a single comprehensive system that will minimize the burden placed upon State and local jurisdictions by eliminating redundant and overlapping planning, assessment, information-gathering, and reporting practices. The specific assessment systems that were reviewed are:

- *State Preparedness Reports (SPR).*—All 56 States and territories have submitted SPRs to the FEMA Administrator. SPRs contain assessments of current capability levels, descriptions of unmet target capabilities, and assessments of resource needs to meet preparedness priorities.
- *NIMS Compliance Assessment Support Tool (NIMSCAST).*—NIMSCAST is a voluntary Web-based data collection tool used to assess NIMS compliance. Fifty-six States and territories and 18,000 local and tribal entities have NIMSCAST accounts.
- *Gap Analysis Program (GAP).*—GAP assesses 7 response mission areas in 20 hurricane-prone States and territories. For example, as depicted in figure 84, GAP data reveals that the assessed State would require significant Federal assistance in commodity distribution, evacuation, and the provision of fuel.
- *Pilot Capabilities Assessment (PCA).*—PCA has completed three pilots (as of November 2007) to develop a capability assessment methodology.
- *National Preparedness System.*—The National Preparedness System has completed field tests in 10 States to evaluate all 37 capabilities in the TCL.
- *Capabilities Assessment for Readiness (CAR).*—The CAR was a one-time, Nation-wide assessment of emergency management performance conducted by FEMA in 1997. The CAR was completed over a 3-month period through self-assessments by 56 States and Territories. Its methodology embraced 13 Emergency Management Functions (EMFs) based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1,600 standards.

The National Preparedness System will play an important part in the Comprehensive Capability Assessment that the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) requires. PPPA is incorporating important features and functions from the NPS and the best practices of pertinent assessment tools into a single, integrated methodology to facilitate the capability planning, assessment, and reporting process. Key components of the NPS will form a critical part of the foundation for the development of this enhanced assessment tool.

The final Comprehensive Assessment System will capture best practices and lessons learned from these PPPA efforts to create a streamlined, yet comprehensive, approach. The goal is to build an effective national system for enhancing preparedness that integrates planning tools, assesses capabilities defined by the Target Capabilities List, and measures progress at the local, State, and Federal levels.

NATIONAL RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (NRF)

Question 3a. The release of the updated NRF is an important step in improving disaster operations. Its implementation will be critical to the future success of FEMA in responding to an incident.

Please provide a clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the Principal Federal Official (PFO) and Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO).

Answer. HSPD-5 designates the Secretary of Homeland Security as the principal Federal official for domestic incident management. In carrying out that responsibility, the NRF provides that the Secretary may elect to designate a single individual to serve as a PFO and be his/her primary representative to ensure consistency of Federal support as well as the overall effectiveness of the Federal incident management.

The NRF further provides that the Secretary will only appoint a PFO for catastrophic or unusually complex incidents that require extraordinary coordination. A PFO is a senior Federal official with proven management experience and strong leadership capabilities. Once formally designated for an ongoing incident, a PFO relinquishes the conduct of all previous duties to focus exclusively on his or her incident management responsibilities.

Responsibilities of a PFO, if appointed, include:

- Serves as the DHS Secretary's primary representative to ensure consistency of Federal support and the overall effectiveness of Federal incident management;
- Interfaces with Federal, State, tribal and local officials regarding the overall Federal incident management strategy;
- Serves as the primary Federal spokesperson for coordinated media and public communications;
- Serves as the primary point of contact for situational awareness locally for the Secretary of DHS;
- Promotes collaboration and helps resolve any Federal interagency conflicts that may arise;
- Identifies and presents to the Secretary any policy issues that require resolution;
- Serves as a member of the Unified Coordination Group.

The PFO does NOT:

- Become the Incident Commander;
- Direct or replace the incident command structure;
- Have directive authority over the Senior Federal Law Enforcement Officer (SFLEO), Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), or other Federal and State officials.

The Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) is appointed by the President upon recommendation of the FEMA Administrator and Secretary of Homeland Security, for all Stafford Act Incidents. A senior FEMA official trained, certified and well-experienced in emergency management, the FCO represents the FEMA Administrator in the field to discharge all FEMA responsibilities for the response and recovery efforts. The FCO is the focal point of coordination within the Unified Coordination Group, ensuring overall integration of Federal emergency management, resource allocation, and seamless integration of Federal activities in support of, and in coordination with, State, tribal, and local requirements for the geographic areas covered by the Stafford Act declaration.

Responsibilities of a FCO include:

- Executes Stafford Act authorities, including commitment of FEMA resources and the mission assignment of other Federal departments or agencies.
- Acts as primary Federal representative with whom the State Coordinating Officer, other State, tribal and local response officials interface to determine most urgent needs and set objectives for an effective response in collaboration with the Unified Coordination Group.

Question 3b. Does prohibiting the use of a PFO during a Stafford Act event adversely impact the Department's ability to leverage all expertise and resources available to respond appropriately?

Answer. The Joint Explanatory Statement (JES) associated with Section 541 of the Fiscal Year 2008 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act recognizes that there are some situations where a Stafford Act declaration might be

made, but the FCO and FEMA would not be in the lead. The JES specifically lists pandemic influenza and a national security special event as examples of such events. The NRF indicates that there may be major non-Stafford Act responses which may also include a Stafford Act component or instances in which FEMA would not be the lead agency in charge of an event. In those cases, the Secretary may choose to appoint a PFO. The PFO, when appointed, does not assume the role of Federal Coordinating Officer who is focused on coordinating emergency management efforts in areas covered by the Stafford Act declaration. Instead, the PFO serves as the Secretary of Homeland Security's representative in the field and promotes collaboration and, as possible, helps resolve Federal interagency conflict. For catastrophic and highly complex incidents, the PFO serves a complementary role to the FCO and helps ensure consistency of Federal response efforts spanning the prevention, protection and emergency management missions. In a non-Stafford Act event, such as a pandemic influenza outbreak or an NSSE, that involves significant national planning, preparation, and coordination across DHS and interagency mission areas, it makes little sense to disrupt the Unified Coordination Group leadership cadre by removing the PFO just because a Stafford Act declaration has been made.

Question 3c. How is FEMA working with the Office of Operations Coordination to determine when a PFO may be required outside of a Stafford Act event?

Answer. FEMA and DHS Operations Coordination have worked together very closely to ensure an integrated, comprehensive leadership capability in domestic "notice events" where there was sufficient time for advanced planning. For the past 2 years, DHS and FEMA have selected PFOs and FCOs respectively to attend common leadership and content training sessions. PFOs and FCOs have been pre-designated for national level exercises, assignments in planning and executing National Special Security Events, and planning contingencies, such as Pandemic Influenza. The distinct duties of the PFO and FCO have been successfully delineated in each case.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Question 4. The U.S. Coast Guard has been working to increase its force structure to include deployable specialized forces or "Adaptive Force Packaging." These teams will be placed under one command, designed to integrate with DHS and other Federal and State agencies to create a more agile, flexible force that can deploy in advance of or after an event to mitigate threats or hazards.

Has FEMA partnered with the Coast Guard on these efforts to ensure that deployable teams and resources are coordinated and organized effectively to meet incident response needs?

Answer. United States Coast Guard (USCG) support is provided directly to DHS and FEMA during an emergency, with USCG response and incident management personnel integrating directly into the DHS/FEMA incident management organization established for a specific incident. Under the old Federal Response Plan, USCG generally played a role in only two support functions; Emergency Support Function (ESF) 1 and ESF 10. However, with the broader approach adopted with both FEMA and the Coast Guard as part of the Department of Homeland Security and under the new NRF and through the implementation of Pre-scripted Mission Assignments, USCG now supports 9 separate ESFs across 20 possible Mission Assignment areas.

To ensure close coordination of USCG and FEMA planning and disaster response operations, USCG liaisons are assigned to FEMA Headquarters. The USCG liaisons provide direct interagency coordination, advice, and education about resources and capabilities; coordinate operational and policy links between FEMA and the USCG; ensure USCG equities are properly represented in FEMA's National Response Coordination Center; and participate in and support Mission Assignment/Pre-Scripted Mission Assignment processes to facilitate synchronized and effective disaster response operations.

FEMA has been working with the USCG, through DHS, to coordinate links with the USCG Deployable Operations Group as part of ongoing interagency support and facilitation of disaster response expertise and resources. FEMA has also participated in working group meetings to discuss the concept of deployable specialized forces.