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ENSURING EFFECTIVE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE: LESSONS LEARNED FROM HURRICANE IRENE AND TROPICAL STORM LEE

FIELD HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

NOVEMBER 29, 2011

Serial No. 112–59

Printed for the use of the Committee on Homeland Security



Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

74–535 PDF WASHINGTON : 2012

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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ENSURING EFFECTIVE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE: LESSONS LEARNED FROM HURRICANE IRENE AND TROPICAL STORM LEE

Tuesday, November 29, 2011

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
La Plume, PA.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:07 a.m., in the Theatre in Brooks, Keystone College, Brooks Hall, College Road, La Plume, Pennsylvania, Hon. Gus M. Bilirakis [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Bilirakis and Marino.

Mr. CALPIN. My name is Fran Calpin and I am the Senior Director of College Relations here at Keystone. On behalf of Keystone President Dr. Edward G. Boehm, Jr., and all of the Keystone students, faculty, and staff, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to Keystone today for this morning's Congressional hearing. We extend a special welcome to Congressman Tom Marino and Congressman Gus Bilirakis and to the witnesses providing testimony here this morning.

As a leading educational institution in northeastern Pennsylvania, founded by families, for families, immediately following the Civil War, we are honored to provide this hearing to gain additional information and insight into the horrific devastation inflicted upon our area after Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

So once again, on behalf of everyone at Keystone, we welcome you this morning. Thank you.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. The Committee on Homeland Security, the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications will come to order.

The subcommittee is meeting today to receive testimony on the impact of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee and the efforts of Federal, State, local, and non-governmental organizations to respond and recover from these disasters.

I appreciate the effort taken by all those involved to have this important field hearing. This is an official Congressional hearing, as opposed to a town hall meeting, and as such, we must abide by the certain rules of the Committee on Homeland Security and the House of Representatives. I kindly wish to remind our guests that any demonstrations from the audience including applause and verbal outbursts as well as the use of signs or placards are a viola-

tion of the rules of the House of Representatives. It is important that we respect the decorum and the rules of this committee. I have also been requested to state that photography and cameras are limited to accredited press only. I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

I am Congressman Gus Bilirakis. I am pleased to be here in La Plume this morning, and I thank Congressman Marino, your great Congressman, and Keystone College for hosting this subcommittee, and I have the right colors on here today, orange and blue. I went to the University of Florida, so I like to wear my orange and blue, but it fits pretty well here this morning.

This year, the subcommittee has focused on ensuring this country has effective preparedness response and recovery capabilities at all levels of government, and the private sector among individuals and communities. This subcommittee has assessed the response and recovery efforts to the many storms this country has experienced this year. This hearing will continue those efforts by assessing the impact of Hurricane Irene and Storm Lee, particularly on this area, because this area was greatly impacted, and we want to consider the lessons learned from those storms so we can continue to enhance our preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities.

Last month, the subcommittee held a hearing at which FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate testified to assess FEMA's preparedness and response capabilities since the passage of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. I think we can all agree that FEMA has made great strides over the past 5 years and it is a far more nimble and forward-leaning organization.

Of course, there is always more work that can be done to further improve our capabilities, a point on which of course Administrator Fugate agrees. I think he is doing a very good job. That is why is so important again that Congressman Marino proposed this hearing. I appreciate that, Congressman. We must also assess what worked well and should be replicated in future disaster response and recovery efforts. We must also address any shortcomings so they do not happen again.

We have a distinguished panel of witnesses here today that will help us with this assessment. I look forward to your testimony and to working with you to enhance our preparedness and response and recovery capabilities.

Now I recognize my very good friend, the vice chairman of this subcommittee, Mr. Tom Marino, for any opening statement he may have. He has been working tirelessly to ensure this area is well on the road to recovery. I would like to recognize him. I know that Tom has been working very hard, and his heart is right here in this Congressional district with his constituents. So I recognize you, Tom, for as much time as you would like to consume.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you, Chairman, and I really appreciate the efforts. Chairman Bilirakis is from Florida, and like myself, we are not really morning people but it was very nice of you to agree to have this hearing, this official Congressional hearing right here in the 10th Congressional District, and I thank you on behalf of my constituents.

I also want to thank the college for having us here as a guest. This is my second or third time here. I want to thank the presi-

dent. Thank you so much, sir, for accommodating us. The staffs, my staff, Rob, who was instrumental in putting this together, the Chairman's staff as well, our committee staff, thank you so much. We cannot do this without their work. I want to thank the committee Members, the witnesses who are going to testify for being here, and you people for coming and seeing how the process works. We wanted to bring Washington to the district, and I think this is a great opportunity to do that.

I want to start out by thanking the Chairman again for holding this hearing and by welcoming all our witnesses to Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional District. I also want to thank you all in attendance for taking the time to come and hear the important matters we are addressing today at this field hearing.

At the end of August 2011, Hurricane Irene caused severe flooding and widespread power outages in eastern Pennsylvania and some flooding in central Pennsylvania. With the ground saturated and waterways at a very high level, Tropical Storm Lee arrived about 1 week later, causing historic widespread flooding in most of central and eastern Pennsylvania, particularly here in the 10th Congressional district. Ten of the 14 counties in the district were impacted by the flood. Thousands of residents were evacuated. Many are still living in temporary shelters. The storm knew no boundaries. It hit individuals and businesses, Government offices and schools, farms, cemeteries, and churches.

I had just been back in Washington, DC, for a few days after Labor Day when I learned that the communities in the district were threatened by severe flooding. My staff and I immediately left Washington and headed back to the district so we could be here in person to assess the damage and do all I could to help. I flew over damaged communities several times to assess the damage from an aerial perspective. I then spent the next few weeks in the district visiting flood victims in every affected county in the 10th Congressional district. During that time, I saw entire bridges and roads washed away in Wyoming County, sinkholes and roads completely washed away in Northumberland County. I walked the cracked levee in Forty Fort, Luzerne County. I watched the effects of broken river gauges in Luzerne County and the fear in all the people in Wyoming Valley. I walked the streets of Athens and saw blocks of homes that were completely, completely destroyed. I visited homes in Shamokin and Coal Township that had water up to the second floor. I stood in a cemetery in Susquehanna County that had uprooted coffins and vaults. I listened to children in Union County asking me to help their mom and dad fix their home that had 5 feet of water in the living room.

I traveled to many businesses, both large and small, that were affected like Knoebels Amusement Park in Northumberland. I watched the workers and owners clean up 4 inches of flood mud that covered the entire park. I stood in the Danville Middle School that had water in the entire school. I watched the destruction from the Susquehanna River in Sunbury. I spoke to people in Sullivan County who watched half of their property washed away. I stood in a VFW in Halstead that had 6 feet of water in the basement. I walked through a trailer park that was just completely washed away.

I have seen the destruction the floodwaters caused in Selinsgrove and I have heard the stories from across the district that echoed the same concerns: My stream is filled with debris deposited over past years, we are overflowing the banks, resulting in damage to homes, roads, and bridges.

While I was personally seeing and hearing from residents the devastation caused by the flooding, I and my staff remained in constant contact with representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett, PEMA, Members of Congress in neighboring districts, State legislators, and officials at the State, county, and municipal level. I am extremely impressed with the way officials on all levels worked so well together, given the extremely difficult circumstances. I have never seen Federal Government, the State governments, and the local governments work so closely together than we saw over the last several months. I thank everyone involved for this tremendous effort and work that has been done to protect and help the citizens and communities that have been so terribly affected. Our first responders and rescue teams were heroes who went beyond the call of duty to save lives, and an example of that: I was in a town that was completely flooded. I was standing out in front of, I think it was a fire chief's home that was lost, just completely lost. But he wasn't working in his home, he was helping the neighbors try and save what they had.

The Red Cross workers and volunteers provided desperately needed aid and comfort to the victims of the flood. Additionally, the cooperation and coordination among State, county, local, and Federal entities truly has been remarkable. I am hopeful that we can all use the lessons learned from this disaster to further improve response capabilities for the next disaster. I realize that the road to recovery may be a long one but I believe that the spirit I saw in visiting with those affected by the flooding will lead the way.

I want to make clear that this is not a finger-point or blame-casting hearing. This is a hearing whereby we know we are not going to be able to stop flooding but what can we do to lessen the damage and become more efficient and more effective.

Chairman, thank so much for allowing me to make an opening statement.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. My pleasure. Thank you.

We are pleased now to have a very distinguished panel of witnesses before us today on this important topic.

Our first witness is Mrs. MaryAnn Tierney. Mrs. Tierney is the Regional Administrator for FEMA Region 3. She hasn't arrived yet, but she will be here pretty soon. She has been delayed, but I understand in the next 5 minutes she will be here, but I will go ahead and read her background anyway. Mrs. Tierney is the Regional Administrator for FEMA Region 3 based in Philadelphia, a position she has held since August 30, 2010. As Regional Administrator, she is responsible for coordinating FEMA's emergency preparedness, mitigation, and disaster response and recovery activities in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. Wow. Prior to joining FEMA, Mrs. Tierney held leadership positions in both the Philadelphia and New York City offices of emergency management, having managed more than 60 EOC ac-

tivations in New York and Philadelphia. She is a principal member of the National Fire Protection Association's technical committee on disaster, emergency management and business continuity programs. She also has served as an adjunct professor teaching graduate-level courses on emergency preparedness. Mrs. Tierney received her bachelor's degree in political science from American University and her master's of public administration from NYU. She has also graduated from the Center for Homeland Defense and Security's executive leadership program at the Naval Post Graduate School.

Our next witness is Colonel David Anderson. Colonel Anderson is the Commander of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore district, a position he assumed on July 17, 2009. In this capacity, Colonel Anderson oversees the 1,300 employees of the Baltimore district engauged in military construction, civil works, and international interagency and emergency support. Colonel Anderson previously served as a lieutenant in the 17th Engineer Battalion, 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood, commanded an airborne bridge company in the 20th Engineer Brigade at Fort Bragg, and was the executive officer of the 2nd Engineer Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division at Camp Castle in South Korea. Colonel Anderson has also served in the Army Congressional Liaison Office as a Legislative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army and as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. Colonel Anderson is a graduate of the United States Military Academy and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, where he completed a master's of science degree in National security resource strategy. He also earned a master's of science degree in engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. Welcome, sir.

Following Colonel Anderson, we will hear from Mr. Glenn Cannon. Mr. Cannon is the Director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, a position to which he was appointed by Governor Corbett on January 18, 2011. In this capacity, he coordinates FEMA support of county and local governments in the areas of civil defense, disaster preparedness, planning and response to and recovering from man-made and natural disasters. Prior to joining PEMA, Mr. Cannon served as administrative assistant in the Federal Emergency Management Agency where he was in charge of disaster operations and was responsible for the development and execution of interagency plans and procedures in response to Presidential disaster and emergency declarations. Mr. Cannon has also served as the County Manager and Chief Operating Officer of Allegheny County, the Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority, and the Director of the City of Pittsburgh's Department of Public Safety. I am partial to Pittsburgh. My dad is from Pittsburgh, so I have some Pennsylvanian blood in me. Mr. Cannon received his bachelor's degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, his master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University, and his juris doctor degree from Duquesne University School of law. Welcome, sir.

Our next witness will be Ms. Marita Wenner. I hope I am pronouncing that right. Ms. Wenner is the volunteer chair of the American Red Cross Pennsylvania State Disaster Committee, a position she has held since 2008. She is also currently serving as the

volunteer chairman of the board of the Wayne Pike chapter of the American Red Cross. Ms. Wenner has been a member of the Disaster Services Human Resources serving as the operations manager directorate for Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in Pennsylvania. Ms. Wenner previously served as the executive director of the Wayne Pike chapter of the American Red Cross and is a past President of the Association of Pennsylvania Red Cross Executives. Welcome.

Our next witness is Mr. James Brozena. Mr. Brozena is the executive director of the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority, a position he assumed in 2007. Prior to this position, Mr. Brozena was the County Engineer for more than 20 years. He has served as Project Manager for Luzerne County on the Wyoming Valley levee-raising project, a project he continues to oversee as Executive Director. Mr. Brozena has a bachelor's in civil engineering from Penn State University and is a registered Professional Engineer in Pennsylvania. Thank you. Welcome, sir.

Finally, we will receive testimony from Mr. James Good. Mr. Good is the owner of Arey Building Supply and a member of the Wysox Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Good also owns several other businesses in northern Pennsylvania. Mr. Good is a graduate of the Williamsport Area Community College and served in the United States Army. Welcome, sir.

Your entire written statements will appear in the record. I ask that you each summarize your testimony for approximately 5 minutes, and since Mrs. Tierney is here, we will recognize you for 5 minutes. Thank you very much.

STATEMENT OF MARYANN TIERNEY, REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR, REGION 3, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mrs. TIERNEY. Thank you. First, Mr. Chairman, I want to apologize for being 45 minutes early to the Towanda campus, which is a lovely campus. I recommend that you go there if you have a chance.

Good morning, Chairman Bilirakis, Vice Chairman Marino, Director Cannon, and guests. My name is MaryAnn Tierney and I am the Regional Administrator for Region 3 of the Federal Emergency Management Agency headquartered in Philadelphia. It is an honor to appear before you today on behalf of FEMA to discuss our response and recovery efforts in Pennsylvania before, during, and after Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

In my testimony, I will share some of our successes, challenges, and lessons learned from these two disasters and FEMA's on-going efforts to apply lessons learned to operations moving forward.

Let me begin by reporting that there is consensus that the partnership between the Commonwealth and Federal emergency response teams generally meet the community's needs and expectations in the aftermath of the disaster. I attribute this initial success to the teamwork established among key stakeholders in the public and private sectors, what we at FEMA commonly refer to as the whole community approach to emergency management. At this very early stage in the process, we have awarded well over a quarter-billion dollars in disaster relief to Pennsylvanians.

I especially welcome the opportunity to speak with you, Chairman Bilirakis, and Vice Chairman Marino after we last met at FEMA headquarters. The briefing was co-hosted by Administrator Craig Fugate and Deputy Administrator Richard Serino this past February 8 where we discussed the agency's capabilities to respond to and recover from disasters.

It is unfortunate that these recent disasters have so heavily impacted the Commonwealth but I thank you for being here to discuss the practical applications of those capabilities after seeing the impact the recent storms have had on Pennsylvania's families and communities.

Strategic decisionmaking, preparedness measures, and decisive preemptive action well before the storm hit were essential in ensuring a successful recovery. FEMA worked closely with State and local officials including Director Cannon and his team to prepare and assist impacted communities and individuals. FEMA pre-positioned its incident management assistance team in Pennsylvania to assist operations at the Initial Operating Facility, or IOF, as soon as they were needed. FEMA strategically staged resources in several locations to ensure maximum flexibility and distribution based on the storm's eventual track. This enabled FEMA to promptly support the Commonwealth's request for disaster assistance including the activation of 6 National urban search and rescue teams and 20 community relations teams deployed within 12 hours of the declaration. FEMA worked with State emergency management officials to quickly conduct Preliminary Damage Assessments, or PDAs, in order to get Federal disaster assistance approved expeditiously.

From August 3 to October 7, along with our State and local partners, we performed PDAs in 39 Pennsylvania counties. Pennsylvania was granted two major and two emergency disaster declarations as a result of these PDAs. The declarations allowed FEMA to provide supplemental Federal assistance to the Commonwealth under three major programs: Public Assistance, or PA, for the repair of damage infrastructure; Individual Assistance, or IA, for individuals and business disaster relief; and hazard mitigation for the prevention of future flooding incidents. In total, 29 counties have been designated to receive disaster relief under the IA programs, 35 for Public Assistance, and all counties for hazard mitigation. To support this effort, FEMA currently has 600 employees working out of the Harrisburg Joint Field Office, or JFO, and in the affected counties.

Since the initial declaration for Hurricane Irene, FEMA has provided support to our Commonwealth partners by providing applicant briefings and kickoff meetings. Of the 1,057 kickoff meetings scheduled, 697 have been completed. The Commonwealth is expecting between 1,500 and 2,000 applications which will result in the writing of approximately 6,000 project worksheets.

An effort of this magnitude does not occur without challenges and lessons learned. Although quick is never quick enough, as of today, FEMA has obligated more than $2.6 million for Tropical Storm Lee and $417,000 for Hurricane Irene. In addition to the PA program, 29 counties have been designated for assistance through the Individuals and Households Program, or IHP. Part of the IA

program for both disasters. IHP provides housing assistance and other needs assistance through financial or direct housing assistance. As of November 27, more than $129 million has been awarded to individuals and families in Pennsylvania through the IHP program.

To ensure that all eligible survivors have access to disaster assistance, FEMA supported the Commonwealth in opening 23 Disaster Recovery Centers, or DRCs. The first DRC was opened less than 72 hours after Tropical Storm Lee was declared. Since then, more than 27,000 survivors have visited and received assistance at these locations.

One of FEMA's top priorities Nation-wide is to provide temporary housing to disaster survivors. In April 2011, FEMA decided to use only Department of Housing and Urban Development-regulated manufactured homes. These manufactured homes are built to HUD-certified standards and are the same as any manufactured housing units consumers across the country may purchase. Today, more than 7 million people throughout the United States live in HUD-regulated manufactured homes as their primary residence.

We continue to streamline the way we coordinate with our emergency management partners, modifying our preparedness response and recovery strategies in light of lessons learned. Earlier, I mentioned whole community. This is an approach that recognizes that FEMA is only a part of the Nation's emergency management team. To successfully prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards, we must work with the entire emergency management community including governments, businesses, and the public.

This September's National Recovery Tabletop Exercise held in Region 3 was our first opportunity to explore the application of the National Disaster Recovery Framework, or NDRF using a large-scale multi-State catastrophic disaster scenario. The NDRF defines coordination structures, leadership roles, and responsibilities, and guidance for Federal agencies, State, and local and Tribal and territorial governments, and other partners involved in disaster planning and recovery.

From the earliest moments, FEMA worked closely with PEMA to identify obstacles or challenges to response and recovery effort. We included Commonwealth staff in the JFO, in the DRC and on our PA teams, which greatly enhanced our effective collaboration and essential local knowledge.

Although mission assignment requests, which are the means by which we test other Federal agencies, were handled capably through regional office coordination, we want to make the process even faster. In the future, the mission assignment manager will be embedded with the IMAT team to streamline and expedite the process of engaging our Federal partners in response efforts.

As we continue to support the Commonwealth in on-going recovery efforts, FEMA's priority will be addressing survivors' unmet needs and rebuilding impacted communities. Realize that some of the best ideas for local response and recovery come from outside FEMA. Any constructive suggestions that the committee and our partners can offer will no doubt contribute to an even more robust response and recovery during future disasters.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The statement of Mrs. Tierney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARYANN TIERNEY

NOVEMBER 29, 2011

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Bilirakis and distinguished Members of the subcommittee, my name is MaryAnn Tierney and I am the Regional Administrator for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region III Office. It is an honor to appear before you today on behalf of FEMA to discuss our response and recovery efforts in Pennsylvania before, during, and after Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. In my testimony today, I will discuss our successes, challenges, and lessons learned from these two disasters and FEMA's on-going efforts to apply lessons learned to improve the way we do business.

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS IN PENNSYLVANIA

FEMA worked closely with State officials before, during, and after Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee to prepare and then assist the affected communities and individuals. This included ensuring FEMA representatives were on scene with the appropriate State and local officials prior to Hurricane Irene's impact, which began late on August 26, 2011. We also provided continued support to State and local officials during response and recovery operations.

Days before Irene made landfall, FEMA pre-positioned numerous Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT) along the Eastern Seaboard to coordinate with State, Tribal, and local officials to identify needs and shortfalls affecting potential disaster response and recovery efforts. In Pennsylvania, the IMATs had pre-designated support staff ready to be deployed to assist operations at the FEMA Initial Operating Facility (IOF) as soon as they were needed. FEMA also strategically staged resources in several locations before Irene's landfall in order to be able to react quickly to the storm's eventual track. For example, the necessary equipment and work space—located in the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) building—was ready prior to the staffing of the facility. This enabled FEMA to promptly support the Commonwealth's request for Federal assistance, including the activation of six National Urban Search and Rescue Teams.

FEMA also deployed Community Relations (CR) Teams to assist with response and recovery. CR Specialists build working relationships among FEMA and our partners at the State and local level. In Pennsylvania, once the Presidential Disaster Declarations were announced, these CR teams were on the ground within 12 hours, making contact with individuals, businesses, community leaders and local officials to assist them in dealing with the events. CR Specialists were also deployed to support Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) and assist with the closing of shelters.

Currently, there are two active Emergency Declarations, one which was signed by President Obama on August 29, 2011, due to Hurricane Irene, and the second, which he signed on September 8, 2011, due to Tropical Storm Lee. Both Emergency Declarations authorized FEMA to provide Emergency Protective Measures including Direct Federal Assistance under the Public Assistance program to the counties identified by Governor Corbett.

In addition, there are two active major disaster declarations, one which was signed by the President on September 3, 2011, in response to Hurricane Irene, and the second which he signed on September 12, 2011, in response to Tropical Storm Lee. The major disaster declaration issued for Hurricane Irene authorizes Individual Assistance for 11 counties, Public Assistance for 14 counties and Hazard Mitigation for the entire Commonwealth. The major disaster declaration issued for Tropical Storm Lee authorizes Individual Assistance for 28 counties, Public Assistance for 25 counties, and Hazard Mitigation for the entire Commonwealth.

Given the wide area of the Commonwealth affected, FEMA worked with State emergency management officials to quickly conduct Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA) to get Federal disaster assistance approved as fast as possible. From August 30 to October 7, 2011, FEMA, working with State and local officials, performed PDAs for 39 counties in Pennsylvania. Subsequent to the declarations, FEMA has worked to obligate the funding to eligible communities and individuals. This is especially crucial for Public Assistance construction projects like road repair,

which, if not completed in the next couple of months, will not be able to commence until spring of 2012 due to winter conditions.

To support this effort, FEMA currently has 600 employees working in the Joint Field Office (JFO) and in the affected counties to respond to the needs of the citizens and the local governments. Our PA staff is working diligently with the PEMA to prioritize local government projects and support the writing of the project worksheets. Since the initial declaration for Hurricane Irene, Commonwealth officials have worked with county Emergency Managers to schedule and conduct Applicant Briefings, where local officials in all designated counties learn about available assistance and eligibility requirements. FEMA also supported PEMA staff at applicant Kickoff Meetings. At these meetings, each applicant's needs are assessed and a plan for the repair of the applicant's facilities is prepared. There are 1,057 Kickoff Meetings scheduled in the months of October through December and to date, 697 have been completed. The Commonwealth is expecting between 1,500–2,000 applications, which will result in the writing of approximately 6,000 project worksheets.

FEMA is working closely with the Commonwealth to prioritize assistance to those communities most in need of immediate assistance. For example, we are working to increase our knowledge and awareness of local conditions by leveraging the information local officials have to increase the speed with which we can provide them the money they need to repair and rebuild. As of November 16, 2011, we have obligated $921,840 for Tropical Storm Lee, and we are continuing to work with the Commonwealth to swiftly approve and award projects for Hurricane Irene.

In addition to the Public Assistance program, a combined total of 30 counties have been designated for assistance through the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), part of the Individual Assistance program, for both disasters. IHP provides housing assistance and grants for other serious, disaster-related needs through financial assistance or direct housing assistance. Housing assistance includes temporary housing (rental or temporary housing unit), repair, and/or replacement assistance. IHP also authorizes FEMA to construct permanent housing under certain circumstances, in cases where alternative housing resources are unavailable, or other forms of FEMA temporary housing assistance are not feasible or cost-effective. As of November 16, in response to both major disaster declarations, a combined total of $126 million has been provided to individuals and families in Pennsylvania through the IHP program.

Since the beginning of these disasters, we supported the Commonwealth in opening 22 DRCs, with the first DRCs opening less than 72 hours after Tropical Storm Lee was declared a major disaster. A DRC is a readily accessible facility, staffed by Federal, State, local, and voluntary agencies, where disaster assistance applicants may go for information about FEMA and other disaster assistance programs, for questions related to their case, or for the status of applications being processed by FEMA. DRCs also provide individuals with information on Small Business Administration (SBA) and National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) assistance programs. We will continue to support the Commonwealth and its citizens in recovery efforts and identify lessons learned to increase the speed and effectiveness of providing assistance to disaster survivors.

APPLYING LESSONS LEARNED TO IMPROVE PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY

As we have done in the past, we will continue to learn from our experiences to improve the way we do business. One of FEMA's top priorities is to provide temporary housing for disaster survivors. In the past, this effort has been hindered by an inability to quickly obtain quality housing for survivors. In April 2011, FEMA decided that going forward, only Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-regulated manufactured homes would be procured. These manufactured homes are built to HUD-certified standards and are the same as any manufactured housing units consumers across the country may purchase. Today, more than 7 million people throughout the United States live in HUD-regulated manufactured homes as their primary residence. HUD regulations for these units set stringent standards for construction materials and also require a health notice to be posted in the kitchen of each unit.

Understanding that the effects of winter weather could significantly delay the delivery of manufactured homes, PEMA requested FEMA move rapidly in meeting the housing needs of disaster survivors. Throughout the summer, FEMA has purchased 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom mobile home units built to HUD standards to support on-going housing missions and begin backfilling our inventory levels. However, as new units are being produced, FEMA continues to deplete our existing inventory of units comprised of tested Park Models and Mobile Homes, which meet the highest standard of quality. FEMA is also providing the same code-compliant park models and manu-

factured homes that comply with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, the guidelines that ensure buildings and structures are accessible for people with physical disabilities.

We also continue to improve the way we coordinate with our emergency management partners, modifying our preparedness, response, and recovery strategies in light of lessons learned. This "Whole Community" approach recognizes that FEMA is only a part of the Nation's emergency management team. In order to successfully prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards, we must work with the entire emergency management community. The Whole Community includes FEMA and our partners at the Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial governmental levels, non-governmental organizations such as faith-based and non-profit groups, the private sector and industry, and most importantly, individuals, families, and communities, who continue to be our greatest assets and the key to our success.

We learned that our partners need to be more involved in our preparedness activities in order to maximize their effectiveness in response and recovery. Since 2005, FEMA has sponsored over 750 National, Federal, regional, State, and local direct support exercises in coordination with its partners. This September, we held a National Recovery Tabletop Exercise (Recovery TTX) in the Washington metropolitan area. This exercise involved the whole community, with over 200 participants from Federal, State, Tribal, and non-governmental organizations. The Recovery TTX consisted of both plenary and breakout group sessions and focused on three planning horizons: Short-term, intermediate, and long-term recovery.

This exercise was also the first opportunity to explore the applications of the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) using a large-scale, multi-State catastrophic disaster scenario. The NDRF defines coordination structures, leadership roles and responsibilities, and guidance for Federal agencies, State, local, territorial, and Tribal governments, and other partners involved in disaster planning and recovery. The NDRF reflects input gathered through extensive stakeholder discussions which included outreach sessions conducted by FEMA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development in each of the ten FEMA Regions, and forums held in five cities across the country. The final NDRF incorporates comments, lessons learned, and recommendations from discussion roundtables held with professional associations, academic experts, and more than 600 stakeholders representing Federal, Tribal, State, and local governments, as well as public and private organizations.

In Pennsylvania, we identified both best practices and areas for improvement in coordinating with our partners during response and recovery. From the earliest moments, FEMA worked closely with PEMA to identify obstacles or challenges to the response and recovery effort. Incorporation of Commonwealth staff on JFO, DRC, and PA teams greatly enhanced our effectiveness and local knowledge. Having clearly defined responsibilities allowed us to deliver services smoothly and efficiently. For example, the staging of commodities at Fort Indiantown Gap during the response phase was successful because the point at which responsibility switched from FEMA to the Commonwealth was clear and explicit.

With time being of the essence during the initial stages of an event, we should be moving as quickly as possible to engauge other Federal agencies in the response effort. In Pennsylvania, Mission Assignment requests—which are the means by which we task other Federal agencies—were handled capably through regional office coordination, but we want to make this process even faster. We will do this in the future by imbedding a Mission Assignment Manager with the IMAT team to streamline and expedite the process of engaging our Federal partners in response efforts.

CONCLUSION

FEMA is committed to improving its effectiveness in supporting its partners in the wake of disasters. A key way we can improve is by identifying best practices and lessons learned from our response to disasters and incorporating these lessons into our standards and guidance. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mrs. Tierney.

I now call on Colonel Anderson. Sir, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF COLONEL DAVID E. ANDERSON, DISTRICT COMMANDER, BALTIMORE DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Colonel ANDERSON. Chairman Bilirakis, Congressman Marino, I am Colonel David Anderson, Commander of the U.S. Army District in Baltimore. Thanks very much for the opportunity to testify today about how our organization plans for, responds to, and recovers from high-water events with specific regard to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

The Corps is a very unique organization. The Baltimore District had responsibility in the civil works arena for the entire Susquehanna River Basin including the majority of central Pennsylvania. To our west, the Pittsburgh District has that portion of Pennsylvania that lies outside the Susquehanna River Basin and the Ohio Basin, and to our east, the Philadelphia District is responsible for the area of the Commonwealth that lies within the Delaware Basin, so three districts the Corps of Engineers all serve we believe seamlessly the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Responsibility for flood risk management in the United States, the topic here today, is of shared responsibility between multiple Federal, State, and local government agencies including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. State and local governments are responsible for requesting Federal assistance to address flooding for establishing floodplain zoning regulations and for enforcing those flood-wise requirements. These State and local policies in turn affect the performance of flood risk management projects that are constructed and maintained either by the Commonwealth or the State governments or the Federal Government. In addition, all levels of government must ensure the public is educated as to the risk they face and actions they should take at times of emergency.

In late August and early September, the Susquehanna River Basin experienced a series of significant precipitation events that caused historic flood through the East Coast. First, it was Hurricane Irene in late August, and then only a week and a half later, Tropical Storm Lee moved up from the Gulf and stalled over the basin. The Baltimore District and the Corps of Engineers exercised its full range of flood risk management programs to address these events as part of the community, this team sport that we call emergency response.

First, under the flood control and coastal emergency authority, we dispatched engineers, construction experts, and even public affairs officers to area levees and dams to monitor water levels, to activate emergency operations procedures and to help communicate important lifesaving information to the public. During the height of the storm, we had a 10-person team of engineers in central Pennsylvania to assist the evaluation of conditions of levees and floodwalls, to provide technical assistance and to support in flood fighting, and Congressman Marino, this was the Wilkes-Barre and the Forty Fort area where you saw the cracked levee, significant and, frankly, very dramatic evening for the local flood protection authority for our team that was supporting them. We fully staffed our dams to respond to any necessary actions and we had a staff of engineers monitoring weather and river stage conditions around

the clock to make sure that decisions regarding storage and release of water from the reservoirs were both timely and prudent.

At the same time, and in support of FEMA, with the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act authorities, we had 45 experts from various time frames providing assistance with debris, damage assessment, dam assessments, emergency temporary power, and temporary housing support. Again, that is part of the FEMA team under the National Response Plan.

Rain events in the river—the rain events along the 57 miles of Federally-built levees as well as higher water elevations throughout our systems of reservoirs created historic conditions but our projects prevented an estimated $4.1 billion in damages within the Susquehanna River Basin. Let me repeat that. The projects that we constructed in the Federal Government prevented an estimated $4.1 billion in damages within the basin. This included about $173 million in damages prevented by our reservoirs by holding water back during times of high water and $3.9 billion in damages prevented by our levees and floodwalls.

In the future as we work with local and State partners to address flood risks, we aim to reduce the probability of flooding by incorporating structural as well as non-structural solutions. While levees and floodwalls represent the traditional structural built solution, we also need to strongly consider non-structural solutions such as flood warning systems, emergency evacuation plans, floodproofing of structures and, frankly, relocations and buyouts, getting people away from the water.

So as new projects are being formulated, we focus on the most effective combination of all tools available to help lower risk.

Sir, I am out of time, but thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before the committee and I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Colonel Anderson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF COLONEL DAVID E. ANDERSON

NOVEMBER 29, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the subcommittee, I am Colonel David Anderson, Commander of the Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you about our how our organization plans, responds to, and recovers from high-water events, and with specific regard to the recent Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee events.

OVERVIEW

The Corps is a unique organization, with a diverse military and civil works mission. The Baltimore District is 1,200 employees strong and executes its Civil Works mission primarily in flood risk management, ecosystem restoration, and navigation throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, from its headwaters in New York through Pennsylvania to the shorelines of Maryland and Virginia and to the Atlantic coastline.

The Corps owns or operates 692 dams that provide hydropower, water supply, and crucial flood damage reduction throughout the United States, including 17 dams in the Susquehanna River and Potomac River Basins, 11 of which are in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Corps is also responsible for executing an important regulatory program that helps protect tens of thousands of acres of aquatic resources per year, and we work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide valuable engineering expertise during times of National emergencies.

We are the Army's engineers, focusing our expertise on building training facilities, hospitals, barracks, and other assets across the Department of Defense that help

improve the lives of our service members and increase our military's ability to protect and defend our Nation.

Included in our diverse missions, and related to the topic here, is our role and responsibility in flood risk management and emergency response.

Responsibility for flood risk management in the United States is a shared responsibility among multiple Federal, State, and local government agencies with a complex set of programs and authorities. The authority to determine how land is used in floodplains and to enforce flood-wise requirements is entirely the responsibility of State and local governments. Floodplain management choices made by State and local officials, in turn, impact the effectiveness of Federal programs to mitigate flood risk and the performance of Federal flood risk management infrastructure. Importantly, we must ensure the public is educated both as to the risks they face and actions they can take to reduce their risks.

AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 2011 FLOODING

The Baltimore District, which has responsibility for the Susquehanna River Basin, exercised its full range of flood risk management programs in response to Hurricane Irene in August 2011 and Tropical Storm Lee in September 2011. These two events produced significant precipitation in the Susquehanna River Basin and caused flooding throughout the East Coast. First, Hurricane Irene passed through the Northeast Corridor, making landfall on August 26–28, 2011. Then, only a week and a half later, Tropical Storm Lee moved up from the Gulf of Mexico and stalled over the Northeast, creating moderate to major flooding along the Upper Susquehanna and mainstem Susquehanna Rivers. In some locations, the flood stage was exceeded by more than 15 feet, with numerous river gauges exceeding previous records set mostly during Tropical Storm Agnes in June 1972 and during the storm of June 2006.

Rainfall totals ranged from 6–15 inches, mostly from Tropical Storm Lee, during the period of September 6–9, 2011. The heaviest rain fell over the mainstem Susquehanna and Upper Susquehanna River Basins, generally in a north-south band running from Binghamton, New York to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Some of these areas had already been affected by heavy rains associated with Hurricane Irene.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND PREPAREDNESS

The Corps' emergency response authorities derive from the Stafford Act, the authority of 33 U.S.C. 701n (referred to as Pub. L. 84–99 or PL 84–99) and our regulatory statutes. The Corps also provides reimbursable emergency response and recovery support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Pub. L. 93–288, as amended), and in emergencies the Corps can expedite permitting through its own regulatory program.

Under Pub. L. 84–99, the Corps is authorized to undertake activities that include disaster preparedness, advance measures, emergency operations, and rehabilitation of eligible flood damage reduction projects damaged by flood or rehabilitation of Federally authorized shore protection projects.

Disaster preparedness consists of functions required to ensure that the Corps is ready to respond to a broad range of disasters and emergencies. Corps flood preparedness includes coordination, planning, training, and conducting response exercises with key local, State, and Tribal stakeholders/partners. Establishing and maintaining good working relationships benefits both the Corps and its partner and improves communications during a flood response. Also, confirming points of contact for both State and local partners and the Corps on a periodic basis allows for an exchange of information and updating on key areas of interest. Being aware of State and local authorities, requirements, capabilities, and expectations helps the Corps determine how it can best supplement State and local needs. Conversely, educating State and local entities about Corps authorities, requirements, and expectations eliminates potential gaps and overlaps. These activities ensure Corps personnel assigned emergency assistance responsibilities are trained and equipped to accomplish their missions.

The Rehabilitation and Inspection Program (RIP) provides for the inspection and rehabilitation of Federal and non-Federal flood risk management projects damaged or destroyed by floods, and the rehabilitation of Federally authorized and constructed hurricane and storm damage reduction projects damaged or destroyed by wind, wave, or water action other than that of an ordinary nature. A project in the program remains eligible for acceptance into the program for future rehabilitation as long as it is properly operated and maintained as determined by a Corps inspection, which is conducted annually.

In accordance with the Department of Homeland Security's National Response Framework, the Corps is the executing agency under Emergency Support Function No. 3 (Public Works and Engineering), on behalf of the Department of Defense. Typical mission assignments include Emergency Temporary Power, Debris Removal, Commodities/Water, Temporary Housing/Roofing, Infrastructure Assessments, Urban Search and Rescue, among others. As a result of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, the Baltimore District supported FEMA by deploying 45 experts for various time frames for assistance.

The Corps responded to the high-water event by immediately dispatching engineers, construction experts, and public affairs officials to area levees and dams, monitoring water levels, activating emergency operations procedures in preparation for potential flooding, and helping to communicate important life-saving information to the public. For example, during the height of the storm, we deployed a 10-person team of engineers to central Pennsylvania to assist in evaluating the condition of levees and floodwalls, providing technical assistance, and supporting the flood fight.

One example of the measures taken occurred in Wilkes-Barre, where the river gauge recorded 42.66 feet of water at its peak, a full 1.75 feet higher than Tropical Storm Agnes in 1972, which reached 40.91 feet. The Wyoming Valley Levee System, originally constructed in 1936, consists of three levee systems at Plymouth, Kingston-Exeter, and Wilkes-Barre-Hanover Township. The levees extend for approximately 15 miles with 13 storm water pump stations. Tropical Storm Lee tested this system with tremendous flows and water pressure placed on the structure.

On-site patrols identified two locations in Forty-Fort that required interim solutions in order to reduce the risk of damage to the levee system. The first incident occurred late in the day Thursday, September 8, where rising waters caused cracks to develop on the system's floodwall. In order to stabilize the wall and maintain flood protection, we provided on-site expertise and made recommendations to the local flood authority to add ballast—or weight—to the land side of the wall. By building up additional material on the land side, a flood wall is stabilized against the pressure of the rising water. A local contractor provided the necessary equipment, staff, and truckloads of material to perform the repairs, and they, along with the flood authority and the Corps, worked throughout the night and finished the repairs around 2 a.m.

A few hours after repairing the floodwall, the Corps was called to a second location in Forty-Fort that needed repairs. A large boil, an area where differential pressure allows seepage and the possible transport of fine grained material, measuring 50 feet in diameter was occurring on the landside toe of the levee. Boils are typical during a high-water event, and if not properly monitored, they can destabilize the levee. Our engineers again recommended covering the area with a specialized material and loading it with additional fill to prevent further degradation of the levee. By adding additional fill, weight is added to the land side of the levee, increasing its stability. The repair was completed and further damage was avoided.

As described in Wilkes-Barre, teams of engineers perform 24-hour levee patrols at the Federal projects, walking the levees and examining the flood walls and pump stations to ensure proper performance during significant flow events. Typically, our engineers look for cracking, tilting, and soft foundation conditions around the floodwall. They also look for boils and properly working closure structures, drainage structures, and pump stations. They work in partnership with State and local officials to provide technical assistance and support for levees that are not operated by the Corps. This intensive effort is conducted so that issues can be identified and resolved early, reducing the risk of a more serious problem to structures or people.

Although flood damages in the entire Northeast region were devastating, in many areas where Corps projects exist, their operation by the Corps effectively reduced an additional estimated $6 billion of damages to the residents in the Northeast.

PUB. L. 84–99—FLOOD CONTROL AND COASTAL EMERGENCIES

Following a significant event, the Corps has the authority to rehabilitate flood risk management projects as authorized by Pub. L. 84–99, which is funded by the Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE) Appropriation. It includes responsibility for disaster preparedness, emergency operations, rehabilitation of flood damage reduction projects, provision of emergency water, advance measures when the threat of flooding is imminent, and participation in FEMA-led hazard mitigation teams. The Corps has the ability to execute emergency response operations and specific activities under this authority; a Presidential declaration is not required. Following an event, the Corps releases a public notice to Federal and non-Federal sponsors, who can submit a formal/written request for assistance.

Rehabilitation is limited to those projects that have been previously and regularly inspected (called "active" projects) and determined to be in acceptable condition. In most cases, these projects are maintained by local jurisdictions. In accordance with Corps' regulations, assistance for "active" projects is limited to repair to pre-disaster condition and level of protection, must be beyond normal operation and maintenance, must have construction repair costs greater than $15,000, and must have a benefit-to-cost ratio of 1.0 or greater. Channel restoration, within the project limits, to pre-flood hydraulic capacity may be eligible when the channel capacity has been decreased to 75 percent or less of pre-event capacity.

Post-storm, the Corps deployed teams to the affected areas to conduct initial assessments of damages to our flood risk management projects. The results from these assessments will be combined with a sponsors' written request for assistance, and projects will be considered for eligibility under the Pub. L. 84–99 Program. Many projects sustained varying levels of damage, some more critical than others.

Funding for repair of eligible damages is 100% Federal cost for Federal projects and 80% Federal, 20 percent local sponsor for non-Federal projects. Funding is provided through the Corps' FCCE appropriations account.

Following Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, a Public Notice was issued on September 16, 2011 to Federal and non-Federal sponsors whereby sponsors could submit a formal/written request for assistance per the previously described criteria. The Public Notice was posted on the Baltimore District website and the 30-day window ended October 16, 2011.

Due to the damages caused by the record flooding in 2011, the Corps is using a prioritization process to differentiate the level of need and to facilitate prioritized funding requirements. These are based primarily on those projects that pose the greatest risk to life safety and other factors.

Requirements for funding as a result of September 2011 flooding are being evaluated by Corps Headquarters, along with requirements for damages resulting from other major natural disasters which occurred in 2011, namely flooding in the Mississippi River and Missouri River Basins.

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

The Corps shares with FEMA, both the expertise and mandate under its respective authorities and missions to address the Nation's vulnerabilities to flood-related disasters and damages. Since passage of the Flood Control Act of 1936 established a Federal role in flood management, the Corps authorized responsibilities have expanded to include developing structural and nonstructural solutions to managing flood risks, inspecting the condition of existing flood management infrastructure, providing technical and planning support to States and communities, conducting advance emergency measures to alleviate impending flooding, providing emergency flood fight support, and rehabilitating levees and other flood management infrastructure damaged by flooding. In May 2006, the Corps established the National Flood Risk Management Program to take the first step of bringing together other Federal agencies, State and local governments and agencies, and the private sector to develop and implement a unified National flood risk management strategy that eliminates conflicts between different flood risk management programs and takes advantage of all opportunities for collaboration. In recent years, the Corps has placed an increasing emphasis on nonstructural approaches to flood risk management. Nonstructural alternatives focus on efforts and measures to reduce flood damages in an area by addressing the development in the floodplain, such as: Floodplain zoning, participating in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), developing and implementing flood warning systems (coordinated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's flood warning program) and emergency evacuation plans, and flood-proofing individual structures as well as removing structures from the extreme flood hazard areas. Other measures, such as setback levees, are also being utilized by the Corps, as they typically offer greater natural use of the floodplain while still providing structural protection from floodwaters if completely non-structural alternatives are not viable.

Traditionally, Corps efforts to address flooding hazards have been through civil works projects to reduce the probability of flooding through the construction of levees or other flood management infrastructure. As projects are formulated, we now focus on the most effective combination of tools available that citizens may use to lower their flood risk, not only reducing the probability of flooding, but also reducing the consequences should a flood occur. Furthermore, the decision on which tools to implement involves all stakeholders.

LEVEE SAFETY PROGRAM

The Corps has had a long history of planning, designing, constructing, and inspecting a multitude of levee systems and conducting flood fighting throughout the Nation. The Corps established its Levee Safety Program in 2007 with the mission to assess the integrity and viability of levees and recommend courses of action to make sure that levee systems do not present unacceptable risks to the public, property, and environment. The Levee Safety Program activities focus on public safety as its top priority. Some specific Levee Safety Program activities involve:

- Populating and maintaining the National Levee Database to serve as a living, dynamic record of information relative to the status and safety of the Nation's levee systems. The National Levee Database was opened to public access on October 27, 2011 and can be found at *(http://nld.usace.army.mil).*
- Applying a levee screening tool that combines inspection data with a preliminary engineering assessment and maximizing the use of existing information (inspection rates and consequence data) and local knowledge of levee performance. Results will be used to rank levees based on relative risk to help inform decisions about future actions to improve public safety associated with the levees.
- Incorporating changes and improvements associated with the state-of-the-art professional engineering practice into levee safety policy and procedures.
- Conducting both routine (every year) and periodic (every 5 years) inspections for the levees in the Corps' Levee Safety Program—
  - To ensure that the levee system will perform as expected.
  - To identify deficiencies or areas which need monitoring or immediate repair.
  - To assess the integrity of the levee system in order to identify any changes over time.
  - To collect information in order to be able to make informed decisions about future actions.
  - To determine eligibility for Federal rehabilitation funding for the levee in accordance with Pub. L. 84–99.
  - To determine if the levee is being properly operated and maintained.

Levees within the Corps Levee Safety Program include those which are: (1) Federally authorized and Corps operated and maintained; (2) Corps constructed and locally operated and maintained; and (3) locally constructed and locally maintained, but have been accepted in to the Corps Rehabilitation and Inspection Program (RIP). Levees within the Corps program consist of approximately 14,600 miles or 2,000 levee systems. The Corps will communicate the condition and associated risk of these levee systems and recommend actions that may include immediate repair of certain deficiencies and/or interim risk reduction measures. The Corps will assist the local sponsor and other stakeholders to develop the best path forward. Levees do not and cannot eliminate risk and are not the only available flood risk reduction tool.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

Under the Floodplain Management Services Program, the Corps can provide technical assistance with flood-related issues. Technical assistance takes the form of hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, inundation mapping, geographic information system analyses, assessing structural and non-structural alternatives (including floodproofing and stormwater management measures), determining potential benefits and costs, assessing flood hazards and mitigation, comprehensive planning and risk management, and other related analyses and assessments. This program can provide concept plans for alternative solutions to flooding problems but cannot result in design or construction of projects.

STUDY—DESIGN—CONSTRUCTION

The Corps also has a range of study, design, and construction authorities for flood risk management. There are the "large" project authorities such as that used for the Wyoming Valley and Lackawanna River Flood Risk Management projects and "small" project authorities, for projects generally less than $7 million total. The traditional and most common way for the Corps to help a community solve a water resource problem is through individually authorized studies and projects. The Corps jointly conducts a cost-shared study with a non-Federal sponsor and, if shown by the study to be feasible, constructs the project. This approach requires that Congress provide the Corps with authority and funds to first accomplish a reconnaissance and feasibility study and, then, to design and construct the project. Local sponsors share the study and construction costs with the Corps and usually pay for

all operation and maintenance costs. This approach may be used to address any one of a variety of water resource problems, including navigation, flood risk management, and ecosystem restoration.

PARTNERING WITH FEMA ON FLOODPLAIN MAPPING

Both the Corps and FEMA have a long history of partnering on floodplain mapping as part of the NFIP. Over the past 30 years, the Corps has completed more than 3,000 studies for FEMA related to identifying the flood potential of various areas across the country. These studies involved activities such as flood plain delineations and detailed flood insurance studies. In August 2005, both agencies signed an agreement that further streamlined the process for the Corps to provide flood plain mapping and other related services to FEMA.

The Corps cooperates with FEMA and other Federal, State, and local agencies through numerous avenues in support of FEMA's floodplain mapping efforts. Currently, the Corps and FEMA partnership is the strongest it has ever been. The Corps and FEMA will continue this partnership as FEMA transitions into their Risk Mapping, Analysis, and Planning (RiskMAP) program.

SILVER JACKETS PROGRAM—AGENCY COLLABORATION

The Silver Jackets program is an interagency team with members that have some aspect of flood risk management/reduction as part of their mission. Traditionally, different agencies wear different colored jackets when responding to emergencies. The name Silver Jackets is used to underscore the common mission of the diverse agencies involved.

Silver Jackets includes more than 12 active Federal, State, regional, and professional agencies and organizations. Their focus over the past year has been on flood risk management outreach and learning others' programs. The team developed an interagency flood risk management program guide that lists all Federal, State, and regional flood-related programs. Most recently, the team met to discuss the recent flooding and the actions each agency took during and after the event. Flood-related issues and how our programs can be used continue to be discussed among the various agencies.

The Pennsylvania Silver Jackets team recently submitted a proposal for a flood inundation mapping project for the City of Harrisburg and several adjacent communities. The proposed project leverages resources from the Corps, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, U.S. Geologic Survey, National Weather Service, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and The Harrisburg Authority. The project will provide a graphical extension to river forecasts issued by the National Weather Service in partnership with the Susquehanna River Flood Forecast and Warning System. The Harrisburg pilot project was selected to move forward.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a comprehensive review of our role and programs for flood risk management, and an understanding of Corps programs for flood risk management. The Corps uses its authorities, programs, and role in flood risk management to the optimum and maximum extent in order to reduce the risk to life, structures, and property. We are all responsible for our safety.

This concludes my testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions you or other Members of the subcommittee may have.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Colonel. I appreciate it very much. Now Mr. Cannon, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF GLENN M. CANNON, DIRECTOR, PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. CANNON. Chairman Bilirakis, Congressman Marino, I am Glenn Cannon, Director and Homeland Security Advisor for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. I am pleased to have this opportunity to appear before you to discuss the response to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee and the lessons learned from those storms. I very much appreciate the committee's concern that at the Federal, State, and local level we continue to focus on ensuring effective preparedness and response to disasters.

As you mentioned earlier, sir, after Hurricane Katrina, I was hired as the assistant administrator in the Department of Homeland Security at FEMA. I was brought in to help fix the problems that happened during FEMA's response to Hurricane Katrina. At FEMA, I was in charge of disaster operations for 56 States and territories and was responsible for, among other things, the development and execution of interagency plans and procedures in response to Presidential disasters. I believe the lessons we learned from that disaster made us better prepared to respond to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

In late August, PEMA, other State agencies, county and local emergency management agencies, and FEMA began preparing for Hurricane Irene. Since that time, we responded to Irene. We started the recovery process from Irene. We prepared for Tropical Storm Lee. We responded to Tropical Storm Lee. We started the recovery process from Lee and are now back in the recovery phase for both Irene and Lee. It has been a very hectic and stressful period of time with long hours for those at the Federal, State, county, and local level who have been involved with both Irene and Lee. Our State Emergency Operations Center was at elevated levels just about every day from August 25 until the last week of September. For several days during Tropical Storm Lee, our EOC was at level 1 the first time since 9/11/01.

At the State level, Governor Corbett took a hands-on approach regarding the disasters and committed all necessary State resources. Governor Corbett, his executive staff, Lt. Governor Cawley and our Cabinet secretaries were camped out at PEMA during these storms and actively involved in the operations. I think we may have set a record for Cabinet meetings held in an agency during a 1-week period of time.

The magnitude of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee was immense. With regards to disaster destruction, Hurricane Agnes in 1972 has been the benchmark in Pennsylvania. With Tropical Storm Lee, there are areas with flood levels that exceeded Agnes. Other areas that had flood records and across the State, the total amount of devastation was worse than any storm since Agnes.

Here are many of the key statistics that show the magnitude of our storms. For Hurricane Irene, there were 11 counties declared for individual assistance, 14 declared for public, and 13 declared for emergency protective measures. For Tropical Storm Lee, there were 28 counties declared for individual assistance, 30 counties declared for public assistance, and 44 counties were declared for emergency protective measures. We have 67 counties in Pennsylvania; 44 were declared.

To date, there have been over 92,000 people registered for individual assistance and over $129 million in individual assistance has been awarded. The preliminary damage assessments for public assistance have totaled over $200 million. The actual PA damage number will likely double or triple that amount. There have been over 1,800 Small Business Administration loans approved for a total of over $73 million. We have had over 26,000 visits to our 23 Disaster Recovery Centers that MaryAnn mentioned.

Immediately after the storms hit, in coordination with FEMA, over 576,000 bottles of water and over 147,000 emergency meals

were delivered to communities that needed these essential supplies.

With the widespread destructive force of these storms hitting not only Pennsylvania but the entire East Coast, it was a major challenge for all in the emergency management community. Now it is an even bigger challenge recovering from the storms. Here are some of my thoughts on the lessons learned and some of the things upon which we should try to improve.

First and foremost, we need to keep reminding our citizens about preparedness in our Ready PA campaign. You probably have seen Governor Tom Corbett on television or heard him on the radio doing highly important public service announcements about Ready PA. The purpose of Ready PA is to motivate Pennsylvanians to take action to prepare for a disaster. It encourages all Pennsylvanians to be informed, be prepared and be involved. The on-going purpose of Ready PA is to make our citizens fully aware of this reality and have them fully prepared if such a situation occurs.

With regard to power outages and the aftermath in the storms, we continue to look at the problems with power and the extent of time that they are out. We are working with the Public Utility Commission looking at doing tabletop exercises to try to help them assess how to better prepare for and respond to these situations.

We also learned, and we have had some of the discussion about the huge benefit of flood mitigation projects. We believe that probably as a result of these storms we will receive requests for 400 to 500 home buyouts from the storms. In addition, the flood levee system in Luzerne County that wasn't there during Hurricane Agnes probably saved lives and, as we have heard, billions of dollars of property damage. Nation-wide, FEMA estimates that for every dollar spent on mitigation, $4 are saved.

I would like to thank everybody that has been involved in the preparation for and the response to and recovery from these storms, this tremendous effort and work that has been done to protect and help the citizens and communities that have been so adversely affected.

One final point, and I think it is critical to where we are. The success we had in the response to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee was in large part due to the prior work done in enhancing our emergency response capabilities. The events related to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita highlighted the critical importance of a comprehensive, all-hazard planning and training effort across our country. In particular, the Emergency Management Performance Grant program and the Homeland Security Grant program have played key roles in providing the resources needed to strengthen our response capabilities.

In light of the current budget crisis, I fully appreciate the difficult situation faced by Members of Congress in making budget cuts. As you know, over the past year, cuts have been made to the Emergency Management Grant program and to the Homeland Security Grant program. I am very concerned that further cuts will be made to these and other programs which would jeopardize our ability to respond effectively to future disasters. Therefore, I strongly urge you to fight for the resources our emergency manage-

ment community, including our first responders, needs to sustain our response capability and protect our citizens.

Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Cannon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GLENN M. CANNON

NOVEMBER 29, 2011

Chairman Bilirakis, Ranking Member Richardson, Congressman Marino and Members of the committee, I am Glenn Cannon, Director and Homeland Security Advisor for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). I am pleased to have the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the response to the Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee and lessons learned from those storms.

I very much appreciate this committee's concern that—at the Federal, State, and local level—we continue to focus on ensuring effective preparedness and response to disasters. As some of you may know, after Hurricane Katrina, I was hired as an assistant administrator in the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). I was brought in to help fix the problems that happened during FEMA's response to that disaster. At FEMA, I was in charge of Disaster Operations for 56 States and territories and was responsible for, among other things, the development and execution of interagency plans and procedures in response to Presidential disaster and emergency declarations. I believe the lessons we learned from that disaster made us better prepared to respond to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

In late August, PEMA, other State agencies, county and local emergency management agencies, and FEMA began preparing for Hurricane Irene. Since that time, we responded to Irene, started the recovery process from Irene, prepared for Tropical Storm Lee, responded to Lee, started the recovery process from Lee, and now are back in the recovery phase for both Irene and Lee. It has been a very hectic and stressful period of time—with long hours—for those at the Federal, State, county, and local level who have been involved with Irene and Lee. The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was at elevated levels just about every day from August 25 until the last week of September. For several days, the SEOC was at Level 1 for the first time since September 11, 2001.

At the State level, Governor Corbett took a hands-on approach regarding the disasters and committed all necessary State resources. Governor Corbett, his executive staff, Lieutenant Governor Cawley, and cabinet secretaries were camped out at PEMA during these storms and actively involved in the operations. I think we may have set a record for cabinet meetings held at an agency during a 1-week time period.

The magnitude of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee was immense. With regards to disaster destruction, Hurricane Agnes in 1972 has been the benchmark in Pennsylvania. With Tropical Storm Lee, there are areas with flood levels that exceeded Agnes, other areas that had record flood levels, and across the State the total amount of devastation was worse than any storm since Agnes. Here are many of the key statistics that show the magnitude of the storms:

- For Hurricane Irene, there were 11 counties declared for Individual Assistance, 14 counties declared for Public Assistance, and 13 counties declared for Emergency Protective Measures.
- For Tropical Storm Lee, there were 28 counties declared for Individual Assistance, 30 counties declared for Public Assistance, and 44 counties declared for Emergency Protective Measures.
- To date, there have been over 92,000 people register for Individual Assistance (IA) and over $128 million in IA has been awarded.
- The Preliminary Damage Assessments for Public Assistance (PA) totaled over $180 million and the actual PA damage number likely will be double or triple that amount. Currently, there are about 1,650 applicants for Public Assistance.
- There have been over 1,800 Small Business Administration (SBA) loans approved for a total of over $68 million.
- We have had over 26,000 visits to our 23 Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs).
- Immediately after the storms hit, in coordination with FEMA, over 576,000 bottles of water and over 147,000 emergency meals were delivered to communities that needed these essential supplies.

With the widespread destructive force of these storms hitting not only Pennsylvania but the entire East Coast, it was a major challenge for all in the emergency management community. Now it's an even bigger challenge recovering from the

storms. Here are some of my thoughts on the lessons learned and some of the things upon which we should try to improve.

First and foremost, we need to keep reminding our citizens about preparedness and our "ReadyPA" campaign. You probably have seen Governor Tom Corbett on television or heard him on the radio doing highly important Public Service Announcements about ReadyPA. The purpose of ReadyPA is to motivate Pennsylvanians to take action to prepare for a disaster. ReadyPA encourages all Pennsylvanians to: Be Informed, Be Prepared, and Be Involved. Nation-wide experience has shown that, in major emergencies or disasters, people need to be prepared to make it on their own for a period of time. Local officials and emergency relief workers will respond after a disaster, but they may not be able to reach everyone right away. As we saw with Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, it may take significant time after an emergency for things such as power or water to be fully restored. That is why it's critical for everyone to be prepared to survive on his or her own for at least 72 hours in the event of an emergency. The on-going purpose of ReadyPA is to make our citizens fully aware of this reality and have them fully prepared if such a situation occurs. The ReadyPA website can be found at: *www.ReadyPA.org.*

With regards to power outages, in the aftermath of the storms we had citizens who were without power for a week to 10 days. We also had people who experienced power outages for over a week from an early season snow storm that hit the eastern part of the State several weeks ago. PEMA's role is very limited regarding power outage matters and I appreciate the challenges the utilities face in restoring power in these situations. However, long power outage issues need to be reviewed. It is my understanding that the Public Utility Commission is considering doing a tabletop exercise with the utilities to try and assess what can be done to better prepare for and respond to these situations. I think such a tabletop exercise would be very beneficial to see how things can be improved.

We also learned a lesson about the huge benefits—on the human safety side and the property damage side—of flood mitigation projects. Since 1996, PEMA has used Federal mitigation funds to acquire about 1,400 homes which removed an estimated 3,500 people from dangerous flood areas. Acquisition is considered the "best" mitigation practice because it eliminates the hazard of flooding in a risk area: No homes=no losses. Based on the amount of homes damaged in Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, we anticipate that PEMA will receive requests for 400–500 home buyouts from the storms. In addition, the flood levee system in Luzerne County—that wasn't there during Hurricane Agnes—probably saved lives and over a billion dollars in property damage. Nation-wide, FEMA estimates that for every $1 spent on mitigation, $4 are saved. I highly encourage this committee to make funding of Federal mitigation projects a priority.

On the recovery front, there are several important matters to note. At the beginning of the recovery, FEMA did not think it could support the large number of DRCs that we needed opened in the State and get them up and running as quickly as we needed. We worked jointly with FEMA and moved aggressively on the matter. The result—we had DRCs opened in record time and in record numbers. For future disasters, it should be a reminder that—when it comes to helping our citizens—where there's a will, there's a way to get things done. On the housing front, getting citizens into Temporary Housing Units (THUs) has been the biggest challenge during the recovery. I know that it is a very complex matter at the Federal and local level and I hope that progress will continue to be made to get all people in THUs as soon as possible. On the business front, SBA's 4% interest rate continues to be a concern for many small businesses. I would encourage this committee to see whether SBA will lower the interest rate in light of the devastation from these storms. The viability of the affected businesses is crucial to the future recovery of our flood-ravaged communities.

I thank everyone involved—in the preparation for, the response to, and the recovery from these storms—for the tremendous effort and work that has been done to protect and help the citizens and communities that have been so adversely affected. Our first responders and rescue teams were heroes who went beyond the call of duty to save lives. There were neighbors helping neighbors and strangers helping strangers. The cooperation and coordination among State, county, local, and Federal entities truly has been remarkable. On the political front, the assistance given on these disasters has been so terrific and so nonpartisan. When I was in Duryea, Luzerne County, FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate was there to see the devastation first hand. He told me "Glenn, whatever you need, call me and you'll have it." When I was in Noxen and Forkston, Wyoming County, Congressman Marino told me he would call the Chairman of this committee, Peter King, to absolutely make certain we had everything we needed to help our citizens and communities. Simply put—the worst of Mother Nature was met with the best of human nature.

The success we had in the response to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee was, in large part, due to the prior work done in enhancing our emergency response capabilities. The events related to Hurricane Katrina and Rita highlighted the critical importance of comprehensive all-hazard planning and training. In particular, the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) have played key roles in providing the resources needed to strengthen our State response capabilities. In light of the current budget crisis, I fully appreciate the difficult situation faced by Members of Congress in making budget cuts. As you know, over the past year cuts have been made to EMGP and HSGP. I am very concerned that further cuts will be made to these and other programs which will jeopardize our ability to respond effectively to future disasters. Therefore, I strongly urge you to fight for the resources our emergency management community, including our first responders, need to sustain our response capabilities and protect our citizens.

On behalf of Governor Corbett and the 12 million Pennsylvanians we serve, I again want to thank you the Members of this committee and the entire United States Congress for your continued support of PEMA and our partners in public safety across the State. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I appreciate it very much.

Now we will ask Ms. Wenner to testify for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MARITA C. WENNER, VOLUNTEER CHAIR, PENNSYLVANIA STATE DISASTER COMMITTEE, AMERICAN RED CROSS

Ms. WENNER. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Members and staff of the subcommittee. I am honored to appear here today on behalf of the American Red Cross. My name is Marita Wenner, and I am a resident of this community and I serve as the volunteer chair of the Pennsylvania State Disaster Committee for the American Red Cross.

I started my Red Cross career responding to single-family fires in Wayne and Pike counties, helping my neighbors recover from devastation of losing all of their belongings, having nowhere to go, and not knowing what to do next. I am one of thousands of Red Cross volunteers who respond to disasters across the country when the need arises.

Over the past 20 years, I have learned that whether it is a house fire or a catastrophic disaster event, people have the same concerns and needs. They need information on where to go for help, how to begin their recovery, and most of all, they need someone to listen to their story with a caring heart. This is a small part of what the American Red Cross does in times of disaster, and I am fortunate to be part of this outstanding organization.

Today's hearing's topic is of vital interest to the Red Cross and particularly important to me and my colleagues serving both at the National level and here in Pennsylvania.

This has been a historic year for disaster response. Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee caused devastating flooding and wind damage in communities from North Carolina to New England affecting millions of residents. These storms flooded roads, damaged and destroyed homes, caused power outages, and prompted the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of families. In response to the threat of Hurricane Irene, the Red Cross mobilized a massive response. Thousands of prepackaged meals and over 240 emergency response vehicles were deployed across the East Coast. As Irene made landfall, more than 27,000 people found safe haven in approximately 500 shelters. After Tropical Storm Lee hit, some resi-

dents returned to find their homes with damage beyond repair. Red Cross shelters remained open for several weeks in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New Jersey.

I was dispatched along with many other volunteers prior to landfall of Hurricane Irene to the New York City chapter where I worked directing the preparedness activities anticipating what might be one of the worst natural disasters the city and State had ever encountered. Post-landfall, the valuable lessons that we have learned from past catastrophic hurricanes helped us mount an integrated and collaborative response with our government and nongovernment partners across the northeast United States. After 2 weeks in New York, I shifted my focus to Pennsylvania. With my experience of prior flooding events in Pennsylvania, I understood the enormous disaster implications of the predicated amount of rain that was falling in the area.

Over the years, the Pennsylvania Red Cross has made great progress using our resources both material and human to our best advantage. We have developed regional systems to respond quickly and assess the resources we need to help our neighbors. This disaster would test our preparedness and become an unprecedented Pennsylvania response.

Our response to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee was immediate and comprehensive. We were able to rapidly move people and supplies from unaffected areas of the State such as Erie and Pittsburgh to affected central and northeast areas such as Pine Grove, Bloomsburg, Wilkes-Barre, Sayre, and Tunkhannock. As disaster needs increased and evolved, we relied on our assets from our National system to support our State-wide response. Shelters were open across the area in anticipation of need to provide food, a safe place to sleep, mental health support, and access to some basic first aid and health care. Mobile feeding was established as soon as the weather permitted and was safe to do so. Red Cross trucks drove through affected neighborhoods delivering meals, snacks, and beverages to people returning to and cleaning up their damaged homes.

Within days, we secured donated warehouse space at the Humboldt Industrial Park in Hazleton. The Red Cross opened a combination operation headquarters, mobile feeding kitchen, staff center, and storage facilities for our bulk supplies. We distributed truckloads of supplies like clean-up kits, rakes, shovels, garbage bags, disinfectant, gloves, masks, and personal care items. We engauged partner agencies such as the Boy Scouts and our corporate partners, who worked at our warehouse assembling and distributing hundreds of coolers packed with shelf-stable food, recovery supplies, and information. From this site in Hazleton, we were able to serve the affected populations from Susquehanna and Bradford counties to the affected areas south of Harrisburg and across the central part of the State.

Over the length of these storms, the Red Cross in Pennsylvania provided a safe place to stay for over 8,000 people in 100 shelters and served over 400,000 meals and snacks. Our response efforts were given by volunteers, many of whom came from across the country. In total, the Red Cross had 1,870 workers on the ground, 1,734 of which were volunteers. We worked closely with our col-

leagues in the nonprofit, charitable, and faith-based communities along with our Federal, State, and local officials to expand our reach.

After reviewing our Red Cross response in Pennsylvania, we will focus on the following. We need to continuously recruit, develop, and train local volunteers. We must continue to provide preparedness information ahead of events. When families are prepared, lives are saved and communities are more resilient.

Consistent, on-going State-wide planning and collaboration is critical to a successful response. We need to focus on transitioning shelter residents to longer-term housing solutions. The faster that people can transition to permanent housing, the sooner that families including the vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with disabilities can return to normal activities and move towards recovery.

Partnering remains critical to a successful response as no one agency can meets the needs of the community in a major event. Government, NGOs, the faith community, advocacy groups, the private sector, and individual citizens each play a critical role in response. We must continue to build and strengthen these partnerships at all levels.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide testimony. The Red Cross is committed to be there ready for whatever disaster may strike. Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee were storms that tested our communities, and I am pleased that the American Red Cross and our volunteers and partners could play a role in the successful response.

I am happy to address any questions you may have.

[The statement of Ms. Wenner follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARITA C. WENNER

NOVEMBER 29, 2011

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Members and staff of the subcommittee. I am honored to appear today on behalf of the American Red Cross. My name is Marita C. Wenner and I serve as the volunteer chair of the Pennsylvania State Disaster Committee of the American Red Cross. I previously served, for 17 years, as the Executive Director of the Wayne Pike Chapter of the American Red Cross and am currently the Chairman of the Board. I am a resident of this community and would especially like to acknowledge Vice Chairman Tom Marino for his leadership as we continue to recover from the impact of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee as well as his role in bringing this important hearing to Northeast Pennsylvania.

I started my Red Cross career responding to single-family house fires in Wayne and Pike counties, helping my neighbors recover from the devastation of losing all their belongings, having nowhere to go, not knowing what to do next. I am one of thousands of Red Cross volunteers who respond to disasters across the country when the need arises. Over the past 20 years, I have learned that whether it is a house fire or a catastrophic disaster event, people have the same concerns and needs. They need information on where to go for help, how to begin their recovery, and most of all they need someone to listen to their story with a caring heart. This is a small part of what the American Red Cross does in times of disaster and I am very fortunate to be a part of this outstanding organization.

Since its founding in 1881, our Nation has turned to the American Red Cross in emergency situations. As part of its mission, the Red Cross has provided shelter, food, clothing, emotional, and other support to those impacted by disasters in communities across the country and around the world. We supply nearly half of the Nation's blood. We teach life-saving skills to hundreds of thousands of people each year, and we provide resources to the members of the military and their families. Whether it is a hurricane or a heart attack, a call for blood or a call for help, the Red Cross is there.

Today's hearing topic, "Ensuring Effective Preparedness and Response: Lessons Learned from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee" is of vital interest to the Red Cross and particularly important to me and my colleagues serving both Nationally and here in Pennsylvania. This has been a historic year for disaster response—beginning in the spring with an unprecedented number of severe storms and tornados that culminated with Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. We are grateful for the opportunity to share our operation details and thoughts on best practices in preparation for future events.

HURRICANE IRENE AND TROPICAL STORM LEE

As you may know, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee caused devastating flood and wind damage in communities from North Carolina to New England, affecting millions of residents. These historic storms flooded roads, damaged and destroyed homes, caused power outages and prompted the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of families across the Eastern Seaboard.

In response to the threat of Hurricane Irene, the Red Cross mobilized a massive response and urged residents to prepare for Irene's impact. Thousands of pre-packaged meals were deployed from North Carolina to Maine. In addition, approximately 250 emergency response vehicles were placed on alert and mobilized to support disaster relief operations in many of the coastal States. As Irene made landfall, more than 27,000 people found a safe haven in approximately 500 shelters. By September 7, 2011, alongside community and Government partners, the Red Cross had provided 1.8 million meals and snacks, opened 492 shelters, provided 22,000 health and mental health consultations, and distributed nearly 127,000 relief items.

After Tropical Storm Lee hit, some residents returned to find homes that were damaged beyond repair. Red Cross shelters remained open in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New Jersey to house those still displaced for several weeks after these storms made landfall. To help families with the task of clearing their homes of debris and mud, the Red Cross provided over 55,000 clean-up kits and hundreds of thousands of other relief items to aid those affected.

I was dispatched along with many other volunteers prior to landfall of Hurricane Irene to the Red Cross Chapter in New York City, where I worked directing the preparedness activities anticipating what might be one of the worst natural disasters the city and State had ever encountered. Post-landfall, the valuable lessons we have learned from past catastrophic hurricanes helped us to mount an integrated and collaborative response with our Government and non-Government partners across the Northeast United States. After 2 weeks in New York, I shifted focus to Pennsylvania. I was quickly sent to help coordinate the efforts of the Pennsylvania chapter. With my experience of prior flooding events in Pennsylvania I understood the enormous disaster implications of the predicted amount of rain that was falling across the area.

Over the years, the Pennsylvania Red Cross has made great progress, using our resources, both material and human, to our best advantage during disasters. We have developed regional systems to respond quickly and assess the resources needed to help our neighbors during disasters. We work closely with our partner agencies to identify the disaster-caused needs of our communities and work collaboratively for a timely response. This disaster would test our preparedness and become an unprecedented Pennsylvania response. We were able to rapidly move people and supplies from unaffected areas of the State, such as Erie and Pittsburgh to the affected Central and Northeast areas, such as Pine Grove, Bloomsburg, Wilkes-Barre, Sayre, and Tunkhannock. As disaster needs increased and evolved, we relied on assets from our National system to support our State-wide response.

AMERICAN RED CROSS SERVICES—WHAT WE DO IN TIMES OF DISASTER

Our citizens rely on the American Red Cross to provide comfort and care during an emergency. The American Red Cross will be there to provide the basics of food, shelter, and a shoulder to lean on in times of disaster. But it is important to know the details of these services and I would like to take a moment to expand upon each service.

Sheltering.—Shelters often become a focal point for the interaction between disaster survivors and the community at large. They are a place of safety, refuge, and comfort for many. When a family or individual walks through the door of a shelter operated or supported by the Red Cross, they can expect food, a safe place to sleep, mental health support, and access to some basic first aid and health care.

The Red Cross works closely with Government and community partners to initiate sheltering activities in schools, churches, or other large facilities for individuals and families. Shelters may be opened in anticipation of a disaster, during an evacuation

or post-disaster. Shelters are not closed until the disaster-caused housing needs of all of the occupants are met.

We coordinate all of our shelter operations with our Government partners using a database called the American Red Cross National Shelter System. We are committed to the important work of moving people out of the shelter environment and into transitional and long-term housing. This is where our communities truly depend on the collaboration and partnerships with Federal, State, and local government. In Pennsylvania, we were challenged by housing shortages in our Northern counties and worked closely with our partners making sure that shelter clients' housing needs were met.

Feeding.—In addition to feeding people at shelters, the Red Cross also provides food in affected areas for people who cannot travel to a shelter, for those who choose to stay in their homes or for those cleaning up after a storm. Emergency workers or other groups helping in disaster relief efforts are provided meals, as well. Mobile feeding is critical to meeting the immediate needs of affected communities. Red Cross workers often drive through affected neighborhoods delivering meals, snacks, and beverages to people returning to and cleaning up damaged homes.

Distribution of Supplies.—In many disasters, essential items clients need to assist their recovery might not be immediately available in the local area. In such cases, the Red Cross distributes throughout the affected areas items that may be needed. During Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee the Red Cross distributed truckloads of clean-up kits, rakes, shovels, garbage bags, disinfectant, gloves, masks, insect repellant, sunscreen, personal toiletries items, and ready-to-eat meals. In Pennsylvania, we engauged partner agencies such as the Boy Scouts and our corporate partners to work at our warehouse assembling hundreds of coolers packed with shelf-stable food, recovery supplies, and information which were distributed to families across the affected areas.

Disaster Mental Health Services.—Red Cross workers provide vital mental health services helping people cope with the after-effects of a disaster. Our mental health workers are present at shelters, feeding sites, and aid stations. They also travel with caseworkers and visit families in disaster-affected neighborhoods where clean-up and rebuilding is taking place. Red Cross mental health volunteers are licensed mental health professionals and often work with practitioners in the community to provide services where the need is greatest. In Pennsylvania, our mental health workers were embedded throughout our response, working on feeding trucks, with caseworkers, and with partner agencies. They were there listening to the stories of everyone in the community affected by the disaster. They helped families begin their recovery process with valuable information and guided them to seek further help if needed. In addition to our mental health volunteers, the Red Cross encourages all of our workers to take our Psychological First Aid Course so that more of our volunteers are prepared to help clients and each other in times of extreme stress.

Client Casework.—Disaster victims often need the type of one-on-one advocacy that caseworkers can provide. Few things are more rewarding than working with a family to help the family begin their recovery after a disaster. Each family has unique needs that skilled Red Cross caseworkers can help to address, and caseworkers provide referrals to community resources and agencies as necessary. Because of the sheer number of agencies involved in a successful response, it is often hard to know where to get help and how to start on the road to recovery. Caseworkers advocate on behalf of the client to access the needed resources. They provide a caring heart and a listening ear.

Outreach to People With Disabilities.—In developing mass care and sheltering capacity throughout the community, the American Red Cross is making it a priority Nation-wide to ensure that services and shelters are as accessible as possible to people with disabilities. Our Red Cross chapters work closely with local experts on access and functional needs issues. We strive to staff shelters with workers who have the knowledge and experience to evaluate the needs of clients and to make the adjustments and accommodations to ensure a safe and comfortable stay.

RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Red Cross disaster responses are primarily led and delivered by volunteers. In addition to local volunteers who respond to an average of 200 disasters a day Nationwide, a network of more than 70,000 trained volunteers is available to respond to larger events. The American Red Cross also has the capacity to manage large numbers of spontaneous volunteers (more than 230,000 volunteers participated in the 2005 response to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma). In addition, key partners such as Southern Baptist Disaster Relief provide an enormous resource for helping those in need. Other key partners like the NAACP, National Disability Rights Net-

work (NRDN) and faith organizations further extend service capabilities. Our model for disaster services is collaborative; it takes the entire community to deliver an effective response in a large-scale event.

RED CROSS RESPONSE IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Red Cross response to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in Pennsylvania was immediate and comprehensive. Shelters were opened and staffed across the area in anticipation of the need. Mobile feeding was established as soon as weather permitted and it was safe to do so. Within days, we secured donated warehouse space at the Humbolt Industrial Park in Hazleton. The Red Cross opened a combination operation headquarters, mobile feeding kitchen, staffing center, and storage facility for bulk supplies.

From this site, we were able to deploy 98 Emergency Response Vehicles with food and relief supplies ranging from Susquehanna and Bradford counties to affected areas south of Harrisburg and across the central area of the State. Over the length of these storms, the Red Cross provided a safe place to stay for over 8,000 people in 100 shelters, and served over 400,000 meals and snacks.

Our response efforts were driven by volunteers—many of whom came from across the country—to help provide a wide range of services. These services included more than 4,525 mental and disaster health consultations from volunteers who listened and helped families move forward in their recovery. In total, the Red Cross had 1,870 workers on the ground, 1,734 of which were volunteers.

We are working closer than ever with our colleagues in the nonprofit, charitable, and faith-based communities to expand our reach. We continue to focus on our coordination with Federal, State, and local officials. Here in Pennsylvania, the partnership we have built with State and County Emergency Management is strong. From responding to single family fires to a major hurricane response, we strive to keep our Emergency Management Partners well informed and cooperate and collaborate to better serve disaster survivors.

GOVERNMENT, NONPROFIT, AND OTHER PARTNER COLLABORATION

In Pennsylvania, as is the case across the country, the American Red Cross staffs the State and local Emergency Operation Center(s) (EOC) with Red Cross Government Liaisons who collaborate with Government and nonprofit agency counterparts. The Red Cross also actively works with the local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), which is a coalition of independent voluntary agencies that meet regularly to ensure a coordinated community response that addresses the needs of victims and minimizes redundancies of services. To ensure effective disaster readiness and response, the Red Cross has established relationships with partner community agencies. We have partnerships with National-level agencies and organizations as well as local agencies and organizations.

In Pennsylvania, through a community partnership with the Southern Baptist Convention, we were able to set up two mobile kitchens units capable of preparing 20,000 meals a day to distribute meals and snacks throughout the Commonwealth. Several partner organizations supported the massive Red Cross relief effort in the State. County mental health agencies throughout Pennsylvania deployed volunteers to assist at Red Cross emergency aid stations. The American Humane Association set up shelters for animals so that people forced to leave their homes had somewhere to take their family pets. Mennonite Disaster Services helped people clean out their homes. The Teamsters helped with transporting supplies. Countless local businesses and organizations donated over $400,000 worth of in-kind supplies and materials to help with the response effort. It was through this collaborative effort that we were able to help those in need.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

After reviewing our response in Pennsylvania, several themes emerged.

- There is a continuous need to recruit, develop, and train local volunteers. This reduces response time and operating costs, and it creates teams of volunteers that are already familiar with one another prior to the disaster.
- We must continue to aggressively provide preparedness information ahead of events to those communities in the path of the storm. When storms are bearing down on our homes, we know from experience that our communities will listen. The opportunity—albeit brief—is there to ensure everyone has the information and resources they need in advance. When families are prepared, lives are saved.
- Consistent, on-going, State-wide planning and collaboration is critical to a successful response. Over the past few years, the numbers of agencies, community

expectations, and resource challenges have increased dramatically. The complexities and interdependencies with all levels of Government have never been greater, and our success in coordinating responses is directly related to how well we staff Emergency Operations Centers and Federal agencies.

- Strengthening partnerships with other agencies and businesses remains a key factor to our success going forward. If a client needs a cot or a meal, it is of no consequence to the client who provides it.
- Shelters provide important social hubs, but we need to focus on transitioning shelter residents to longer-term housing solutions more quickly. The faster that sheltering operations can transition to more permanent solutions, the sooner that residents—including vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with disabilities—can return to normal activities and move towards recovery.
- Partnering remains critical to a successful response, as no one agency can meet the needs of the community in a major event. Government, NGOs, the faith community, advocacy groups, the private sector, and the individual citizen each play a critical role in the response. We must continue to build these partnerships at all levels.
- Responses that cover a wide geography, as was the case with Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, test our ability to scale and to identify key leadership. As you know, we had significant sheltering and response activity from North Carolina to Maine. Moving forward, we will continue to focus on maintaining resource levels and on growing leadership within our Disaster Services volunteer system so that we can deliver the needed services regardless of the geographic scope of an operation.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Chairman and Members of the subcommittee, thank you once again for this opportunity to provide testimony. The American Red Cross is committed to being ready for whatever disaster may strike. Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee were storms that tested our communities, but I am pleased that the American Red Cross and our volunteers and partners could play a role in the successful response. To mount an effective response, entire communities need to work together, and we need to be sure that we are ready to do our part.

I am happy to address any questions you may have.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Ms. Wenner.

Now Mr. Brozena, you are recognized for 5 minutes, sir.

STATEMENT OF JAMES J. BROZENA, P.E., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LUZERNE COUNTY FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY

Mr. BROZENA. Good morning. Welcome to Pennsylvania.

My name is Jim Brozena and I am the executive director of the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my insights into lessons learned during the recent Tropical Storm Lee event and my comments regarding the Federal response to recovery efforts.

To provide you with some background, the authority operates and maintains the Wyoming Valley levee system, which consists of approximately 16 miles of levees and floodwalls and provides protection for approximately 65,000 residents from the Susquehanna River.

On Monday, September 5, the National Weather Service provided its first briefing and the briefing continued throughout the week as the situation worsened. The web-based briefings provided an efficient means of informing emergency management personnel from all counties in the region concurrently about current and projected river conditions. The authority contacted the Army Corps of Engineers Baltimore District to request assistance in the emergency operations during the event.

The Wyoming Valley was placed under a mandatory evacuation beginning at 4 p.m. on Thursday as the river was now projected to crest at 41 feet later that evening. Approximately 100,000 residents would be evacuated. The projected crest would match the flood of record for Wilkes-Barre set in 1972.

The authority was fortunate to have the Corps of Engineers as well as several professional engineers in the county volunteer their assistance with levee patrols. In addition, a local contractor volunteered to stage equipment and material. All of their efforts would be required in the next 24 hours to contain the river.

On Thursday evening, it appeared that the river had finally crested at 38½ feet. However, the USGS gauge had actually reached its operating limit. During a review of a repair over in Forty Fort that evening, officials determined that the gauge had actually failed and that the river actually crested early Friday morning at 42.66 feet. This surpassed the previous flood of record set in 1972, Tropical Storm Agnes, and was 1.66 feet greater than the design of the levee system.

Residents in the protected areas were allowed to return to their homes Saturday afternoon. The levee system had prevented approximately $4 billion in damages. Unfortunately, though, not all areas of the Wyoming Valley escaped unharmed. Nearly 3,000 properties in unprotected communities were flooded.

The early notification from the National Weather Service and the river forecast centers, the expertise of the Corps and the local engineering professionals, the skills of local contractors and local municipal public works employees and the dedication of hundreds of volunteers prevented Tropical Storm Lee from becoming a much larger disaster.

Some of the lessons learned: The USGS gauge, well, they took immediate action following the event to relocate the gauge so that it now reads to a height higher than the actual levee system, and in addition, they have come to the realization of its need to make data users aware of the operating limits and gauge heights of the features. It has spurred a movement to accomplish this Nationally within the USGS.

The Corps of Engineers emergency management preparedness: As local sponsors struggle with budgetary constraints, less and less qualified staff is available for levee patrols. The involvement of Corps engineers on-site is crucial during major flood events. Also, the Corps should develop high-water operations training and hold annual training sessions for local project sponsors. Training videos should be created and made available and would allow for additional local training opportunities.

Interagency coordination: The Susquehanna River Basin Commission has expanded its annual Susquehanna flood forecast warning interagency committee meeting to include a discussion with emergency managers and municipal officials to evaluate system performance and share lessons learned.

Public Law 84–99 funding, which is the Corps' ability to fix projects and inspect and rehabilitate flood damage: Unfortunately, the time line for the process is long. Even if projects are economically justified, funding may not be available. Local sponsors like the authority do not have the funding available to address damages

caused by significant flood events. Delays in addressing repairs puts individuals' safety and property at risk.

Susquehanna Flood Forecast and Warning System: A permanent solution to funding the $2.4 million annual expense of the Susquehanna Flood Forecast and Warning System must be identified. This system provides the data that is used to forecast river levels and issue more accurate early flood warnings. The system is extremely cost-effective, providing a 20:1 benefit-to-cost ratio.

Levee project funding: The levee-raising project started immediately after the flood in 1972. Sadly, the project is still not complete. While the major flood control portions are complete, Federal funding for the mitigation program is not in place. The lack of adequate Federal project funding since 2009 has prevented the mitigation program from being completed. With adequate project funding, additional projects and properties could have been done and we would have suffered less damage in those communities.

Pennsylvania is one of the most flood-prone States in the country. It consists of 67 counties with nearly 2,600 municipalities. Luzerne County alone has 76 municipalities. Many of the communities are staffed by one person that handles all administrative functions. Typically, the salaries are low and turnover is high, and most do not have the technical expertise or training to properly administer the flood insurance program.

Major flood events are infrequent, and the small municipalities are paralyzed immediately following an event. It is at this point that FEMA assistance is most critical as municipal leaders are bombarded with questions regarding flood recovery. Whether there is a Presidential disaster declaration or not, FEMA should immediately contact municipalities and remind them of their responsibilities to enforce the requirements of the flood insurance program. Visits to municipalities must occur in a more timely fashion. Most visits did not occur until 30 days after the event, and some municipalities unfortunately have still not had their visits.

In addition, while FEMA has thousands of publications, it does not have a Flooding 101 document. This manual would consist of a comprehensive step-by-step reference regarding all necessary actions a municipality must undertake following a major disaster.

Failure to involve county officials in the recovery effort is an error. County staff could act as the liaison between FEMA and the affected municipalities and allow for a consistent measure being presented. A more efficient means of dealing with substantially damaged or destroyed structures must be identified. Property owners will not even know if their property is possibly included for acquisition until the end of January 2012. A timeline for acquisition still has not been determined. Individuals damaged by flooding cannot be expected to wait the 1½ to 3 years that a typical hazard mitigation project takes.

Finally, thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments. Federal officials need to have a better understanding of the challenges facing local governments and agencies and evaluate modifications to their programs.

This concludes my testimony. Again, thank you. If you have any questions, I will be glad to answer them.

[The statement of Mr. Brozena follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES J. BROZENA

NOVEMBER 29, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the subcommittee, good morning and welcome to Northeastern Pennsylvania. My name is James Brozena and I am the executive director of the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my insights into lessons learned during the recent Tropical Storm Lee event and my comments regarding the Federal response to recovery efforts.

To provide you with some background, the Authority operates and maintains the Wyoming Valley Levee System located in the Wyoming Valley in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Wyoming Valley Levee System consists of approximately 16 miles of levees and floodwalls, 13 pump stations, closure structures, and relief wells. The system provides protection for approximately 65,000 residents located in nine communities from the Susquehanna River. The Wyoming Valley Levee Raising Project, which raised the existing levees overtopped in 1972 by Tropical Storm Agnes, started construction in 1997. Work is still on-going.

TROPICAL STORM LEE—SEPTEMBER 2011

Levee System

On Monday, September 5, the National Weather Service Binghamton Office provided its first briefing from its Warning Coordinating Meteorologist. Briefings continued on throughout the week as the situation worsened. The web-based briefings provided an efficient means of informing Emergency Management personnel from all counties in the region concurrently about current and projected river conditions. Also, it gave Emergency Management officials the ability to understand issues and problems occurring in neighboring counties. The "local knowledge" of all areas in the service area allowed for keen insights by the National Weather Service meteorologists. If specific areas of concern were observed, the National Weather Service and River Forecast Centers were available for direct consultation.

As the projected river crests continued to rise, the Authority contacted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, to request assistance in the emergency operations during the event. Multiple teams arrived Thursday afternoon. The Wyoming Valley was under a mandatory evacuation beginning at 4 p.m. Thursday as the river was now projected to crest at 41 feet later that evening. Approximately 100,000 residents would be evacuated. The projected crest would match the flood of record for Wilkes-Barre set in 1972.

The Authority was fortunate to have several professional engineers from the county volunteer their assistance with the levee patrols. Also, several Corps personnel that resided in the area volunteered their help as well. In addition, a local contractor, Mericle Construction, offered to stage equipment and material at several locations in the event that it would be needed. All of their efforts would be needed in the next 24 hours to contain the river.

Issues developed with the closure structure as the Market Street Bridge in both Kingston and Wilkes-Barre as seals failed. A flood wall in Forty Fort began to crack and the Corps provided the Authority recommendations on an interim solution. Mericle Construction completed the work about 2 a.m. Friday morning.

At that point it appeared that the river had crested at 38.5 feet; however, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) gauge had reached its operating limits. This information was not known by the Authority, the Corps, the National Weather Service or the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. During a review of the Forty Fort repair officials determined that the gauge had failed and that the river had crested early Friday morning, September 8, 2011 at 42.66 feet. This surpassed the previous flood of record set during Tropical Storm Agnes in June 1972 and was 1.66 feet above the design height of the raised levee system.

Additional problems arose Friday morning with boils in Forty Fort, Kingston, and Plymouth. The water began to recede and residents in the protected areas were allowed to return to their homes Saturday afternoon. The Wyoming Valley Levee System had prevented approximately $5 billion in damages.

Unfortunately, not all areas of the Wyoming Valley escaped unharmed. Nearly 3,000 properties in unprotected communities were flooded.

The early notification from the National Weather Service and the River Forecast Center, the expertise of Corps and local engineering professionals, the skills of local contractors and local municipal public works employees, and the dedication of volunteers prevented Tropical Storm Lee from becoming a much larger disaster.

The Luzerne County Board of Commissioners, the Luzerne County Emergency Management Agency, the National Guard, the Red Cross, the Pennsylvania State Police, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and all of the other county,

State, and municipal officials and especially the volunteers are to be commended for their efforts during of the event. During a very difficult time, everyone remained focused on accomplishing the tasks at hand to ensure the safety of lives and property.

LESSONS LEARNED

Levee System

USGS Gauge.—USGS took action immediately after the flood event to relocate the Wilkes-Barre gauge to a location that allows it to now read river heights in excess of the top of the levee system. The new gauge was installed within 30 days of the flood event. USGS is working with the Authority to install a staff gauge in the event of a failure of the electronic gauge. In addition, USGS has come to the realization of its need to make data users aware of operating limits and gauge heights of features. It has spurred a movement to accomplish this Nationally within the USGS.

Corps of Engineers Emergency Management and Preparedness.—As local project sponsors struggle with budgetary constraints, less and less qualified staff is available for levee patrols. The involvement of Corps engineers on site is crucial during major flood events. Also, the Corps should develop High Water Operations training and hold annual training sessions for local project sponsors. A training video should be created and made available that would allow for additional local training opportunities.

Interagency Coordination.—The Susquehanna River Basin Commission has expanded its annual Susquehanna Flood Forecast and Warning Interagency Committee meeting to include a discussion with emergency managers and municipal officials to evaluate system performance and share lessons learned during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

PL84–99.—After major flood events, the Corps has the ability to inspect and rehabilitate flood damage reduction projects. Unfortunately, the time line for the process is long. Even if projects are economically justified, funding may not be available. Local sponsors, like the Authority, do no have the funding available to address damages caused by significant flood events. Delays in addressing repairs put individuals' safety and property at risk.

Susquehanna Flood Forecast and Warning System.—A permanent solution to funding the $2.4 million Susquehanna Flood Forecast and Warning System must be identified. The system uses radar and a network of stream and rain gauges to provide the data that are used to forecast river levels and issue more accurate early flood warnings. The system provides the National Weather Service the critically important data necessary to issue flood warnings. The System is extremely cost-effective, providing a 20-to-1 benefit-cost ratio.

Levee Project Funding.—The Wyoming Valley Levee Raising project started immediately after the Agnes flood in 1972. Sadly, the project is still not complete. While the major flood control works are complete, Federal funding for the mitigation program is not in place. The project contains a Mitigation Program that provides $23 million for flood reduction activities in 53 unprotected communities located in five counties. A GIS-based Flood Warning System has been used by Emergency Managers for nearly 10 years to provide early notifications that have allowed individuals to take protective actions during flooding events. Hazard Mitigation Plans were developed. Approximately 20 homes have been acquired and demolished and numerous other structural flood mitigation projects completed. However, the lack of adequate Federal project funding since 2009 has prevented additional projects from being completed. With adequate project funding, additional projects could have been done that would have reduced damages.

LESSONS LEARNED

Post-Event—Unprotected Communities

Pennsylvania is one of the most flood-prone States in the country. Pennsylvania consists of 67 counties with nearly 2,600 municipalities. Floodplain management responsibilities under the National Flood Insurance Program fall to the municipalities. In Luzerne County, there are 76 municipalities. Many of the communities are staffed by one person that handles all administrative functions. Typically salaries are low and turnover is high. Most do not have the technical expertise or training to properly administer the flood insurance program.

Major flood events are infrequent and the small municipalities are paralyzed immediately following an event. It is at this point that FEMA assistance is most critical as municipal leaders are bombarded with questions regarding flood recovery.

Whether there is a Presidential disaster declaration or not, FEMA should immediately contact municipalities by phone or e-mail and remind them of their respon-

sibilities to enforce the requirements of the flood insurance program. Visits to municipalities must occur in a more timely fashion. Most visits did not occur until nearly 30 days after the event and some municipalities still have not been visited.

In addition, while FEMA has thousands of publications, it does not have a "Flooding 101" document. The manual would consist of a comprehensive step-by-step reference regarding all necessary actions a municipality must undertake following a major disaster. While I use flooding as the topic, the manual should address all hazards.

Looking forward, FEMA should require the annual registration of a municipal floodplain manager. In addition, video training or webinars should be developed to continue to educate municipal officials regarding the National Flood Insurance Program.

Failure to involve county officials in the recovery effort is an error. County staff could act as the liaison between FEMA and the affected municipalities and allow for a consistent message being presented.

A more efficient means of dealing with substantially damaged or destroyed structures must be identified. Property owners flooded in September will not even know if their property is possibly included for acquisition until the end of January. A time line for acquisition still has not been determined. Individuals damaged by flooding cannot be expected to have to wait the 1½ to 3 years that a typical Hazard Mitigation Project takes.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments on emergency preparedness and response and the lessons learned during Tropical Storm Lee. Federal officials need to have a better understanding of the challenges facing local governments as the agencies evaluate modifications to their programs.

This concludes my testimony. Again, thank you for this opportunity. I hope that our actions today lead to a more efficient response for the next disaster. If you have any questions, I would be pleased to answer.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Brozena.

Mr. Good, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF JAMES GOOD, OWNER, AREY BUILDING SUPPLY

Mr. GOOD. Thank you, Chairman Bilirakis.

Arey Building Supply was substantially flooded September 8, 2011, from Tropical Storm Lee. It had never been flooded before. There are about 18 to 20 businesses and 4 to 5 homes—although that may be a low number on the homes—along the Wysox Golden Mile, which is U.S. Route 6, that were flooded that day.

The store, warehouse, and sheds had almost 2 feet of muddy water in them. Lumber had floated out onto Route 6, into neighbors' yards and to other businesses. Employees and neighbors gathered in all that they could find to return to the yard area. Mud clogged the parking lot storm drainpipe and it had to be replaced.

The store was only closed September 8, but for several days customers were not allowed in the floor because of slippery mud on the floor. Desired merchandise was brought to the door for each customer's request. The store has been kept open 7 days a week all through the clean-up and repairs. This caused problems for employees and customers alike trying to find things that were moved because of putting down new floors, tearing off walls for new sheetrock and insulation and a new heating system and new bathrooms. Repairs will be complete December 18 with the installation of new shelving throughout the door.

The cost to Arey Building Supply is approximately $310,000, although about $65,000 of that amount was due to renovations to offices. We took the opportunity, since everything was a mess, to

make some changes to the store and make more store space where there were formerly offices.

Approximately a week after the flood, I tried to gather businesses together to see what we could do about the Laning Creek, which had caused the flood. As I stated, it had never been flooded before, that area of U.S. Route 6. We met in a chamber meeting in October along the Wysox Golden Mile, and since then there have been donations made to a fund to try and get enough money together to dredge Laning Creek between U.S. Route 6 and the railroad track. That area had plugged up with debris and trees and that caused the flooding in that area.

The flood had occurred over a 12-hour period. In 12 hours it had flooded everything there and went back down to the point where we could get to the businesses, unlike river flooding that lasts over several days. I believe that the problem in that area could be averted if we were allowed to dredge Laning Creek. The process to get a permit to do that is quite cumbersome, and we have been working on that for 2 months trying to get the paperwork in order to apply for a permit to do that. We still have not—it has been turned over to an engineer because frankly we are not capable of getting all the stuff together. Hopefully that process will be complete soon and we will be able to apply for a permit to dredge the creek.

That completes my report. Thank you.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you very much.

I am going to ask Mr. Marino if he would like to include this article from *The Daily Review* into the record, sir.

Mr. MARINO. Yes, Chairman.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Okay. Then without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

PREVENTING FLOODING

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 6, 2011

By James Loewenstein (Staff Writer)



Photo/JAMES LOEWENSTEIN.—Wysox Township businessman James Good, left, and Wysox Community Chamber of Commerce President Bill Them discuss a proposed debris-removal project to help prevent further flooding of businesses in Wysox Township.

WYSOX TOWNSHIP.—A campaign is under way to raise $15,000 to clean out a section of the Laning Creek in order to help prevent future flooding of businesses on U.S. Route 6 in Wysox Township.

The project would involve removing trees branches, gravel and other debris from the creek starting at a point behind the Comfort Inn and ending at the bridge that carries the Lehigh Railway line over the creek, said James Good, who is spearheading the project, and who, along with his wife, owns Arey Building Supply in Wysox Township and Mountain Lake Electric.

Over 20 businesses on Route 6 in Wysox Township were impacted by the flooding that occurred during Tropical Storm Lee, said Good, who discussed the project at a meeting on Wednesday of the Wysox Community Chamber of Commerce.

"If we don't do something about the Laning Creek, the flooding could happen again within the next year," Good said at the meeting, which was held at A.J.'s Family Restaurant.

Good said that there is a curve in the creek behind the Bonanza Restaurant and the Comfort Inn where trees became lodged during Tropical Storm Lee, which caused water to flow out of the creek bed and flood businesses along Route 6.

"The major problem" that resulted in the flooding of businesses along Route 6 in Wysox Township was water being diverted from the Laning Creek, he said.

Good said he has lined up a contractor to do the debris removal, and has applied for a permit from the DEP to do the work. He said the process for approving the permit is 80 to 90 percent complete.

Good and Wysox Community Chamber of Commerce President Bill Them both said they think the permit will be approved.

Good "said the DEP told him they didn't think it would be a problem" having the permit approved, Them said in an interview after the meeting.

Wednesday's Chamber of Commerce meeting was open to the public, and several people who attended it said they thought there were additional reasons for the

flooding along Route 6 in the township. For example, Budd Clark Sr., who co-owns Clark Furniture, said he thought a bridge that carries CraftMaster Road over Laning Creek contributed to the flooding, because it doesn't have enough capacity to allow the entire creek to flow under it during the kind of flood conditions that took place last month.

But in an interview after the meeting, Good said the bridge was not a factor in the Tropical Storm Lee flooding of Route 6, because the land at the site of the bridge is sloped southward, which would have carried water that backed up at the bridge away from Route 6, not toward it.

Good is asking businesses that were affected by the flooding to donate toward the debris-removal project, and he said he is also seeking donations for the project from the public and from the chamber of commerce.

He said that if each of the businesses that was impacted by the flooding donated $500, and if the chamber of commerce made a donation, there would be enough money to pay for the Laning Creek project.

After the meeting, Them said there was a total of $1,500 in donations lined up so far for the Laning Creek project.

Those who said they were donating toward the project included Good, Them, and Beers Auto & Tag owner Wilbur Beers.

Retired local businessman Newman Benson urged business owners to donate.

"Businesses can't survive without doing some of these things" to prevent further flooding, he said. "You have to step up and cash out."

Good has asked the chamber of commerce to endorse the debris removal project.

In an email that Them sent out after the meeting to all the members of the chamber of commerce, Them wrote that the members of the chamber of commerce who were at Wednesday's meeting were in favor of the chamber of commerce making that endorsement.

Anyone who cares to donate to the Laning Creek debris removal project should make out a check to the Wysox Community Chamber of Commerce, earmark it for the "Laning Creek project," and mail it to the Wysox Community Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 63, Wysox, PA 18854, Them said.

If, for some reason, the debris removal project does not go forward, the money will be returned to the donors, members of the chamber of commerce said.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Well, thank you very much. What we will do is, we will alternate back and forth and have at least a couple rounds of questions, and I will recognize myself for approximately 5 minutes to begin and then I will yield to my colleague here.

The first question is for Mrs. Tierney. As you noted in your testimony, Mrs. Tierney, the Department of Homeland Security released a National Disaster Recovery Framework on September 23. How are you working to integrate the NDRF into Region 3's recovery efforts, and more specifically, how have you incorporated NDRF's six recovery support functions into your response to these disasters? Have you received any positive—what kind of feedback have you received from the State and local first responders about the NDRF? Then again, give me some feedback whether it has been positive or negative. You are recognized, ma'am.

Mrs. TIERNEY. Thank you. We are in the nascent stages of rolling out the NDRF within Region 3, specifically in central Pennsylvania. From the outset of our major disaster declaration even before the NDRF was issued, it was a priority of mine to do a major activity in central Pennsylvania around the NDRF as it was rolled out.

So as you mentioned, it was rolled out on September 23, and we have been working with the Commonwealth through our emergency support function 14, which is long-term community recovery, to focus on doing an NDRF rollout session tentatively scheduled for January 12 in central Pennsylvania. We specifically selected that location given the magnitude of the impact of Irene and Lee on the area and the ability to capitalize on the coordination mechanisms

set up in the NDRF for the local governments, for the counties, and for the nonprofit and private sector stakeholders to participate in that rollout.

In the interim, prior to the complete rollout of the NDRF in Region 3, our ESF 14 staff has been working with several townships such as Athens Borough and Shickshinny, which were severely impacted by the storms, to look at economic development and recovery options and making those communities a priority moving forward. To date, I have not specifically spoken to any county officials. However, my conversations with the Commonwealth indicate that this has been a fairly positive experience for them. I look forward to the complete rollout of the NDRF in early January to really kick-start the recovery in central Pennsylvania.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Cannon, do you wish to comment on the NDRF?

Mr. CANNON. We are working hand-in-hand with FEMA as a pilot as the first rollout of this new program. We have a number of community meetings with the ESF 14, which is long-term recovery staff, and are getting very positive feedback. It is a larger program than just finding immediate needs, recovery things. It is getting the communities back on their feet economically as well as kind of the social-mental issues that have to be dealt with as well. So it is an all-encompassing long-term recovery program, and we are in the very early stages but we think it is an outstanding program.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, sir. I appreciate it.

Colonel Anderson, questions for you. In your written statement, you mentioned that the Army Corps conducts flood preparedness and response exercises with State and local partners. Were exercises conducted in this area prior to the recent flooding? If so, what were the findings of the exercise, and did the exercise help in your response to the storms?

Colonel ANDERSON. A new framework has been developed, sir, recently. It is a framework called the Silver Jackets program, and basically when you think about the Corps of Engineers coming to disaster, we have got our red coats on. You see some FEMA blue coats here, and there is a lot of questions about, you know, how does all this fit together? So under a recent agreement with the Commonwealth, we have established the Silver Jackets program here. The big idea is that flood risk—planning response and rehabilitation to an event does require—it is a team sport and requires local, State, Federal, lots of Federal different agencies to work together. So we have taken an important step, which is actually signing our Silver Jackets charter.

With respect to the specific exercises, I don't have dates to give you right now. Within the district, we did a tabletop exercise in June 2010, very extensive use of modeling and things like that to replicate an actual flood event. In this case, it was a hurricane and how would we respond to it internally. We did have members of our team that sit in Mrs. Tierney's operations center as well as our folks that sit in emergency operations centers as liaisons throughout that event. So there can be key lessons learned that we take away from—each and every time that we exercise for an event basically is, No. 1, communications is absolutely critical. We need to

know each others' voices in the dark. We need to know who each others' roles are and what our authorities are when it comes to responding. We learn once again the value of having boots on the ground. We have to have people out there walking around projects, you know, in the rain, frankly, at risk in some cases, to make sure that we know exactly what is going on. In this case, as Mr. Brozena said, the floodgate challenge that we had on the Susquehanna was really diagnosed and discovered by people walking around on the ground. I think the main lesson learned is that we just have to know each others' roles, we have to know each others' responsibilities, we have to understand each others' role in the process, and I think sometimes there can be misunderstandings after the storms happen and when the water recedes on what the Federal can and should do, what the local can and should do and what the State Commonwealth government can and should do. So we just need to constantly work that with public service outreach so that folks understand exactly who does what.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, sir. I appreciate it.

Mr. Good, we constantly hear about the obstacles that small businesses face with regard to any natural disaster, and I am familiar with it being from the Tampa Bay area of Florida. I understand that you had about 17 feet of water around your business but it was only closed for, I understand, 1 day, but what mitigation, what steps did you take prior to the storms to alleviate some of the—well, first of all, we want to reopen our businesses as quickly as we possibly can, particularly during these troubled economic times. Can you elaborate on the steps that you took prior to the storms?

Mr. GOOD. First off, it wasn't 17 feet, it was 17 inches in the store. We had approximately 2 feet in most of the buildings on the property. We took no action ahead of the storm. It totally caught us by surprise. It should not have happened. It had never happened before. I believe it was mentioned in one of the reports here that stuff has built up in the streams over years and nobody has taken any steps to clean any streams. I am old enough to remember Hurricane Agnes quite well, and I recall that after Agnes there was a tremendous amount of clean-up in the streams, removing debris and mud and rock and shale out of the streams so that the next time there was a serious storm, it wouldn't be as badly flooded. However, that was in 1972. Since that time, very little has happened to keep any of the streams clear of debris and sediment and so forth so they have gradually built up, and like I said, this caught us totally by surprise. It had never—that area had never flooded before.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Okay. Thank you very much.

Now I will recognize Mr. Marino for as long as he would like during the hearing. Thank you for questions.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you, Chairman.

I want to focus in on what Mr. Good was stating concerning, some people referred to it as dredging the streams and cleaning the debris. I refer to it as, you know, removing the gravel that has been washed down into the streams and the trees. What steps can we take in the future to remove the gravel bars, to remove the debris, the trees, the stumps, the rocks coming off of the mountain-

sides that build up somewhere in the streams and rivers to divert that? So Colonel Anderson, can you help me out with, is it possible to do this? We have thousands of miles of streams and rivers in this State. How do we clean that up?

Colonel ANDERSON. Sir, I need to go back and check the history on what happened earlier. I understand post-Agnes the Corps may have been involved in some aspects of stream clean-up after the storm, and you are right, removal of material from streams within requires a permit from the Corps of Engineers, and I will get to that in just a second.

But with respect to removal, typically, responses like that start at the local level. So once the local and State level have exceeded their capabilities to respond to something like that, then they can request support, get the Corps involved through FEMA through the Stafford Act type of thing. But typically we don't get involved in things like stream clearing. Typically that is massive debris removal on the scale of Joplin, on the scale of Katrina, things like that. So the Corps doesn't have a standing mission into a local stream and clean it up. What we do have a responsibility for is ensuring that we act expeditiously and efficiently on permit requests. We are the Federal regulatory agency for section 404 of the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbors Act. Under those two authorities, impacts to either navigable waters in the United States or waters in the United States require a Corps permit. For 15 years, we had had a State programmatic permit with Pennsylvania, which we just renewed, and it is Pennsylvania State Programmatic General Permit No. 4, and that has standing authorities for folks to go in to do stream clean-up in situations of immediate life and safety issues.

So after the waters go down, which is what Mr. Good is talking about, local citizens, whomever, will submit a request for a permit to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. They screen it to see if it falls within that permit, if it is their responsibility for the permitting approval or if it comes to us. Generally speaking, it comes to us if it impacts more than 250 linear feet of the stream or impacts more than 1 acre. We have tried really hard, worked very hard as we negotiated with the Commonwealth on this last permit to make sure that we had a pretty streamlined process and a fairly simple permit application process.

Having said that, there is a fair amount of technical information that is required on the application permit, and if Mr. Good and his neighbors have made the decision to employ an engineering consultant, a professional dealing with—that this is what he does for a living, a professional engineer, that is probably a good step to get that permit expeditiously submitted. Our record since the programmatic general permit was enacted is, we are well under 60 days. Once a complete application is submitted to the State, we have a permit decision easily within 60 days has been our track record.

So, sir, we are more than happy to work with Mr. Good and any of your constituents that would have concerns regarding the regulatory permit process. It is important, it is incumbent on all of us to make sure that we are operating transparently, that people

know what the requirements are for a permit so that when they come to the State with that one permit application, it can be complete, they know the requirements and we can expeditiously act on it.

Mr. MARINO. I think I read perhaps in an article that a person is permitted or a township or a community or a county is permitted to clear their area but there is a 50-feet maximum. So they cannot go 50 feet beyond the conditions, beyond a bridge, beyond a bridge abutment or a structure so——

Colonel ANDERSON. Sir, when a structure is built, when the permit is proffered for the construction of a structure, be it a pier, or in the case we are talking about most likely here is the dam, that permit typically comes with a 50-feet requirement so that the person, the organization or business or whomever that is granted that permit is responsible for maintaining the channels within 50 feet of the abutments. So the permit that constructs the bridge grants them that standing, not just authority but actually responsibility to maintain the channel. So if you go outside of that 50 feet, then that is where additional permitting requirements exist.

Mr. MARINO. Who issues that permit? Is it a Federal or a State permit that is issued?

Colonel ANDERSON. It is issued either by the Commonwealth, if it is generally speaking less than 250 linear feet or less than an acre, and if it exceeds those thresholds, then it comes to the Federal Government. Again, this is the agreement under the Pennsylvania State Programmatic General Permit No. 4. We work very, very closely with PDEP as well as the Pittsburgh and Philly districts that also oversee the same permit.

Mr. MARINO. Does anyone else wish to comment on that issue that has been brought up?

All right. Let us move to this. Homeowners, small businesses do not have the equipment nor the expertise to start removing gravel buildups from streams, start removing massive tree trunks and stumps from around bridges. Am I correct in saying that the rules say that it is the responsibility of the homeowner, the property owner to take care of those matters? Anyone?

Mr. BROZENA. Traditionally, that is a responsibility that falls to the local municipality. They should as part of their operations have an annual stream cleaning type of activity. However, unfortunately, with all of the other things that are tasked to local communities, that is one that rarely, if ever, gets addressed.

Mr. MARINO. What is the No. 1 remedy that we can execute that is responsible for a major portion of the flooding. Is it cleaning the streams out? Is it cleaning the debris that builds up around the bridges or is it something else? Anybody?

Mr. GOOD. I can tell you from the standpoint of our business area, building supply, a dike from U.S. Route 6 to the railroad would be very, very welcome. It would certainly prevent future flooding. I mean, you have got an area there of about a quarter-mile. I don't believe it would be an extravagant expense, but that is out of my realm so I don't know for sure.

Colonel ANDERSON. So Mr. Good, you know, has gone straight to the, I guess you would say traditional things we think about with flood control, which is structural, you know, build a dam, build a

levee, build a flood wall, right, but some structure between the people and the water to allow us to go on with our livelihood and our lives as close to the water as possible. There are other authorities that do exist that we can utilize pretty quickly, and we have one called Planning Assistance to States. We have floodplain management services that the Corps has standing authorities in, depending on what the service is, low or no cost to the State or local government. We can assist with, you know, certain actions. Again, these are not structural events, structural solutions but it includes things like, you know, flood warning systems. It includes things like planning documents for responses. It includes mapping services. There is a number of things that we can do at the Corps, you know, at request of the local entity, a local municipality that can help. Again, these are not structural solutions but it is really looking at managing the floodplain.

Mr. MARINO. Is it true that if we build a levee system in one area or we put walls up in certain areas, it is going to have an effect on an area above and below?

Colonel ANDERSON. That is absolutely correct, sir. When you constrain the water in a manner that is contrary to how Mother Nature had the water flowing is it going to impact—fluid mechanics dictate that it will impact other places.

Mr. MARINO. Now, Mr. Brozena stated that it is the responsibility of the municipality to clean the streams, to clean away the debris from bridges. What if the municipality doesn't have the money? Mr. Cannon, what do we do from the State level, and if the State doesn't have the money, Ms. Tierney, Colonel Anderson, what do we do from that aspect?

Mr. CANNON. Actually, we had started looking at debris removal from the streams early on. DEP has been issuing literally hundreds of emergency permits to allow you to enter the stream as a municipal government and actually on many of our agriculture areas where farmers themselves needed a permit to enter into the stream and using their own resources cleaned the stream as it ran through their farms. We created a program with the State Department of Agriculture and our conservation districts. We thought it would be funded as an emergency protective measure. It was not able to be funded with those dollars. Therefore, we had no funds to be able to move that program forward.

PennDOT as it relates to any State bridges will clean 50 feet on either side of the bridge. We will do that without PennDOT resources when it is a State structure.

We have now created a debris removal taskforce as part of our recovery effort trying to bring together anyone that has resources to be able to help local governments. You have a backhoe, you have got some dump trucks. You bring this in. We will do what we can to try to coordinate those resources. But it is piecemeal. There is not an overall program. We had developed a program but we weren't able to fund it with State dollars in our budget and we weren't able to get funding from the Federal Government either. So that program didn't move forward. It is a major issue but I do want to let you know that we are issuing emergency stream permits. I mean, I will speak to Mr. Good afterwards. I don't know why they are having trouble getting a permit. Again, we issued hundreds of

permits to get into the stream. But it is a major issue in our entire region. There is no question about it. Streams that may at one time have been, you know, 8 feet wide are now 30 feet wide, I mean, so most of the time there is no water in them, and in a flooding situation, it just goes right over the banks. So it is significant issue, an issue that needs a funding source to be able to resolve it.

Mr. MARINO. Do we have the money at the Federal level within the Army Corps of Engineers and Homeland Security at FEMA to do what needs to be done not only in Pennsylvania? Because we are talking about flooding across the country. I do want to add that Homeland Security is just not focusing on flooding. We have had some disastrous fires out West too that we have to deal with. You don't want a guy like me running a bulldozer or a backhoe in a stream, believe me. You know, I just can't imagine that we want, I am going to say allow just a homeowner to get out there and, you know, rent a little backhoe and start moving things around. It is a pretty dangerous operation.

Colonel ANDERSON. Sir, you asked the question about what is the status of our funding for activities related to response to emergencies. That is covered under Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies, FCCE account, and as you just mentioned, between tornados, fires, flooding on the Missouri, flooding on the Mississippi and then tropical storm and hurricane out there, that account is very strained right now. So there has been reprogramming actions around the Nation to try to get funding at the right places in the Nation that need it, and that account needs to be refreshed via, I believe, a supplemental appropriation in order to get us the funding we need to support those types of activities.

Now, those type of activities for us is rehabilitation of flood control projects, not, you know, removal of debris from streams. So, you know, those are to actually take a project, for example, at Wilkes-Barre/Forty Fort area where you personally witnessed the cracking of the wall and we would go through a formal process to identify the problem, to scope an engineering and design and then to get construction funding to repair that and rehabilitate it so it is ready for the next season.

Mr. MARINO. My last question and then I will turn it over to the Chairman, what do we do about eliminating or curtailing the regulation that we have to go through, that a typical small business owner or homeowner has to go through to secure these permits and do what has to be done? Because I know that—I see the regulations with the EPA. I see some lesser regulation with DEP. How do we make this more constituent-friendly?

Colonel ANDERSON. Sir, we just finished negotiating the new permit with Pennsylvania, and a lot of the focus was on how do we do that, how do we let industries and individuals and commercial interests and municipalities, how do we make them aware of what the requirements are to submit a complete permit action so that once it is submitted, the information is available, we can act on it quickly? We have begun some training on the new permit with local industries. We have had our first training with industry, I believe one in Philadelphia and one in central Pennsylvania, and we are going to continue those so that folks know what the permit application requirements are.

With respect to what can be done to reduce—to make it—to lessen it, I mean, we believe that we are—the intent of the regulatory program is to meet our obligations under the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbors Act, and we understand we need to do that as transparently and as efficiently as we possibly can.

Mr. MARINO. All right. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Marino.

I have a couple questions, the first one for Mr. Cannon. I am pleased you discussed the continued need for individual and community preparedness. Of course, we are in agreement. I am sure Mr. Marino is as well. I believe efforts like Ready.gov and Ready PA can be so important because taking steps in advance of a disaster can make all the difference when the disaster strikes. As a matter of fact, Mr. Good said we would save money in the long run if we did the proper mitigation. As Administrator Fugate has stressed, it really does take the whole community, and I agree, to develop effective preparedness and response to natural disasters. Unfortunately, people don't always heed the call to prepare. We must continue to work to develop a culture of preparedness.

My question is: What more can we do on this front and how can this subcommittee be of assistance? First to Mr. Cannon and anyone else who would like to comment, I would appreciate that as well.

Mr. CANNON. Yes, sir. Absolutely, we need to develop across our country a culture of preparedness. For these two storm events, first, before Hurricane Irene made landfall, and second, when the Lee remnants began flooding, the first storm, we had over 1,500 Pennsylvania National Guard troops on station in their armories with their Humvees, their high-water vehicles, food, water, medical supplies ready to go out. The second storm, we had over 1,800. We have a philosophy of responding to these events called leaning forward. If you wait until the event has occurred, you have lost already. So preparedness is part of that leaning forward to be ready, and it goes back to, to embrace the entire community is that everyone that has a role down to the individual must be involved in that preparedness.

We have been talking about floods. A few weeks ago, we had a major snowstorm that was very unexpected in the Northeast that early. Back in August, I think it was, we had an earthquake tremor that for people in this part of the country they are not used to that at all. When these events occur, it oftentimes is beyond the capability of the emergency response force to get there immediately. So it is necessary that people prepare for their families, their neighborhoods and their community. If you look at those tornados in Joplin, Missouri, the first people that came out to help rescue were their neighbors, people helping people. We now don't call them victims any longer; we call them survivors, survivors who come out and respond.

So it is very important that people take some responsibility. We talk about a 72-hour window of having some food, supplies, medicine, things that you would need in the event that you or your family or your community were cut off because of the nature of the event. Even to the point of losing power, do people realize if you have canned goods, you can't use your electric can opener once you

have lost that power? Do you have water enough for everybody there? So it starts at the very local, home level in terms of preparedness, and the more we can get people to prepare and the more we can get our country to think about people assuming some of these responsibilities themselves, the better we will be when each of these events happen because people have taken the necessary steps.

The other thing is that people need to accept the guidance. You know, it would be better to evacuate folks nine times and when it turns out they could have stayed in place then that tenth time when they didn't evacuate. I was at FEMA when Hurricane Ike came across Galveston and up into the Houston ship channel. There were people there that were absolutely told by the National Hurricane Center, if you stay there, you will die, and that whole community was washed out to sea and those people died because they chose not to heed that advice. So it is very important that people prepare and listen to the warnings and realize that their Government can't do everything immediately. It takes a little bit of time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you very much, Mr. Cannon.

Ms. Wenner, I think you want to comment. What can we do? What can Congressman Marino do? What can I do? Any suggestions on how we can be helpful as a subcommittee, as individual Members of Congress? Public awareness? Do you have any suggestions?

Ms. WENNER. I think I agree with Mr. Cannon wholeheartedly. The Red Cross works closely with our Government partners in preparedness in our communities. I think it is important, educational process to engauge our schools in preparedness and educate children to bring home this and have their families prepared. I think it is really important that we provide education in our businesses in our community and engauge groups of people to work together in times of disaster. Japan has a wonderful program where they have community responses to disasters—where they train as communities to know what to do ahead of disasters. That is the mindset that we need to have in this country throughout our communities is to be prepared for the inevitable of any disaster happening. People need to understand, you know, to get resources into areas that have been impacted by disasters takes time and that time that they have those resources, that the community has those resources and they are prepared to deal with it on their own is critical to saving livings in communities.

I worked in Joplin. I was there the day after the tornado. Those people in Joplin were prepared for tornados. They knew what to do. They knew where to go. It made that operation so much more comprehensive and the people cooperating and the agencies all working together to rebuild that community. You can see the schools opened up within months of absolutely being destroyed there. We need to mirror that across the country, to have resilient communities across the Nation that are able to bounce back quicker after disasters happen, and that all lies in the preparedness before they happen.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you very much.

Administrator Tierney, yes, please, you are recognized.

Mrs. TIERNEY. Thank you. Just to add to what the director, Director Cannon, was speaking about, creating a culture of preparedness in the United States is not something that is going to happen overnight. If you think about the campaign to eliminate drunk driving or for people to wear seatbelts, it was a generational change in some respects, and I think with preparedness, we are facing the same type of challenge. So keeping the preparedness message on the forefront of the National dialog is critical to ensuring that that generational change occurs. I am certain that in 5 or 10 years we will be having a much different conversation about preparedness, or at least I hope we are, than we are now, which is, you know: How do we move people to action?

One of the ways that I like to communicate to people about moving themselves to action is that preparedness is not an overwhelming task. These are very simple, practical, basic things that you can do. You don't have to do them all at once. You can do a little bit each week or each day. For example, building a home emergency supply kit. It is not an overwhelming task where you need to go to the grocery store and buy this enormous amount of supplies. In many cases, people have the supplies for a home emergency supply kit already in their home. It is a matter of taking those supplies and assembling them in one place and periodically checking them to ensure that they are fresh and available for use in an emergency. The same thing with developing a family emergency plan. There are many steps involved in developing a family emergency plan but you don't have to do them all in one night. You could, you know, say, on a Monday select a meeting place. On Tuesday, identify your out-of-state contact. On Wednesday, practice your plan. So I think part of this is making it more accessible and reachable for people as opposed to a very daunting activity that then just ends up at the bottom of the pile of things that they need to do every day in their life.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Very good.

Anyone else? Would you like to answer, Mr. Cannon?

Mr. CANNON. Just another comment for the committee.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Sure.

Mr. CANNON. Since 9/11, we have built a tremendous capacity and capability in our country to respond to these events, and for a while, from 2001 until 2005, it was kind of focused on terrorists and everybody and every dollar went to anti-terrorism programs. After Katrina, it was recognized that we need to prepare for all hazards that might affect the homeland, not just a terrorist, and those dollars that went to fund those programs were allowed to be used for both all-hazard disaster response, emergency response, and anti-terrorism response. So from 2005 until now, that is what has happened, whether it was Joplin where they didn't need any outside rescue teams because they had enough capacity and capability built in, ice storms in Tennessee, tornados in Alabama, floods in Pennsylvania, we have been able to use the equipment and the resources that were purchased with those Homeland Security dollars that were legally able to be used for both purposes.

Last year, the States were cut 50 percent in their homeland security budgets. This year, it looks like it will be 59 percent, but because of the on-going situation and the C.R.'s, we are not sure how

much money we are going to get in Pennsylvania. What will happen is—maybe you will remember this. There was a time when buildings had civil defense hospitals in their basements and they were abandoned in place, those shelters and those hospitals and those supplies. We have built Nationally a tremendous capability and capacity to respond to disasters regardless of their cause, and without this funding, there is no way to sustain those programs. So it is my sincere hope that the committee will look at what is happening as it relates to the funding of the State Homeland Security Grant program and the Emergency Management Grant program because as I—I belong to an organization called NEMA, the National Emergency Managers Association. As I go to those meetings and we talk as State directors, every one of us recognizes that we have been able to respond to these disasters. In Pennsylvania, for the flooding, we brought 23 swift-water rescue teams from the western side of our State and they saved lives. We brought USAR teams here because our Federal USAR team went to New Jersey and then New York, but our State element was prestaged and went out. We had ambulances prestaged that we sent 50 ambulances to New Jersey the day before Irene to evacuate hospitals on the coast and then brought them back to Pennsylvania. Those resources were purchased and trained and exercised as a result of the Homeland Security Grant program.

So with that point, when you ask what could the committee do, that is a pretty strong point. Thank you, sir.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you very much. Point well taken. Good input.

I have a question for Ms. Wenner. As I noted in my opening statement, the subcommittee held a hearing last month to assess FEMA's progress since the passage of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. From what I have seen, FEMA has made great strides over the past 5 years. I said that in my opening statement. You have had a long career with the Red Cross and have responded to countless disasters, and thank you for your extraordinary work. I am interested in your perspective on working with FEMA. Have you seen improvements in FEMA's response capabilities?

Ms. WENNER. Absolutely. Over the years, the Red Cross and FEMA actually post-Katrina have worked hand-in-hand to manager disasters. The sharing of information in the past 5 years has been increased ten-fold. We staff the Emergency Operations Center with a Government liaison person so that we can have that seamless communication between what the Government is doing and what the Red Cross is doing, because as we all stated before, you know, it takes an entire community, an organization to share resources to serve people after disasters. So I would say our relationship with FEMA has improved and constantly we are evaluating and assessing how we can work closer with our Government partners. People don't care when they are affected by a disaster who is handing them the ready-to-eat meal or who is opening the shelter. All they care is that it is there and it is provided for them. So it is really important for us as an organization, for the Red Cross to work not only with our Government partners but our non-Government partners and or other VOAD organizations. So yes, I think

across the board all the relationships have been built pretty strongly and have progressed in a positive direction.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Anyone else wish to comment on that, on FEMA's responsibility capabilities? Have you seen an improvement? Anyone else on the panel? Yes, sir.

Mr. CANNON. Having worked there and now being a customer of theirs, we have seen great improvement since the Post-Katrina Reform Act was passed. You know, I think that after the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, much of FEMA's identity was taken, moved, dollars went to DHS rather than staying at FEMA. The Post-Katrina Act kind of refocused on its mission, and they have certainly become more attentive, more focused, and understand that if you are going to make a difference in saving lives, then you have to involve yourself early on. As I have heard Administrator Fugate say, go big, go fast. If we don't react that way to these disasters, then life-saving missions become body recovery missions. They have turned the corner, and I am very proud to have been a part of that, and I am very pleased with the work they have done with Pennsylvania.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Very good. Thank you.

Does anyone else wish to comment on FEMA? Okay. My final question is to Administrator Tierney. You mention in your written statement that FEMA in conjunction with State and local partners completed Preliminary Damage Assessments in 39 Pennsylvania counties in a little over a month. Who participates in these PDAs, the teams, and how are these assessments scheduled? How is information shared with the teams to ensure that you have the most complete information? You are recognized.

Mrs. TIERNEY. Thank you. In FEMA Region 3, we have a standard operating procedure for conducting Preliminary Damage Assessments so pre-event, actually over this summer we spent a considerable amount of time walking through the process for conducting PDAs to ensure we were doing them in the most efficient and expeditious manner. We were able to implement that PDA SOP during the Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee responses. PDA teams are primarily made up of FEMA Region 3 staff coupled with staff from the Commonwealth and the affected county. It is important that PDAs be done jointly so that we see the same picture at the same time and can compare and contrast notes. The PDA team could also include other Federal agencies such as the Army Corps or Housing and Urban Development. Typically, our PDA teams also include the Small Business Administration. This helps expedite any requests that a Governor may make independent of a major disaster declaration for SBA loans to be issued, activated within the State.

So basically there is a team leader. The team leader coordinates with the Commonwealth and the county. Based on the county coordinator—in the case of the Commonwealth, each county has a county emergency management coordinator. The county emergency management coordinator identifies areas that they would like the PDA team to view. The PDA team reviews those throughout the day. They caucus at the end of the day to compare notes and then a situation report is provided to me and to the Commonwealth.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you.

All right. Now I would like to recognize Mr. Marino for as much as time as he would like to consume.

Mr. MARINO. First, I failed to thank the security people here, the college security people and the Pennsylvania State Police for being here, helping us with security. I greatly appreciate that.

I have about a thousand questions, and we don't have the time. If you would, think about this when you leave and get back to me in writing, and it doesn't have to be a thesis, what you individually, what your agency individually could do to streamline the system by which we permit, by which we ask for help and by which we respond. If you could just zero in on one area in your agency that if financing were not an issue, what we could do to become more efficient and become more proactive. That is it, what can do to become more proactive. Make it simple, okay?

Ms. Wenner, I had the opportunity to spend some time with your volunteers in the mobile kitchens. They were incredible. I think these people were just from the Deep South that came up, many of them from faith-based organizations. What can we do to enable your organization to get those mobile kitchens out faster?

Ms. WENNER. We get our feeding out as fast as we possibly can.

Mr. MARINO. But how can we help you?

Ms. WENNER. How can you help us?

Mr. MARINO. Yes.

Ms. WENNER. Open the roads faster? You know, it is always a challenge after disasters getting the resources needed in a timely manner. I think, you know, it is a problem we are going to constantly struggle with because we don't know what we are facing, we don't know what the conditions are immediately after a disaster. Usually communications are, you know, down. So I really don't know how you could do any better than we do it right now.

Mr. MARINO. Are you in the loop quick enough? Are you notified quickly enough——

Ms. WENNER. Yes, absolutely. As I said before, we are staffed at the EOC, and we have as timely information as we possibly can get from our Government partners. We work hand-in-hand with our Government partners in getting that information and getting our resources out as fast as possible.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you.

I think it was Director Cannon, did you state that there was a manual put together, or was that at the Federal level and we just didn't follow through with it, a 101 manual, I think it was referred to? Mr. Brozena.

Mr. BROZENA. That is the concern that we have is that immediately following an event, and traditionally, major flood events don't happen all that often so you traditionally have someone who has never gone through a flood event before, does not know what to do. So while there are lots and lots of publications from FEMA that tell you things that you can't do, there is not one comprehensive document that says immediately do this. The prime example that I speak to is that people who live in special flood hazard areas are supposed to put their properties back together so that they would now be in compliance with the floodplain ordinance. The problem we have is that in lots of communities, they don't even know that they have a floodplain coordinator. So it is that type of

thing, that type of information that allows them to go down a checklist so that they can provide correct responses to residences as they put their houses back together so that they don't do it incorrectly and put themselves at risk again.

Second, it allows all of the information to be made available as quickly as possible because I live in West Pittston, my house was flooded, and the borough officials attempted that weekend to have a meeting, and everyone turned out and the borough attempted to ask questions, and all they ended up with was a bunch of frustrated flooded property owners because they didn't have all the answers.

Mr. MARINO. Can FEMA put together a succinct, easy-to-read manual where you don't have to be a Ph.D. to educate we at the local levels on procedures?

Mrs. TIERNEY. I don't see why we can't do that. I am certainly going to take that back and discuss that with the regional mitigation staff.

Mr. MARINO. Would you mind working with me personally on that project? I know it is not something that is going to be done in the next 2 months, and what I would like to do is, if FEMA was to prepare something, maybe PEMA could put some thoughts down, maybe we could get some representatives from the counties, the emergency service and put some thoughts down, get that information back to myself or Mrs. Tierney, and we can start compiling a how-to book that we go to. I mean, there are enough manuals in Washington that they could be skyscrapers if they were stacked but nobody reads them because they are all 3 feet thick and you need a couple of degrees to determine what they are saying. But we can do this. We can apply common sense here and put together a how-to manual, a quick reference that we can go to. So I would enjoy working with you on that, and Mrs. Tierney, if we can work something out.

Mrs. TIERNEY. We would be happy to do that. Anything that makes the process easier for people makes everybody better off. So certainly a checklist of some sort, that is what it sounds like the gentleman from Luzerne would like. I am certainly open to doing that. It sounds like it makes sense.

Mr. MARINO. Here is another request I have of you people sitting here on the panel, and you have been excellent, believe me. I have learned a great deal of what you are going through. Is there a possibility that if I can get all my emergency services people together in the county, which I have 14 counties in my district, could you individuals or your representatives, if we far enough in advance had a meeting, had a little luncheon where we all could sit down and discuss the issues that we are faced within the 10th Congressional district and get some advice from you and perhaps we could give you some suggestions, a little seminar, a learning lesson. From being in industry until I was 30, I found the best way to build a factory is not only have the engineers and the architects but have the people who run the equipment there also. Is that possible to do? I mean, would you all be willing to do that or go back and ask your superiors if that is possible? I will have my office contact you individuals and maybe we can set this up, because I really would

like to have my county coordinators sitting at the table with you folks because we have a lot of information that we can exchange.

I was in Forkston last night, and I know some of my constituents are here, and one of the issues is the rerouting of streams because of the flooding, and the rerouting of these streams, if we get a rain with a couple of inches, these people are going to get hit again. What can we do now, what can we do starting tomorrow to prevent this? Colonel, I am sorry, but I am going to go to you first.

Colonel ANDERSON. Again, going back to my previous response, the traditional way of getting a flood control structure, a structural solution to reducing risk is proving very expensive and long to take care of it, I think it is fair to say. We have capabilities that we can provide, standing authorities at the request of a local community to help with, you know, floodplain mapping, emergency warning systems, things like that, the non-structural things we need to consider. But if folks have located their property in a floodplain, that is more problematic in terms of getting them—you know, protecting or reducing risks for those folks. It is the non-structural things that we can do very quickly at very little or no cost to the local community.

Mr. MARINO. So I have this straight for the people listening, I live—when I was a kid in Williamsport, a young kid—I emphasize the word "young", when Agnes came by—I saw what my family went through. My dad was a fireman and I saw where he had to go and what he had to do. It is devastating. So in order to help mitigate the damage, is the first procedure the homeowner gets with their municipality, their township supervisors and says look, here is a problem here behind my property and the rocks have washed off the mountain and they need removed. Okay. Now, the township supervisors invariably are going to say we don't have the money to do this. So the next step for the township supervisor is what then? To go to the county level? I mean, we have got to go through this hierarchy, I imagine, and if the county says I don't have the money and they go to the State and ultimately the State is going to go to FEMA, is that the cumbersome procedure that these people have to go through?

Mr. CANNON. If they want to—if they have been repeatedly flooded, then as part of our mitigation program, we will move people out of that area. Now, once you move out of that area, that property cannot be developed, and because title then falls back to the local municipality for that property, so were exactly right in the beginning part. When people want to be brought out, they must go to their local municipality because they are the ones that actually submit their request to us for the buyouts.

Mr. MARINO. Who determines if they are going to be bought out then?

Mr. CANNON. Well, there is actually a committee that sits at the State level that is made up of a number of State agencies that review those requests and make that determination and then we submit them to FEMA, and ultimately the end result is FEMA. We have probably removed about 1,400 homes since Agnes and 3,500 people away from those flooded areas. The amount of mitigation money we get to do this with is based on the size of the disaster, and you don't know that until the end of—but we are already tak-

ing the applications and we are already holding the meetings much faster than it has ever been done before in communities as it relates to mitigation.

Mr. MARINO. I can attest to that for sure.

Mr. CANNON. So—and exactly. If we can move the homes out of the flood areas, then we eliminate the risk of those people being flooded.

Now, there are some issues that come up in municipal governments. They don't want to lose the tax base for a number of those people so they hopefully find another place to relocate them within that municipality. But we are looking at primarily getting the people out of those areas and getting them bought out in what is done through an appraisal system of pre-flood values of their homes. It is not certainly a flooded home that gets evaluated.

Mr. MARINO. Does this hold true for businesses as well?

Mr. CANNON. It does hold true for small businesses, yes.

Mr. MARINO. I am going to play devil's advocate here for a moment. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but if someone refuses to move, we cannot continue to—we will not have the funds to keep rebuilding. Is that person then living in that particular spot at peril, at their own loss, Mr. Cannon?

Mr. CANNON. I don't think that we can force people to move from that area but there is an issue there with flood insurance. MaryAnn, are you familiar with that?

Mrs. TIERNEY. Yes. There are currently about 41,000 homes that were registered with the NFIP, the National Flood Insurance Program. To date, we have paid out about 9,332 claims, about $127 million. Depending on the location of the home and the severity of the flooding, whether or not they are in a special flood hazard area, that is going to dictate kind of the long-term consequences to that property. I would be happy to get back to you with more specific information about the NFIP. Obviously, as you know, it is a very complicated program. I wouldn't want to speak out of turn on what would happen with a particular home.

There are a variety of categorizations of homes. For example, there are homes that have been flooded several times. They are something called a severe repetitive loss list. Those homes in acquisition receive priority for acquisition if the benefit-cost analysis works out in their favor. So if you would like, I could provide more detailed information or a briefing to go through that with you.

Mr. MARINO. A homeowner applies with FEMA for this or does it go through the State first?

Mr. CANNON. It goes through the State first, and then we forward them on to FEMA, who makes the final call.

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Brozena.

Mr. BROZENA. Mr. Marino, we seem to be talking about three things at once here, and it got away from your original question, which is, all of a sudden the stream is not where it used to be, it is now in a new location and someone is at risk. The issue comes down to that the definition of emergency protective measures of FEMA does not allow actions to be taken to relocate that stream back to where it should be and put it in to pre-flood condition. That is the major issue.

Mr. MARINO. Colonel.

Colonel ANDERSON. To add a fourth one in there, Jim, the Pennsylvania State Programmatic General Permit that we just put in place does indicate that—you asked what we can do to be more proactive. As an example, activities, where the stream has left its channel as a result of a recent storm event, channel work is authorized to restore the stream flow to pre-storm conditions under emergency permit application process with PDEP, which is less—more streamlined, less onerous.

Mr. MARINO. Who does this? Who is responsible then for——

Colonel ANDERSON. An emergency permit, using emergency permitting processes, again, with this State programmatic general permit, to restore the channel to its original——

Mr. MARINO. Pre-storm route. So again, we started a process with the local government, the township, the city, the county. We go that route.

Colonel ANDERSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. MARINO. But we can, there is a method by which we can hopefully get that stream back to pre-flood conditions.

Colonel ANDERSON. From a regulatory permitting aspect, yes, sir.

Mr. MARINO. Do we have to do something legislatively in Congress or is the regulation there?

Colonel ANDERSON. No, sir. This is a programmatic permit between the State and the Corps of Engineers for how our regulatory requirements would be executed. No further legislative action is required.

Mr. MARINO. Okay. What do we do to improve the warning system, whether it is from the locals to the Federal Government or from the Federal Government down to the locals? How can we make that more efficient and more effective?

Colonel ANDERSON. Sir, if I could take that. We need full appropriations for our mitigation components of our projects. Mr. Brozena mentioned that unfortunately the project wasn't complete at Wyoming Valley, although it just prevented, you know, $3 billion or $4 billion of damage. The incomplete portion he is talking about is the mitigation piece. Going back to your previous question, do our projects create other conditions in the river?—yes, they do, and in recognition of that phenomenon of fluid mechanics, our projects include a component for mitigation, to mitigate the deleterious impacts that our projects may have in unprotected areas. For the Wyoming Valley project, for example, we ended up with $37 million of funding. A couple components of the project were actually removed because they weren't permittable or no longer required. We still are awaiting full appropriations to enact the mitigation pieces of that. There are 53 communities that are eligible. Fifty-three communities are eligible and they have some up with something like 660 potential projects that they submit to the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority and Mr. Brozena's leadership and once those projects have been selected that are the most effective, they come to the Corps for reimbursement based on a 75/25 Federal/local cost share. To date, we haven't received full appropriations for that, and that would certainly help us enact some things like flood warning systems.

Mr. MARINO. Do we have to evaluate our floodplain not only here in the 10th Congressional District or Pennsylvania but across the

country? Because I was at one area where there was a mobile home park less than 50 yards from what looked like—it was a stream but when I was there standing on the banks, it looked like a raging river. The information that I was able to collect was, it was okay to put that mobile home park there because it was 2 feet above the floodplain. Now, we seem to have left common sense out in the backyard when we are that close to a stream and say oh, you know, we are 2 feet away from it. I am not one to promote regulation but do we need to tighten this up?

Mrs. TIERNEY. You have certainly ventured into an area that is new territory for me. I am not an NFIP expert. I can speak specifically to some of the things in Pennsylvania. For example, in Lackawanna County, our maps, the re-study for the floodplain was recently completed and our maps are preliminary. They will go effective in less than a year. There has been a lot of work Nationally to digitize the flood insurance rate maps and to redo the flood studies. As I am sure you are aware, there has been a lot of local, State, and National discussion about that. I would be happy to provide or have, frankly, people in FEMA headquarters in Washington, DC, provide additional detailed information about your request, but I am certainly not in a position to dive into the nitty-gritty of the NFIP.

Mr. MARINO. Who is responsible for determining the floodplain? What Government entity? Is it locals or the Federal Government?

Mrs. TIERNEY. It is FEMA through the National Flood Insurance Program through the issuance of flood insurance rate maps. Those determine the flood plain, both the 100- and 500-year and the special flood hazard areas.

Mr. MARINO. Okay.

Mr. BROZENA. Let me just add a little bit more about the map modernization program. Luzerne County is going through that currently. There have been new preliminary maps issued in 2009. They have not have gone final. But one of the difficulties with the new maps is that we are using old data. Of the more than 800 miles of streams and rivers in Luzerne County, we only did new studies on less than 10 percent of those. So we are using data that probably dates back to the 1970s, and if there is one thing that we probably should do, especially in light of the events since 2004, 2005, and 2006 on the Susquehanna River is that we should do a comprehensive review of the Susquehanna River Basin to take a look and see what the floodplains really are. We have been playing catch-up since the 1970s because of development that has occurred throughout the watershed, and I am not sure that we have an accurate depiction of what is going on out there.

Mr. MARINO. The gauge that maxed out—I am going to use that term—we had no idea that it maxed out until after the disaster?

Mr. BROZENA. No. We had no idea what the limitations and the operating limits of the gauge were. However, the repair that we were doing in Forty Fort on Thursday evening, they brought pictures back and they showed me them and I asked what the dots on the wall were, and they told me that is where the water was, and I told them it better not because we don't have enough wall left based on where the river is at right now. So it was at that point that we then went out and gathered some on-the-ground in-

formation to make a determination as to what the river reading really was and then address the plan from that point forward.

Mr. MARINO. Do we need a better system? Is there a state-of-the-art system out there to determine this or is it simply the gauge did what it was supposed to do but it got to its top point and that was it?

Mr. BROZENA. Well, to USGS's credit, they recognized the situation, and within 30 days, a new gauge has been installed and in place. So that is good. The problem is, is that the annual funding component for the Susquehanna River Basin gauges is about $2.4 million, has a benefit-cost ratio of 20:1 and we struggle annually to find the dollars to do that, and that is how we come up with accurate river forecasts, and it makes it very difficult as we use less and less data as more and more areas become more populated.

Mr. MARINO. Okay. I am getting to the point where I am concluding now. Could each one of you take a moment and think about what your agency would do over the next time we have a flood? What would you do differently? You did so much that was good, and I really, truly mean that. I have seen it. I was on the ground out there. You prevented loss of life, the loss of more property and personal effects. But the next time we have a flood—and we are going to—what do we do to mitigate our losses? Mrs. Tierney.

Mrs. TIERNEY. Thank you. As I mentioned in my oral statement, one of the things that we would do differently in FEMA Region 3 is—and this would be regardless of whether the incident was a flood or a tornado or other type of emergency or disaster—is with our Incident Management Assistance Team, we will assist a full-time employee to handle mission assignments with the IMAT collocated in the State's or Commonwealth's EOC. We think this will significantly compress the time by which we can mission assign agencies and enhance coordination between the IMAT operation occurring in the EOC and our regional response coordination center operation.

Mr. MARINO. Colonel, could you respond to that, please?

Colonel ANDERSON. Sir, there is two sets of answers to this. One is if we weren't in resource-constrained environment and one is if we are. So if we weren't in a resource-constrained environment, I would love to finish out all the mitigation at Wyoming Valley. I would love to get flood protection to places where it has already been authorized like Bloomsburg. I would love to get, you know, max protection done. But we live in a resource-constrained environment.

So there are other things that the Corps can do now to help prepare, and those are those floodplain management sources, planning assistance to States. I would like to get with some of the communities that have these concerns and just make sure they know what is at their disposal at the Federal level, again, for little or no cost, to help them with some of these challenges that they face. We do have a toolkit we can use. It is non-structural, pretty quick and inexpensive. If I had it to do over again, I would probably be back at these communities and making sure that they know about them and how to request them.

Mr. MARINO. Director.

Mr. CANNON. We continue to review everything we did during these events. A number of the things that were done were done for the first time ever in Pennsylvania. A number of the things we did happened faster than they ever happened before in Pennsylvania. But in these events for the people that suffered, nothing is fast enough, and so we will continue to review every single thing we have done, every action we have taken to see where we can improve on the performance that we had.

The thorny issue, and you both touched on it and discussed it, is the issue of the debris removal in the streams where no one seems to have the responsibility or the funds to be able to deal with that issue. So we will——

Mr. MARINO. Could I stop you there for moment, sir?

Mr. CANNON. Yes.

Mr. MARINO. Excuse me. Who has jurisdiction? Who really has the jurisdiction to get in and reroute those streams and clean them out beyond 50 feet?

Mr. CANNON. We work—you know, I would have to get back to you with the answer to that. That is what I said, we don't know who has—different people have different responsibilities. We thought if we facilitated permits to enter the streams—because, remember, there are other people at the same time that don't want us to enter the streams.

Mr. MARINO. Sure.

Mr. CANNON. And——

Mr. MARINO. Those are the people that haven't been flooded.

Mr. CANNON. They haven't been. Then there are other agencies that we have to make sure that they are on-board with the program.

Mr. MARINO. Listen, I am a conservationist. I want to protect the environment. I live out in the country. I want my water protected. I love to see the bear and the deer come through the yard. But I have a little problem when someone says that a particular rock or a plant or toad could be in danger relative to somebody losing their house, their personal effects, and someone from their family. You know where my precedent is going to go on that one.

Mr. CANNON. Well, and that is why we have been issuing the permits to get into the streams.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you.

Mr. CANNON. But the scope of the issue is so large, it is my belief that it will take a Federal response to be able to deal with it. It takes a program that large and it takes a program that needs to be funded, because we see this—it is a recurring issue every time there is a flood.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Wenner.

Ms. WENNER. We have a meeting tomorrow in Harrisburg, the Pennsylvania State Red Cross, to evaluate our disaster response, but I can tell you the two things that I know ahead of time which are going to come out of this meeting, and one thing is that we need more trained local volunteers prior to the event throughout the area. We bring in our resources from all over the country to support—we brought in 1,800 volunteers we had on the ground here. That costs us time and that costs us money that, you know,

we are in tight constraints like everyone else, and if we had trained volunteers here ready to respond, it would be savings in time and in money. We also need to strategically place our supplies in areas that we have assessed that have the greater needs for a quicker response too because bringing in supplies as bringing in people is costly and time-consuming. So those are two things that I definitely know are going to come out of that meeting tomorrow.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you.

Mr. Brozena.

Mr. BROZENA. Well, it is interesting. I was just going to say, I was going to steal the Red Cross's page because when you look at who responds to these types of events from the Federal level on down, it is an employee, it is an employee, it is an employee, and then finally when you get to the local level, it is volunteers that we have at the county level and especially at the municipal level. Again, we need to do—so we need to recruit volunteers, and there are lots of talents out there that have gone untapped that we somehow need to get them to become involved in their community in some way.

The second thing is, is that it is great to have a volunteer but it is better to have a trained volunteer, and maybe that is one of the focus things that the agencies should look on is to develop means to provide us with tools that we can, when we do our exercises, train people so that we are not doing it as the river is rising, I am out there teaching someone what they should be looking for.

Mr. MARINO. I guess it gets back to, I am going back to my 18 years as prosecutor. It gets started at some point. The warning needs to come from the technology that the Federal Government has but the front line, the front-line operations, people in the community, the emergency service people, and the volunteers. No one knows more so what is going to happen. There was a gentleman, 84 years old, who was standing at one place and someone made a comment about when this is going to crest. He said he learned over the years, over the 84 years, he called that crest within a half a foot. Amazing.

Mr. Good, what would you like to see us do, Congress do, the Government do?

Mr. GOOD. I was sitting here trying to think what all the different comments and so forth, what could come out of that, but I fear that in today's economy, the lack of available funds is a huge problem.

Mr. MARINO. Perfect segue. I have been in Congress for almost 11 months now, and believe me, there is enough waste in agencies and departments that haven't been efficient or effective for the last 40 years. There is where we start. Because we know we are going to have disasters—floods and hurricanes and earthquakes and fires—and we are not going to stop that, but we can mitigate our losses, and I know that the Chairman and I and committee Members are devoted to making sure that we get the best bang for our buck in the places where we see the efficiency, and I want to commend each and every one of you because you first of all have had a stellar performance today. I learned so much from you and I hope to learn more. But what you did not only in my community but across this country on how your actions, your knowledge, and your

quick service saved lives and saved property. So I commend you for that. Please continue to educate us. Please don't forget about, I would still like to have the meeting in the 10th Congressional District with you people or your peers.

Two thoughts I would live to leave with you. We have to work on getting the funds that are available to the municipalities faster, but if we have to do something in the municipalities to help you get us that money faster, please educate us. We didn't have anybody here today—the panel was full—from the electric companies, and there were people that went a long time without electricity, and I have spent a fair amount of time talking with the executives and the workers from the respective electric companies, and I just want to put out there, just because you don't see a person right there on the line does not mean that the electric company isn't working to get grids up and functions like that, but we need to also find out from these individuals, these companies what we can do to help them restore electricity faster than we have been doing.

Again, I probably have another thousand questions but we will do that at some other time. I want to thank you all so very much for being here, and I certainly appreciate the information you have given us.

Chairman, I know I have used time than if we had 20 people up at this panel but I yield back.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, and I want to thank you, Tom, for your extraordinary service to your constituents. I have seen you work in the District of Columbia, and he works in a bipartisan fashion and he demands results and he gets them. So you are very fortunate, in my opinion, to have a representative like Tom Marino. He truly cares about the people, and it shows.

So I have got to conclude here. I want to thank the witnesses for your valuable testimony, and I agree, it was great testimony, very productive, very informative. I also want to thank the audience, and we will be available one-on-one if you have any questions or if you would like to make some comments for us. We will be available for a few minutes. We do have to drive back to the District of Columbia for votes this evening, but I am assured that we will get there in time for the votes.

So the Members of the committee may have some additional questions, and I know Tom has some, I have a couple too, of the witnesses, and we ask that you respond in writing. The record will be open for 10 days.

So I want to thank the college as well, and the subcommittee stands adjourned. Thank you very much for your hospitality.

[Whereupon, at 11:17 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]