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FEMA REAUTHORIZATION: ENSURING THE NATION IS PREPARED

(113–37)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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FIRST SESSION

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† Representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency were invited to attend the hearing as witnesses. However, they were furloughed as a result of the Government shutdown of October 1 through October 16, 2013, and were unable to attend. Their written statement was submitted for the record.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

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Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

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September 30, 2013

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management
FROM: Staff, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management
SUBJECT: Subcommittee Hearing on "FEMA Reauthorization: Ensuring the Nation is Prepared"

PURPOSE

The Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management will hold a hearing on Wednesday, October 2, 2013, at 10:00 a.m., in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building to receive testimony from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a Central Region Representative of the National Urban Search and Rescue System (USAR), representatives of the wireless and broadcasting industries, and a local emergency alert user. The purpose of the hearing is to examine FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and USAR System to evaluate the need for reform legislation in the context of a proposed reauthorization of FEMA.

BACKGROUND

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)

Purpose and Need

Pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), FEMA is charged with ensuring an emergency presidential message can be effectively disseminated to the Nation and, as part of that system, providing for the ability of state, tribal, and local governments to issue public alerts and warnings in the event of impending or imminent disasters or emergencies. In the 1960s, the foundation of such a system was established through the creation of the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS), which used television and radio to alert the public to emergencies. In recent years, that system, now called the Emergency Alert System (EAS), has been modernized and updated to digital technology.

Because of the advances in technology and the increase in the methods by which the public can receive information and be alerted (e.g., cellphones, satellite radio, and television), in 2006 former President Bush issued Executive Order 13407, stating the U.S. policy is "to have an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible and comprehensive system to alert and warn the American people." Executive Order 13407 directed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) as a "system of systems." It was intended to eventually integrate existing and new alert systems into one unified system.

Currently, IPAWS includes EAS, Wireless Emergency Alerts (mobile devices), and National Weather Service alerts. Future methods of alerting could include computer gaming systems, digital signs, siren systems, internet search engines, social sharing websites, and instant messaging. IPAWS creates an integrated system that allows one "message" or data package to be transmitted through as many mediums and methods as possible to reach the greatest number of people who may be impacted by a disaster or emergency. The move to digital signals, for example, creates opportunity for the message to incorporate audio, video, or other data in addition to a text-based message to provide the public as much critical information as may be needed. The need to increase the mediums and forms of alerts also increases options for the effective alerting of people with disabilities and people with limited English proficiency.

The development of IPAWS also involves the increase in the number of what are known as Primary Entry Point (PEP) broadcast stations. PEP stations are private or commercial radio broadcast stations that work with FEMA to provide emergency alert and warning information to the public. The FEMA PEP stations also serve as the primary source of initial broadcast for a Presidential emergency alert. PEP stations are "hardened" stations that are equipped with additional back up communications equipment and power generators designed to ensure they can continue broadcasting information to the public during and after a disaster. Before FEMA began expanding the number of PEP stations, there were significant parts of the Nation that did not receive alerts directly from one of these stations. The alerts were typically relayed from station to station to reach as many people as possible – a process called the "daisy chain." The danger with the daisy chain process is that if stations downstream from the PEP station go off the air because of a disaster, many people would be left without any way of receiving alerts. As a result, FEMA has been working to expand the number of PEP stations to ensure as much of the Nation can receive signals directly from them as possible. Direct coverage of the Nation's population will expand from approximately 67 percent in 2009 to over 90 percent in 2015.

Wireless Emergency Alerts

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) comprises one of the components of IPAWS. The Warning, Alert and Response Network Act (WARN Act), as signed into law as Title VI of P.L. 109-347, the Security and Accountability for Every Port Act of 2006 (The SAFE Port Act), required the establishment of a Commercial Mobile Service Alert Advisory Committee by the FCC to facilitate the development of the wireless portion of IPAWS. WEA allows for the alerting of the public through wireless devices. Instead of thousands of separate text messages being sent (as used in some localities), one message is broadcasted to wireless devices in the affected geographical area, minimizing the chance of clogging the cell towers and wireless networks. Currently, the wireless system has been used or will be used for extreme weather and other threatening emergencies in a given geographical area, AMBER Alerts, and Presidential alerts during a national emergency.

IPAWS Challenges and Problems

Nationwide Test

Even though an alerting system has been in place dating back to the old Emergency Broadcast System in the 1960s, until two years ago, there had never been a nationwide test of the alerting system raising serious questions as to whether or not the system would work, should the President ever need to send a nationwide emergency message. On November 9, 2011, the first nationwide test of EAS was conducted. The test only involved the legacy TV and radio system and not the wireless system.

A number of problems were identified during the test. The test was originally planned to last for three minutes; however, a decision was later made to reduce the test time to 30 seconds. As a result, the length of the test impacted the results. For example, the shortness of the test impacted the ability of some stations to receive the alert in full. In addition, 3 of the 63 PEP stations at that time failed to rebroadcast the message, resulting in some members of the public not receiving a message and reports of poor or no audio or the playing of music in lieu of the message.

Broadcasters were required to report on the results of the test by the end of 2012. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), as of January, 2013, 61 percent of broadcasters and cable operators had submitted the required report. Of those, 82 percent reported receiving the nationwide test alert, and 61 percent reported successfully retransmitting the alert to other stations, as required. Broadcasters' and cable operators' reception of the alert varied by state, from 6 percent in Oregon to 100 percent in Delaware.

Subcommittee Investigations

During the development of IPAWS, the Subcommittee conducted extensive oversight. The GAO issued reports in 2009 and 2013. The Subcommittee's oversight coupled with GAO's reports supported the need for legislation to ensure consultation and coordination with key stakeholders, strategic planning, and the timely roll out of the new system. The 2009[1] GAO report highlighted that without a clear vision and strategic plan, FEMA conducted pilot programs that "have ended inconclusively, with few documented lessons learned."[2] In addition, the subcommittee found that FEMA failed to consult with key stakeholders, such as states, local officials, broadcasters, and the wireless industry to ensure that IPAWS would be developed in such a way as to be compatible with existing technologies and usable by the primary users of the system. While the 2013 GAO report indicated progress in addressing some of the previous concerns, it identified continued concerns related to coordination with state and local officials and problems identified in the nationwide test.[3]

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[1]Emergency Preparedness: Improved Planning and Coordination Necessary for Modernization and Integration of Public Alert and Warning System, GAO-09-834, September 2009.
[2]Id. at p. 18.
[3]Emergency Alerting: Capabilities Have Improved, but Additional Guidance and Testing Are Needed, GAO-13-375, April 24, 2013.

Legislation

Legislation was introduced in the 110th, 111th, and 112th Congresses to address problems identified in the development of IPAWS. The Committee is considering the inclusion of similar legislation as part of FEMA reauthorization legislation this Congress. That legislation would establish a clear framework for the development of IPAWS and ensure that stakeholder input is incorporated in the development of IPAWS. The legislation would achieve this by codifying the purpose and framework for the IPAWS consistent with Executive Order 13407 to ensure there is clear statutory direction. It would also ensure that the various federal agencies that have a part in the governance of the IPAWS are conducting an ongoing dialogue with industry, state, tribal, and local stakeholders.

Urban Search and Rescue System (USAR)

Currently, there are 28 USAR FEMA task forces located in 19 states throughout the continental United States. The task forces were created and are used by FEMA under the authority of the Stafford Act[4] to rescue victims from structural collapses during disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes. These task forces, in their standard configuration, consist of 70 person teams comprised of state and local first responders and include firefighters, rescue specialists, medical professionals, structural engineers, emergency managers, and canine search specialists. A task force is a partnership between state fire departments, law enforcement agencies, federal and local governmental agencies, and private companies. In some cases, task forces consist of participating agencies from more than one state.

USAR is an all-hazards disaster program. Regardless of what causes the structural collapse (e.g., earthquake, hurricane, gas explosion, bomb, or structural failure), the essential elements of the USAR operation remain the same. The capabilities of the USAR task forces include:

- Conduct physical search and rescue in collapsed buildings;
- Provide reconnaissance to assess damage and needs;
- Render emergency medical care to trapped victims;
- Canine search-and-rescue;
- Assess and control of hazardous materials, electrical services, and gas leaks;
- Provide structural evaluations of buildings; and
- Evaluate and stabilize damaged structures.

The task forces are trained and partially funded and equipped by FEMA. In return, if a disaster event warrants national USAR support, FEMA will deploy the three closest task forces within six hours of notification, and additional teams as necessary. State and local governments can use the task forces and their expertise in events in their communities and state and in neighboring states and communities regardless of whether the President declares a major disaster or an emergency for that event.

[4] 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207.

Legislation

Legislation was introduced in previous Congresses to clarify liability issues related to the USAR team members. Because USAR teams are composed of state, local, and private-sector employees, there remains a lack of clarity in terms of their status when they are essentially "federalized" and deployed under the direction of FEMA to a federal disaster area outside of their normal jurisdiction. Many of these first responders deploy to other areas of the country and even internationally without knowing how they are protected in terms of licensing, liability, and injury. The legislation would codify the USAR system in statute and clarify liability and compensation issues in a way similar to the protections of personnel called up as part of the Public Health Service or the National Guard.

WITNESSES

Mr. Damon Penn
Assistant Administrator for National Continuity Programs
Federal Emergency Management Agency

Mr. Fred Endrikat
Branch Chief
Urban Search and Rescue System
Federal Emergency Management Agency

Mr. Bob Khan
Fire Chief
City of Phoenix, AZ
Sponsoring Agency Chief
Central Region Representative
Urban Search and Rescue System

Mr. Barry Fisher
General Manager
WFMZ-TV
Allentown, PA
National Association of Broadcasters

Mr. Christopher Guttman-McCabe
Executive Vice President
CTIA – The Wireless Association

Mr. Bobby A. Courtney, M.P.H., J.D.
Director of Policy and Planning
MESH Coalition

FEMA REAUTHORIZATION: ENSURING THE NATION IS PREPARED

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:05 a.m., in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Lou Barletta (Chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. BARLETTA. The committee will come to order.

Today's hearing is the second in a series of hearings to examine reforms to improve our Nation's emergency management capability. Last month we received testimony on recovering quicker and smarter following a disaster. We examined the implementation of reforms enacted earlier this year as part of the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act and what additional reforms may be needed to streamline the process.

Today we will hear from local officials in the private sector on two critical components of our preparedness and response system: the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, or IPAWS; the Urban Search and Rescue System, or US&R.

Many people in the public may ask, why are these programs important to me? Some may not recognize the acronym IPAWS, but I am sure they would be familiar with the Emergency Alert System or the National Weather Service alerts that appear on their televisions or radios when a tornado or flood is approaching, and many people may have already received weather or AMBER Alerts on their cell phones. All of these components are pieces of IPAWS, a system of systems intended to integrate and streamline alerts through as many devices as possible.

It sounds pretty straightforward in this age of technology that we should be able to alert people through TV, radio, cell phone and Internet, social media, and the list goes on and on. But as I am sure the witnesses before us will attest, it has not been easy to develop this system. While the Nation's alert system dates back to the old Emergency Broadcast System in the 1960s, it was not until 2006, when former President Bush issued an Executive order directing the development of IPAWS, that there was a focused effort to modernize the old system. In fact, it was not until 2011 that there was a nationwide test to make sure it would even work in the event of a Presidential alert.

While the Executive order provided direction for IPAWS in 2009, the GAO raised a number of concerns about how it was being implemented and how effectively FEMA was working with key stakeholders, such as the broadcasters and wireless industries. In recent years, however, I am pleased to say, we have seen noticeable progress. The program office for IPAWS at FEMA has taken GAO's findings seriously and has taken steps to try and address key problems identified.

I know FEMA has worked closely with this committee to address concerns and ensure we can conduct effective oversight of the program. In fact, in a more recent review completed earlier this year, the GAO found improvements in how the program is currently being implemented.

While there has been progress, there are still issues that must be addressed as IPAWS continues to expand and integrate additional capabilities. The national test, for example, was a good first step. However, there were clear gaps identified in our alert system that still need to be fixed. Reform legislation can help ensure the development of IPAWS stays on track and minimizes waste.

Another area we will examine today is the Urban Search and Rescue System. US&R has been a model of what a Federal, State, local, and private sector partnership can look like. There are 28 US&R teams across the Nation, including in my home State of Pennsylvania. In fact, along with Fire Chief Khan, a number of the other US&R team members are also present today, including Special Operations Chief of Philadelphia Fire Department Craig Murphy.

Each team has up to 70 personnel that are cross-trained in areas such as search, rescue, medical, hazardous materials, and logistics. The teams include physicians, structural engineers, and first responders. They are trained and equipped with help from FEMA and are called up by FEMA when needed to respond following a disaster.

While the members of these teams are not Federal, they do not hesitate to respond to disasters in other States and even internationally, such as following the earthquake in Haiti. These teams have been deployed over the years to many disasters, including the 9/11 World Trade Center terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina, and more recently Hurricane Sandy and the Colorado floods and storms.

The problem has been that these team members, when Federalized, do not have clarity on liability and compensation issues. It is amazing that we ask men and women to go into collapsed structures searching for trapped survivors without providing them clarity on their legal status when it comes to liability issues and injuries.

We want to explore today how US&R works, how US&R teams have responded to recent disasters, and what reforms may be needed to protect team members.

I thank all of the witnesses for being here today, and I also would like to acknowledge and welcome Mr. Fisher, general manager of a broadcast station in my home State of Pennsylvania. Thank you all for being here today.

I now call on the ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. Carson, for a brief opening statement.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you, Chairman Barletta.

Good morning and welcome to our distinguished panel of witnesses; also to Chairman Shuster who is here.

I want to note at the outset that while the issues before us this morning are important, I believe that—as a former law enforcement officer this is an issue that is near and dear to my heart—but I personally believe that we are really doing a disservice to the American people. The shutdown has real-life impacts, and holding a hearing on a topic unrelated to the reopening of our Government, no matter how critical, is really counterproductive.

We all know by now that the last shutdown, in the 1990s, cost over $1 billion, waste we can expect under this shutdown as well. This is money that emergency management programs like these could put to better use. Moreover, FEMA, a very relevant, critically important witness to the issues before us today, cannot attend because of the shutdown. Yes, we have their written testimony, but that is not the same as having a representative testify and respond to questioning. There is no urgent reason to hold this hearing today and it should have been postponed, quite frankly.

But since the hearing is moving forward, I am very pleased that Hoosiers are well represented by Mr. Bobby Courtney with the Medical Emergency Services For Health Coalition. The MESH Coalition, which is located in my district, is one of only three entities of its kind nationwide. MESH supports healthcare emergency management, and this includes using emergency alerts to coordinate hospital preparedness, as well as working with emergency managers to provide real-time hospital capacity information.

Today's hearing addresses very essential disaster preparedness and response functions, and I am happy to be here today, Mr. Chairman. And as Mr. Courtney can attest, modern technologies like IPAWS are a critical part of disaster response preparation. Several times a year the emergency response personnel like these leave behind their families to help those in need, and when they do Congress has a responsibility to make sure that they are supported. We must provide them with assurances that they and their families will be taken care of if they are hurt in the line of duty. This is something we can always do better, and so I am glad that it is a part of today's discussion.

I welcome the testimony from today's witnesses as we consider priorities and provisions for this committee's upcoming FEMA reauthorization legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Ranking Member Carson.

At this time I would like to recognize the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Shuster.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you, Chairman Barletta. Thank you for holding this hearing today. The ranking member is correct that this shutdown is affecting all Americans, and we urge that the Senate and the President come to the table so we can dispense with this shutdown and get back on with business.

I also want to just point out to make sure that everybody understands that FEMA provided us with testimony before the shutdown

occurred, so we have their written testimony, and I am sure in the coming days when we solve this shutdown we will be talking with the folks at FEMA concerning these issues we are talking about today.

But it is affecting all Americans. In fact, it is affecting this committee. We have furloughs beginning this week in our committee staff and our personal offices. So, again, we all want to get back to work and make sure that the Government is functioning for the American people.

But, again, I want to thank Chairman Barletta for holding this hearing on FEMA reauthorization, ensuring that America is prepared for the next incident, and I think we all know there will be another incident, it is just when and where.

I also want to welcome Mr. Fisher also from my home State of Pennsylvania. Thanks for making the trip down here.

Last month the subcommittee held a hearing focusing on recover and rebuilding following disasters and reforms we enacted as part of the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013. Today we are focusing on those key programs that are critical to our Nation's preparedness and response capabilities, the IPAWS and the Urban Search and Rescue System. In previous Congresses this committee has proposed and passed reforms to improve capabilities, and we continue exploring similar reforms in the FEMA reauthorization, this bill, as I said, that continued examination of legislation clarifying those protections.

I also want to thank our stakeholders for being here. I think it is extremely important that as we develop legislation, reforms, that the folks that are out in the real world that have to deal with them are testifying before us. You provide us with great insight, and I hope that we are going to make this a model for the committee, what Mr. Barletta is doing here today, and we have done that on water resources development and other bills that we are moving forward to make sure that stakeholders are at the table and get their say because we learn so much from your real world experiences. So, again, thank all of you for being here today.

With that I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to recognize Congresswoman Norton, if she has any opening comments she would like to make.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am very pleased to see this bill. This bill came forward in the last Congress. It is a bill of some specific urgency as we have seen more events evolve beyond the original 9/11 events where communication is everything. I understand, of course, that there were some outstanding issues, and we agreed that we would work those through. So I am very pleased that we are looking specifically at the issues that had remained outstanding and believe and hope that, with them cleared up, this FEMA reauthorization can finally make it through.

And I thank you very much for bringing this forward. It is an urgent and important piece of legislation. And I am pleased to be here with the new ranking member as well, who I see is settled in quite comfortably and quite well.

Thank you.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you.

I would like to recognize Mr. Mullin for a brief opening statement.

Mr. MULLIN. I don't know if you can call it a statement, more it is a gripe. I hear my colleague on the other side that is going to complain about us holding a hearing. Well, what are we supposed to do? Supposed to go back to our office and sit there, watch movies, play cards? We are here to work.

The gentlemen that are sitting in front of us, they don't have a choice. If called, they are going to go to work. Until we can figure out how we are going to work together, how we are going to move forward, what do we propose? We have to work.

Party politics is causing this gridlock to begin with, and unfortunately we are playing with real people's lives. We have a situation that is in front of us that we have got to take care of. We are talking about responding in the most critical times, and my colleague from the other side is going to complain because we are having a hearing? That is absurd. We have got to continue moving forward regardless.

I am glad I am here. I am glad I am still not just sitting in my office. I am glad I am ready to go to work. And we are still going to be one day moving this ball forward. This gridlock isn't going to last forever. Why have a backlog here? Let's be ready to act immediately. And that is what we are trying to do in this committee, is we are trying to make sure that we are ready to move forward. We have done that in this committee over and over and over again. We have had bipartisan approaches over and over and over again and our chairman has shown that. And to sit here and get slammed because we are having a committee hearing is ridiculous.

So thank you for being here. I am going to listen to everything you have to say. And I hope—I hope—that we get this right, because so far we are getting it wrong up here in DC.

Thank you.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Mr. Mullin.

I would like to recognize Mr. Walz for opening comments.

Mr. WALZ. Well, thank you, Chairman, and thank the ranking member.

I, too, would like to thank you for traveling here and coming.

I would respond to that, to the gentleman. We are high and dry up here, receiving a paycheck. FEMA representatives and FEMA V in Chicago are not today. I think that the ranking member's position was clear. I don't know if we are writing for Jon Stewart now or not. The title of the hearing is "FEMA Reauthorization: Ensuring the Nation is Prepared."

FEMA is not there, and they are not there because they are furloughed. That is where the anger lies. Of course we should be here working. This is about partnerships. Every one of these gentleman is going to testify that it is about building a partnership. What they do is critically important. What FEMA does is critically important. They are not here because of us. That is the point. So let's fix that part first so FEMA can come here and do their job.

Nobody is disagreeing that we want to do what is right by our people, but it is not sitting here at a dry dais. FEMA is the one who walked through the crap in Rushford when we had the flooding and the sewers backed up.

Mr. MULLIN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WALZ. Not at this time. I came here, too, to do my job. I came here, too, to talk to that. I want to talk to FEMA. They are not here because they can't be, and the frustration lies in do you want to pretend like everything is fine, you want to pretend and write a hearing that is ensuring the Nation is prepared. They are not prepared today. That is where the frustration lies. Not a question of whether we are going to posture who is working harder, not who is coming to do here, not that we are going through this. The frustration lies in fix first problems first. We fix the shutdown, FEMA can show up. We fix it where FEMA is showing here, we can fix this communication issue.

I have stood on the top of garages in Rushford, Minnesota, because we had no communication. I have talked to a sheriff who left his vehicle to jump over a hot power line to pull somebody out of an oncoming tornado in Albert Lea and had no communication back. His people lost where he was at.

This issue of being able to communicate, this issue of preparedness, this issue of interoperability, Federal, State, National Guard, local law enforcement, first responders, and all that is critically important. But when we break that chain and one of our critical partners is not here—the chairman is right, they provided their testimony ahead of time. Did they provide sandbags ahead of time in case we need them if they are there?

This is about getting it right. So the posturing again and the frustration, the gentleman is a friend of mine. I trust his judgment. I know he is working. I know you want to be here. I don't question your work ethic. I question what the chairman was saying on this is let's go take up that business first. We can end this today.

And, yes, I understand the chairman has a different point on how we can get to that, but if I am the American people looking on here and we are holding a hearing on ensuring the Nation is prepared, FEMA is not here because of layoff, I call Region V and ask where they are at. You have dedicated public servants here who want to get this right and they are looking at saying, what is this nonsense?

Mr. MULLIN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WALZ. Yes, I will yield to my friend.

Mr. MULLIN. The first responders isn't FEMA, the first responders are the men and women back home like our volunteer fire department, our volunteer police department, which I am a volunteer. And we are the first responders. I understand FEMA is not here, but FEMA is just a little bit of the niche.

Mr. WALZ. A little bit of the niche?

Mr. MULLIN. They are not the first ones to walk in. We are the first ones to walk in. And as far as the paycheck, I am giving mine back to the Treasury.

Mr. WALZ. So am I, and I reclaim my time. That is not the posturing we need.

Mr. MULLIN. OK, but——

Mr. WALZ. No, I reclaim my time.

Mr. MULLIN. OK.

Mr. WALZ. I reclaim my time.

The point about this is, so now we are going to elevate one group over another. I respect the first responders who are there, but my people will tell you this: Without FEMA being there and without that you are never made whole again. So if we are ensuring the Nation is prepared, we are going to pick the winners and losers and put it here and denigrate the Federal employee at FEMA who is not here to defend themselves and the work they have done. No one is criticizing or trying to pick who does a better job. We are all in it together. And so my frustration lies is, is that, yeah—well, I am here to hear the witnesses. I yield back.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you.

I would like to recognize Mr. Meadows for opening comments.

Mr. MEADOWS. I just want to say thank you, gentlemen, for being here. Thank you for your service. I enjoy great support from the men and women who respond, who truly miss anniversaries and birthdays and special events to make sure that they serve the people. And I just want to say a very heartfelt thank you for the job that all of you do to make sure. Because the only time, the only time that you ever get recognized or highlighted is when you don't do your job well, and that is a sad commentary.

And so today I want to go on record to say thank you for doing your job well, thank you for answering a call, because indeed it is a call to serve our Nation, to serve our communities, to serve families and friends. You answer that call. Day in, day out you stand on ready, for when the alarm goes off and we have a need you are there. I just want to say thank you on behalf of a grateful Nation, on behalf of a grateful community. And I am committed to work around the clock in a bipartisan fashion to make sure that not only we address these issues, but also that we are better prepared going forward.

I was able to participate in a FEMA drill for natural disasters, saw it firsthand, saw the unbelievable coordination, setting up cities at an event where we can truly make sure that every single detail is taken care of, rehearse over and over and over again, so that nobody comes in harm's way. And so I want to say thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BARLETTA. I recognize Mr. Nolan for some opening comments.

Mr. NOLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the local, State and Federal FEMA officials who are, if not first, why, they are right behind the first responders, and I know in many cases they are first to help people during these tragic times.

But I would like to, if I might, at the risk of sounding Pollyannic here, associate myself with the remarks of both our good friend Representative Mullin and my very dear and beloved friend Representative Walz and ask that we all give serious consideration to the solution to this Government shutdown and crisis that precludes Federal FEMA officials from being here, that we all give serious consideration to the solution that all of the observers of the process in this town know what the solution and the answer is, and that is to go to our Speaker and to convince him to allow us a simple vote on a continuing resolution to fund the Government at the current levels.

And I don't mind telling my colleagues that many of us on this side of the aisle, myself included, were prepared to vote against the continuing resolution which funds the Government at 2008 levels and maintains sequesters, both of which most of us on this side of the aisle oppose. But we are prepared to vote for that and to make that compromise. And we are not talking about putting that in stone, you know, ad infinitum into the future. Just give us a vote and join us in pleading with the Speaker to give us a simple vote on a clean resolution to fund the Government at these levels for the next 4, 5, 6 weeks, and then we can carry on and have this debate about all the important and great issues of our time, not only the Affordable Care Act, but the future of FEMA and tax reform and immigration and trade and all the great issues.

So forgive me for getting a little off track here, because I know we are here to talk about FEMA. But the way to get FEMA here is for all of us to join in allowing a vote on a simple, clean CR, and then we can all get back to the business, Markwayne, that you so eloquently have articulated the need for us to do.

Thank you.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you.

And let me just say that I certainly appreciate my colleagues' strong feelings, and they are all warranted, and I certainly understand where they are coming from. But just for clarity for the public to make it clear that FEMA is still responding to disasters. They are still available to respond. They are limited in the activities to only protecting life and property, and that is why they are not here today. The Disaster Relief Fund is fully appropriated, and that is why they can continue to respond to disasters.

So our panel today, and again we would like to thank you all for being here, Mr. Bob Khan, fire chief, city of Phoenix, Arizona, and central region sponsoring agency chief, FEMA Urban Search and Rescue System. Mr. Barry Fisher, general manager, WFMZ–TV, Allentown, Pennsylvania, on behalf of the National Association of Broadcasters. Mr. Christopher Guttman-McCabe, executive vice president, CTIA—The Wireless Association. And Bobby Courtney, chief programming officer, the MESH Coalition.

I ask unanimous consent that our witnesses' full statements be included in the record. Without objection, so ordered.

Since your written testimony has been made a part of the record, the subcommittee would request that you limit your oral testimony to 5 minutes.

Fire Chief Khan, you may proceed.

TESTIMONY OF BOB KHAN, FIRE CHIEF, CITY OF PHOENIX, ARIZONA, FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND CENTRAL REGION SPONSORING AGENCY CHIEF, FEMA URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE SYSTEM; BARRY FISHER, GENERAL MANAGER, WFMZ–TV, ALLENTOWN, PA, ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS; CHRISTOPHER GUTTMAN-MCCABE, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CTIA—THE WIRELESS ASSOCIATION; AND BOBBY A. COURTNEY, M.P.H., J.D., CHIEF PROGRAMMING OFFICER, MESH COALITION

Chief KHAN. Thank you, Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Carson, and distinguished members of the committee. This is a

great opportunity to appear before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management.

My name is Bob Khan. I am a 31-year member of the Phoenix Fire Department. In that role I serve as the task force leader for Arizona Task Force 1, one of 28 Urban Search and Rescue teams in the Federal Emergency Management Agency. I have been asked to serve the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Program as one of three sponsoring agency chief representatives representing the 10 central region teams.

I appear before you today as a sponsoring agency chief. I want you to know how proud I am of this program. The men and women that serve the Nation through the US&R program are competent and committed professionals that care deeply for the program and for the citizens that we serve.

Each and every team member is a professional provider in his or her town or village. Whether a firefighter or medical doctor or trained search dog handler, these personnel respond to natural disasters with the same skill sets that they apply every day in their hometowns. The concept is fairly simple: utilization of an all-hazards approach to incident mitigation using special training, special equipment, and very special people.

The US&R system is part of a tiered approach to disaster management. The system has the capability to augment local and State resources with federally sponsored teams that can readily plug into operations at the local level following the National Incident Management System model. These US&R teams are made up of local providers that are on their own local payrolls until activated. They are far less expensive to maintain than a resource that may be fully funded by the Federal Government.

The 28 US&R teams and their localities benefit from training, equipment, and experience that come from being part of this great program. Just as the system members apply the skills learned at home to national disasters, they apply the lessons learned while on Federal missions to emergency or planning needs of their local jurisdictions.

The same search and rescue methods that were utilized and refined during responses to September 11th, Hurricanes Katrina, Sandy, and tornado responses in Oklahoma, are performed daily throughout your hometowns in America by our members. Many of the planning methods learned by the team members in this system were applied just 2 weeks ago while responding to the Colorado floods.

All five of the task forces deployed to the recent flooding in Colorado were from the central region. Our training and equipment worked and saved lives. These deployed teams knew each other and operated from a common operating platform grounded in training, similar equipment, and common policies. Many of the areas in Colorado, because of the flooding, were only accessible by aircraft or boats. Fortunately for the victims in Colorado, all 28 task forces were able to increase their water operation capabilities by adding needed watercraft to their equipment cache during this past fiscal year, which allowed us more effectively to respond to the vast needs that resulted from this catastrophic flooding.

Several of the remaining 28 US&R teams were on standby at their points of departure waiting to be deployed as either augmentation or relief of the first teams that had been deployed. The US&R program office worked diligently to coordinate the deployment of the teams and to ensure the practices applied to any domestic response would also be consistently applied here in Colorado. As the central region sponsoring agency chief of the deployed teams, it was gratifying to know that the Federal support was there and the activation orders were spelled out.

In the aftermath of the tornado-caused destruction in Oklahoma, capabilities brought to the theater of operation included structural evaluation of buildings by structural engineers, including stabilization of damaged structures, including shoring, cribbing of walls, roofs, and flooring, along with critical expertise needed to determine the structural integrity of a building prior to inserting teams with search and rescue efforts of any possible victims. In comparison to a typical local first responder, a US&R task force is able to conduct physical search and heavy rescue operations in collapsed reinforced concrete buildings.

From a sponsoring agency chief's perspective there are legal and financial liabilities that we are concerned of. We want to send the best trained teams to assist other teams while assuring our localities are not left vulnerable and exposed. In this economic climate, expenses that have been borne by sponsoring agencies in the past are being more closely scrutinized by our localities. Many of the sponsoring agencies are suffering cuts that have not been seen in 30 years. We feel it is important for this program to have consistent funding in order to support training and exercises, acquisition and maintenance of equipment, and medical monitoring for responders.

Workman's compensation and liability protection for our civilian personnel are also of critical importance. There is a very real risk of injury and death to our task force members when they are deployed. God forbid anything awful happen here.

These are things that we have to think about to ensure the proper liability protections, coverage, and compensation, and making sure they are in place for their family members. Additionally, we want to assure our deployed members' jobs remain safe until they return home. These assurances protect civilians from the US&R program from employment discrimination and retaliation as a result of engaging in Federal activities.

In conclusion, I am thankful to the committee for this opportunity to discuss the US&R program and how it benefits our communities. We look forward to working with the committee on the FEMA reauthorization and stand by to make any assistance proven to make the system better for the future. Thank you.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you for your testimony, Chief Khan.

Mr. Fisher, you may proceed.

Mr. FISHER. Good morning, Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Carson, and members of the subcommittee. My name is Barry Fisher. I am the president and general manager of WFMZ–TV, Allentown, Pennsylvania. We are a community-oriented local broadcaster with 83 live newscasts each week and a 24-hour digital weather channel. I am here today representing the National Asso-

ciation of Broadcasters. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today about emergency communications and the valuable asset of often lifesaving services that local broadcasters provide during emergencies.

When the power goes out, when phone service is limited, when the Internet goes down, broadcasters are always there and always on the air. Broadcasters are first informers. We are the go-to source for vital information before, during, and after an emergency. I would like to show you a brief video clip that underscores the critical services broadcasters provide.

[Video shown.]

Mr. FISHER. During Hurricane Sandy, WFMZ provided around-the-clock coverage to our viewers to keep them informed. We knew there would be widespread power and communication outages, so we began alerting the public about what areas would be hit, what essentials were needed, and how to stay safe. We also encouraged our viewers to buy battery-operated televisions in case they lost power. In one of our counties in the viewing area, an estimated 67 percent of the county was without power, but we stayed on the air, keeping viewers abreast of what was happening. We worked closely with local radio stations to simulcast our news to reach people without battery-operated televisions.

This type of cooperation among broadcasters is common during emergencies. I am proud of our station's performance during Hurricane Sandy, as well as all broadcasters in the storm zone.

We are also proud to be the backbone of the emergency communication system. The EAS is a national public warning network that connects public safety authorities to the public through over-the-air broadcast stations with the simple push of the button. We consider the delivery of timely alerts and warnings to be the most important use of our spectrum and an indispensable service to the public.

The EAS is also used for AMBER Alerts, which was created by broadcasters and local law enforcement in 1996. To date, AMBER Alerts have aided in the successful recovery of over 656 abducted children across the United States.

Broadcasters have made investments in their Internet and social media sites, some of the most viewed content on the Web. When the public receives an email, text, alerts, or social messages from local broadcasters, they know it is accurate and from an authoritative source. In fact, even wireless alerts received on your mobile phone direct you to local media for more information.

In November 2011, FEMA and the FCC conducted the first ever EAS test where broadcasters participated across the United States. The test served its purpose to diagnose problems in the system that are now being addressed. This is precisely why NAB fully supports EAS testing on a regular basis.

The continued success of EAS depends on a few factors. First, State and local safety officials should receive ongoing training in the proper use and to protect the integrity of the EAS system. Broadcasters stand ready to deliver the message, but we first need someone to deliver it to us. We strongly urge the committee to incorporate training into any legislation that is considered.

Second, we ask the committee to create a national advisory committee on emergency alerting. The committee would bring all stakeholders together to ensure continual improvements to the system.

I am grateful for this opportunity to share my views on this indispensable role that broadcasters play in communicating emergency information to the public. We look forward to working with you toward our shared goal of keeping the American people safe through timely alerts and warnings. Thank you very much for your time.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Guttman-McCabe, you may proceed.

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. Thank you and good morning, Chairman Barletta and Ranking Member Carson and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this morning's hearing.

My name is Chris Guttman-McCabe and I serve as the association's executive vice president. In this role I have been involved in the wireless industry's efforts to implement the Commercial Mobile Alert Service, and I am pleased to be here today to update you on the wireless industry's efforts to deliver a state-of-the-art alerting system to America's wireless consumers.

The Commercial Mobile Alert Service, which has been renamed Wireless Emergency Alerts by the FCC, grew out of the Warning, Alert and Response Network Act, which became law as part of the SAFE Ports Act in late 2006. The WARN Act was intended to harness the creativity of the wireless ecosystem and take advantage of the ubiquity of the mobile platform to augment the existing emergency alerting system, all without imposing new substantial costs or technology mandates on the wireless ecosystem. This approach was consistent with and built upon previous public-private partnerships that led to the successful creation of the Wireless Priority Service and the AMBER Alert programs.

In the WARN Act, Congress developed an innovative procedure to address the problem of emergency alerting by securing the participation of interested nongovernmental parties in the development and deployment of what has become a 90-character, geotargeted alerting capability that lets consumers carrying a wireless device know that there is an imminent threat to health or safety.

The Wireless Emergency Alert system went live in April 2012 and since then carriers serving 98 percent of U.S. wireless consumers have opted to participate in the program. Over the last year alone, more than 8,600 Wireless Emergency Alerts have been issued and many have played a key role in protecting the public. These include AMBER Alerts that have helped to directly recover abducted children, including an 8-month-old in the State of Minnesota, and 8- and 6-year-old children in Pennsylvania. The alerts also have directed the public to take shelter, evacuate, or engage in some other action in the face of impending danger, often from weather events.

As the examples highlighted in my written testimony demonstrate, the Wireless Emergency Alert program is working, offering a valuable mobile augmentation to the Emergency Alert Broad-

cast System we all grew up with while giving emergency managers a, quote/unquote, "game changer" that helps them to inform and protect members of the public who may not be within reach of traditional television or radio alerts.

While industry is working hard to make the Wireless Emergency Alert program an ongoing success test, the effectiveness of the effort also depends on how well the public understands and uses the system. While carriers and others in the industry can and do provide important assistance in the area of education, FEMA and other Government agencies have an important role to play to promote uniform and comprehensive education across all parts of the country and all affected sectors of the emergency response community.

We applaud FEMA on its recent rollout of a public service announcement on Wireless Emergency Alerts, and we agree that this should remain a focus for FEMA and its IPAWS office. Moreover, it is incumbent on alerting authorities to similarly educate their constituents about the alerts they may send, as only they have the knowledge to answer specific questions about incidents and alerts in their area.

The wireless industry is committed to working with FEMA and the FCC to ensure that subsequent generations of the alert system support additional functionality and granularity. With this in mind, we do not believe that wireless carriers that participate in the Wireless Emergency Alerting system should be subject to any new requirements that emanate from the implementation of IPAWS. While IPAWS may help to modernize the distribution of alerts on other communications platforms, the WARN Act framework remains the proper path to deliver and modernize emergency alerts provided over wireless networks. CTIA urges you to keep this in mind as you consider legislative efforts to modernize IPAWS and reauthorize FEMA.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing. CTIA looks forward to working with the subcommittee, FEMA, and others in the public safety community to ensure that the Wireless Emergency Alert program continues to offer a unique and useful way to help protect the American public. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Guttman-McCabe.

Mr. Courtney, you may proceed.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Carson, and members of the subcommittee. On behalf of the MESH Coalition, I appreciate the opportunity to describe our efforts to ensure that central Indiana communities are prepared to respond to emergency events, and I applaud your commitment to these important issues.

I am pleased to report at the outset of my testimony that as a result of cooperative efforts of central Indiana healthcare, public health, emergency management, and public safety partners through the MESH Coalition, that the healthcare infrastructure in central Indiana is well positioned to respond to a wide range of emergency events.

The MESH Coalition is a nonprofit public-partnership that enables healthcare providers to effectively respond to emergency events and remain viable through a recovery. Our programs increase capacity in healthcare providers to respond to emergency events, protect our healthcare safety net, and promote integration and coordination between the Government and private sector.

Today I would like to briefly share three points with you. First, through a comprehensive portfolio of programs, the MESH Coalition is continuously improving central Indiana's ability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from both small and large-scale emergency events. Second, the MESH Coalition is one of the most progressive models of healthcare emergency management, and we believe it can and should be replicated throughout the United States. Third, we believe that in order to promote the adoption of healthcare coalitions, we must find creative and cost-effective ways of providing sustainable support to these efforts while maintaining appropriate stewardship of public resources.

With respect to MESH Coalition programs, in order for healthcare providers to prepare for emergency events they must understand threats to the healthcare system and know how to mitigate against them. Analysts in our healthcare intelligence program conduct real-time monitoring of public and private data and disseminate information on potential threats in order to develop a common operating picture every day.

Our community-based planning program involves the whole community in preparing for potential threats, as well as large-scale anticipated events. Our staff facilitate a number of working groups helping participants develop plans and programs that we implement throughout the year. Our policy program provides objective analyses of policy issues designed to assist coalition partners with planning for long-term sustainability following an emergency event.

We know that the difference that makes a difference between healthcare organizations that respond effectively to emergency events and those that don't is clinicians that make good decisions under tough conditions. As such, our training and education programs focus on clinical decisionmaking that is hands on, practical, and uses high-fidelity simulation to prepare providers to respond to all hazard scenarios.

In addition, we are committed to training the future of the healthcare emergency management workforce, as evidenced by our multidisciplinary internships and fellowships that include physicians, nurses, public health graduate students, law students, and librarians.

Under the authority of the Marion County Public Health Department director and in cooperation with the Indianapolis Department of Public Safety, we also serve as the Marion County Multi-Agency Coordination Center, or MedMACC. The MedMACC is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to provide a critical operational link between central Indiana healthcare facilities, the Marion County Public Health Department, and the governments of the city of Indianapolis and the State of Indiana. As you can see, our programs are ambitious and address the entire emergency management process.

The second point I would like to share is that the MESH Coalition is one of the most progressive models of healthcare emergency management in the United States, and we believe it can and should be replicated throughout the Nation. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has identified the strength of the coalition model and is working to encourage its adoption through two emergency management grant programs.

We are also helping to promote coalition building through the National Healthcare Coalition Resource Center, a partnership between MESH, the Northwest Health Care Response Network in King and Pierce Counties, Washington, and the Northern Virginia Hospital Alliance.

The MESH Coalition is also sustainable, as we pair grant funding with private subscription fees and fee-for-service funding. Nearly 55 percent of our 2013 budget came from private funds, and we expect this to grow in 2014. This does not mean that Federal funding is unnecessary. Indeed, our coalition was started with HHS funding and has been maintained in part by funding from the Department of Homeland Security's MMRS and UASI programs.

Finally, we believe that in order to promote the adoption of healthcare coalitions, we must find creative and cost-effective ways of providing sustainable support to these efforts while maintaining appropriate stewardship of resources. While grant funding alone is not a sustainable solution to protecting and preserving public health and safety, private sector health care should not be solely responsible for responding to emergencies of national significance. This is why FEMA's role in supporting citizens and first responders is so critical. Hospitals cannot and should not be expected to bear this burden alone.

Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Carson, and members of the subcommittee, on behalf the MESH Coalition, I thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to describe our efforts to ensure that central Indiana communities are prepared to respond to emergency events. We hope that our experience will provide insight for other communities across the country. Happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Courtney.

I will now begin the first round of questions, limited to 5 minutes for each Member. If there are additional questions following the first round we will have additional rounds of questions as needed.

Mr. Khan and Mr. Fisher, can each of you briefly talk about why each of these two systems, US&R and IPAWS, are so critical to ensuring we are prepared as a Nation? Mr. Khan, do you want to go first, Chief Khan?

Chief KHAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question. If you look at the local resources that respond to an emergency, to be blunt, no matter how large they are, even New York City, they soon become overwhelmed with a significant event. These 28 teams can deploy, the first three closest teams can deploy immediately, and then followed by a box deployment that we have in place. And they are 72-hour, self-sustained teams with the ability to do search and rescue, different operations for emergency services, under the all-hazards umbrella.

As those local resources get deplenished from the emergency itself, we can come in as a fresh set of hands all working on the same page with the same equipment and provide rescue, search, and treatment to a lot of the people that are out there who need help. We did it in Katrina, we did at the World Trade Center, we did it most recently in New York where we were doing humanitarian efforts. That ability enables the local jurisdictions to do the work they would normally do and not be overwhelmed simply with the number of victims that we have seen with either manmade or natural disasters.

Mr. FISHER. IPAWS is important because we all have to be speaking the same language and communicating as clearly as possible so that when an emergency occurs, the information that is important gets to the people that are affected, and is delivered quickly, efficiently, and clearly.

And when you are speaking on a national level, when we have only first done our test in 2011 on a national level, it becomes even more important that should communication systems be interrupted, that there is some way to get messages through to the public, multiple ways to get it through, but IPAWS is a good start for getting everyone speaking on the same page so that the message is received and that platforms across the universe—television, radio, wireless communications, billboards along the roads, whatever method it is—can take this information and immediately put it out. And IPAWS is the beginning of that, it is the framework, and it is important to continue pursuing cooperation between everyone in developing IPAWS so that it is fulfilled in a way that is universal.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you.

Chief Khan, as you point out in your testimony, because US&R teams are composed of local and private sector personnel, there have been serious concerns about liability and workers' comp issues. Yet in similar situations, as with the National Guard or the Public Health Service, many of these issues have been addressed in statute.

Can you give us some examples as to why clarifying these issues for the US&R team members is important?

Chief KHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I can.

The bottom line is that, when we put these teams together, if you have first responders, firefighters, paramedics, even police officers that come onboard, they typically are under that first responder umbrella. But for the technical rescues that we do, for the medical evaluations and procedures that we need, or for using the animals, the dogs, we need private citizens to join our teams. Many times they are not covered by the statutes.

And so to provide the best talent and to have some sort of fallback in case they are injured in the line of duty, we feel that it is our obligation to provide them some sort of coverage. Right now it is unclear as to how we get them covered, and it makes applying and being participants in such a great program very limited to a lot of these people that are physicians and engineers and dog handlers.

Mr. BARLETTA. And, Mr. Khan, even with the uncertainties regarding liability and compensation protections, US&R team members still respond when they are called to do so. What would hap-

pen, however, if any team members determined they cannot go because of these risks? Will the rest of the team deploy anyway?

Chief KHAN. We do operational ready evaluations. The rest of the team would deploy, but then again you are not going with critical components. Hopefully we would have some fallback staffing that we could rely on. But that is a gray area, sir, at best.

I think the opportunity to shore that up lies within this subcommittee and the ability to fund those individuals that are taking a sacrifice away from their families, taking a chance and responding to the theaters that we go to. There are unsound, unsafe theaters that we respond to and there is liability associated with that, not to mention in addition, too, job security. We had one member who decided to respond regardless of his secure job as a civilian and lost employment because of his response with Arizona Task Force 1 to Katrina.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Ranking Member Carson for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Barletta.

Mr. Khan, you testified about the need for workers' compensation and liability protections for US&R team members. Would you please explain in more detail the type of situations where this is needed and how the lack of such protections impacts the ability of US&R teams to respond?

Chief KHAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Carson. The bottom line is if you go into—and I can best describe a scenario where you are going into a situation like Haiti or the World Trade Center where you have structural collapse, you actually are putting people into voids where other victims are in order to treat and rescue those victims. And you are asking these civilians to take the same risk and the same chances that you have trained firefighters or paramedics doing that are specially trained in rescue.

They are covered under the local municipality's workman's comp insurance coverage. The civilians don't have that. If they get injured, many times they will be on their own. That makes it hard for us to recruit the best of the best to go on deployments with these teams so that we are not in need of those resources when we respond as a task force. And that goes across the Nation. Especially for the jurisdictions that don't have any or as many physicians or engineers to draw from, it becomes even more challenging, sir.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you.

Mr. Courtney, do you believe, sir, that the grant guidance for the Metropolitan Medical Response System is responsive to the growing need for our metropolitan areas to develop the capacity for mass casualties?

Mr. COURTNEY. Yes. We have relied on—I shouldn't say relied on—we have utilized MMRS funds through the MESH Coalition in a number of ways, largely to develop our programs. Our MCI protocol, our mass casualty incident protocol that has been redeveloped over the past year has really developed better communications between first responders and the hospitals. During a mass casualty incident our 24-hour duty officer is paged out, like a piece of fire or EMS apparatus. They directly communicate with hospitals to determine emergency department capacity. We provide that to on-scene commanders, and they are better able to make appropriate

transport decisions, really with the ultimate goal of not overwhelming a single hospital facility.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you.

Mr. Fisher, you mentioned the emerging use and capabilities of mobile DTV-capable devices. Are emergency alerts to mobile DTV devices able to target by geography and region?

Mr. FISHER. Well, I can speak to the mobile DTV platform that is being created right now. It was very useful in Japan. It is widespread in Japan. And when they had their tsunami and nuclear crisis, people were hanging on everything that was coming across mobile DTV. As for is it addressable for a specific location, I would have to get back to you on that. I don't have a specific answer. It is not part of what I am fully aware of at this point.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you, sir.

Mr. McCabe, I know that the broadcasters are working with cell phone companies, and I think most cell phones now have radio capabilities. There is a new arrangement now between Sprint and broadcasters, but I understand that other mobile phone operators may be reluctant to include an activated FM chip in mobile phone plans for alerts. Please explain the reluctance by these cell phone providers to the FM chips.

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. Sure, Ranking Member. First of all, I think it is—we have taken to calling the industry an ecosystem over the last 5 or 6 years because it has changed so dramatically. I have been CTIA for 13 years, and it is—you know, 5, 5½ years ago, you didn't have an iPhone; you didn't have tablets. You can—what you see now didn't exist.

The reality is our manufacturers, our handset manufacturers, manufacture devices for, you know, a wide range of carriers and countries, and they try to fit in a range of products, a range of services into the devices, so not—you know, obviously, with 32 handset manufacturers, they are competing with one another. And when we look at the issue of FM chip sets or issues like that, a DTV, a mobile DTV, whether there is a satellite chip in it, as you look at the range of capabilities or possibilities that can go into a phone, the reality is that choice is made both by the handset manufacturers, and to the extent that carriers are going to subsidize handsets, by the carriers looking at what is going to sell and what consumers are going to want. And so they offer a broad range of solutions, and the reality—or broad range of options. The reality is those change monthly because consumers' desires change monthly. I mean, things like, you know, facilitating Twitter or Facebook or the different photo sharing sites.

And as we look at handsets, a great test case for FM chip sets is going to be Sprint's efforts with regard to putting in FM chip set. And if that sells and is successful, I have a sense that you will see it in many, many more phones. And if it doesn't, you will see it in less, and that is how the market works from—from this perspective.

When we look at 32 different handset manufacturers that put hundreds and hundreds of handsets into the market at any one point in time, the reality is that diversity is king, and the ecosystem tries to chase or, if it can do it well, get ahead of consumers' tastes, and that is why you see an evolution, constantly evolving

handsets. I mean, we have phones and tablets, and now we have phablets, sort of that split between a phone and a tablet that maybe can almost fit in your pocket. And what we see at our trade show shows us that what is coming is going to, you know, really boggle the mind. Handsets that fit on your watch, the ability to use a watch and not have to have a handset attached to it anymore.

And so when we address issues like FM chip sets, we leave it up to that ecosystem, and the carriers will compete against each other as well as the handset manufacturers.

Mr. CARSON. All right. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Ranking Member Carson.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Mullin for 5 minutes.

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Fisher, obviously, there is no doubt the great work the local broadcasters have done. Just in Oklahoma, we know it saved many lives during the May tornados. And the question I have is to what extent or any did—did you experience or expect IPAWS to help in this? How is it helping? What cost did—did your company incur to put this in or did it—did it cost you anything?

Mr. FISHER. Well, in Pennsylvania, we have a little bit of a unique situation. We have incorporated a statewide system that is based on EMnet, which we began about 10 years ago. EMnet ties basically every television station and every radio station in the State together through a common source, so we can receive alerts from local municipalities, State agencies, FEMA—PEMA, I should say, directly via satellite to each of our stations and it is addressable.

Because we had that network in place, it was a rather simple case of interfacing IPAWS into our existing system, so stations in Pennsylvania did not have to invest—most stations did not have to invest in any additional equipment.

If you would like more detail on that, I have the manager of our EAS system, EMnet system, here with us, and he could comment further if you would like.

Mr. MULLIN. Was there funding available if, say, stations, smaller stations that maybe didn't have the system already in place, was there funding available from the Federal Government to comply with this?

Mr. FISHER. I am told no.

Mr. MULLIN. Do you know what the average cost would have been? Once again, I know I am kind of putting you in a situation, but what I am trying to get to is the fact that——

Mr. FISHER. It cost $2,000 per station.

Mr. MULLIN. Per station?

Mr. FISHER. Per station.

Mr. MULLIN. The fact that what I am trying to get to, is there is no question, and I don't think anybody is arguing, that we need to communicate together——

Mr. FISHER. Yes.

Mr. MULLIN [continuing]. But we have a system going on and problems right now. I represent rural Oklahoma, and we have fire—fire stations that are all volunteer, we have police stations that are truly all volunteer. We have very small radio stations, and

we are asking them all to spend money in one area and not providing them funding. And unfunded mandates that are coming out of this city is killing smaller areas. And I agree, we all need to be there, but what we really need to be looking to, if we are going to require this and we want this to happen, then we are going to have to find funding for it. I know that is a lot of conversations we are having up here today, obviously, but is it—do you see this being a problem down the road even with——

Mr. FISHER. No.

Mr. MULLIN. How are you budgeting for this, or do you just kind of take on the chin when it comes in?

Mr. FISHER. I would have to say that you are touching on a topic that is important to broadcasters. Essentially many things are passed that cost us a lot of money without much warning, so funding is an important issue. It is very difficult for small radio stations especially to have a regulation passed and then have to spend $2,000 that they weren't thinking of. So it should always be a consideration.

The beauty of IPAWS would be that eventually, we wouldn't have to be changing on a regular basis to some other format. It is important to get to a format and then maintain it. And the importance of getting to that format, you need to hit it right on the money so that whatever is decided upon is universal and can last 10 or 15, 20 years' worth of time. We don't want to go out and buy the equipment and reinvent this 5, 10 years from now. It doesn't benefit anybody, and it creates a lot of issues.

Mr. MULLIN. I mean, we know technology is changing constantly, though. And so I appreciate your service, I mean, truly, getting it to the public and willing to invest and really out of your own pocket to make sure that the public is informed, because it is vitally important to us, especially in rural areas.

Real quick before I run out of time, Mr. Guttman-McCabe.

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. Yes, sir.

Mr. MULLIN. Hope I said that right.

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. You did.

Mr. MULLIN. Kind of used to two names. My first name is Markwayne.

So, currently, the wireless alerts include 90 characters. Is that right?

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. Yes.

Mr. MULLIN. Can you—can the capabilities be expanded to other forms of data, such as audio or visual information, if needed?

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. So, Congressman, the way the product was launched, it was sort of "let's walk before we run," but one of the things we considered as part of the Alert Advisory Committee that put this together were, you know, what are the next steps, how can we evolve this system? There are several issues in front of the FCC's, let's see, the Communications Security Reliability Interoperability Council, it is a mouthful, but the CSRIC is looking at evolving and addressing sort of the next step of the service.

Right now the way the broadcast system works within the wireless alert is a single 90-character message is broadcast out to everyone who is in an area. We wanted to make sure the technology

was utilized in a way that, since our customers are mobile, that those that came into the area would get it.

Mr. MULLIN. So it is possible, we are just—this is just a first step. We are looking to go further with it.

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. Correct. We are looking at evolving it to other areas.

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you.

I yield back.

Thank you.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Mr. Mullin.

Mr. Walz, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for bringing your expertise. It is incredibly helpful, and each of you articulated very well. Mr. Fisher, you talked about, and I have witnesses before, the integration, all of you have, of things going together, and you mentioned, I think it is one of the outdoor advertisers, seems like maybe one of the oldest advertising, the billboard, but with the advent of electronic billboards, we have seen in Minnesota alerts go up and have successes within the hour because of that. And we all know, and that is an important thing.

And the issue for me, and I think for many of my colleagues that is the challenge, and it has been the challenge whether it was rural electrification or getting roads, is economy of scale makes it very difficult for rural areas. And our fellow citizens who happen to live in incredibly small or unincorporated areas, Mr. Guttman-McCabe did an excellent job of how the market works on the FM chip sets. If there is going to be a need, they will do that. And one of the things is the market mentality does not support building cell phone towers for some of these areas or reaching them. And that is a reality that everyone up here gets that. So that is where there is the gap. That is where that fill in gap.

And this is challenging to me. I know the primary entry points, the goal was to be to 90 percent coverage, which it will feel to me like all 10 percent is in my district that is not covered in 2015, but the fact of the matter is, for that one person, the 90 percent is irrelevant if they are not getting it.

So I guess my question to you, and this is a very challenging one, goes back, again, to the beginning of, how do you serve rural areas when it comes to things that are no longer luxuries, electricity, paved roads, now being alerted to these situations? How do we do that? What is the model, and do you have some suggestion? Because we have talked in the funding issue, we have talked the market. How do we do it, if you can, if just—your expertise?

Mr. FISHER. So if you are asking, from a broadcast perspective, I believe we do cover the areas quite effectively throughout the United States, because we are rather ubiquitous. There are probably very few places in the United States you can go that you can't pick up a radio station or a television station, and we carry those emergency messages in a very timely fashion. So I think from a broadcast standpoint, we are meeting that challenge and doing it very well.

With the addition of mobile TV, the beauty of that will be that while you can watch television stationary now, and the mobile TV will be something that, as the marketplace evolves, will allow it to

be on your iPhone or on your mobile device. And this is where things work together very well. When the wireless industry delivers a 90-character message that says something terrible is happening, tune to your local station, and you are in the middle of one of your rural areas, if they don't have a television or a radio with them at that moment, having that mobile DTV built into their smartphones will allow them to immediately tune without any connection to the Internet. Assuming the Internet has gone down, assuming the wireless went down now because something drastic happened, they still have that connection to the local broadcast station, either with mobile TV or with an FM chip, that allows them to continue to receive that information. After we have told them that there is something major going on, broadcasters are there to fill in the gaps: What do I have to do? Where do I have to go? What do I do for safety, because alerting them is just the first step?

Mr. WALZ. Your mobile TV, where is the cost point on that right now? Because this is the issue for mine, that they do get it; it is in Minnesota, but they get it out of South Dakota, Sioux Falls. They don't have cell phone coverage yet in many of these areas.

Mr. FISHER. Right.

Mr. WALZ. What is the cost?

Mr. FISHER. Well, mobile TV is in the process, stations are rolling it out. And there are some companies that are making—I believe it is Samsung has a unit now that will receive mobile DT signals in their wireless device, and some will receive terrestrial signals as well, so that even without mobile TV, you could receive DTV in your community, if you have a station that is on the air with just regular broadcast, some of the mobile devices could actually receive that. But the FM chip experiment that Sprint is now launching is also a great way for broadcast radio stations to reach that device, because everybody's attached to that device now. I mean, you can't leave home without it. The industry has done a great job with it. And if you had that extra utility of a broadcast TV and radio chip, just like you have the flashlight built into it that works when you need a flashlight, it is great, it is there. You don't usually carry a flashlight, but now you always have one when you need it. Broadcast television—broadcast radio is like that utility. I need it right now. Something major is happening; I am in a rural area. The cell tower is down, whatever; a broadcast television or radio chip will keep you in touch.

Mr. WALZ. Well, I can tell you, and those members up here who have received that alert, and maybe it is the new novelty of it where you can tone out the hard tone on the TV and turn—you know, turn it down or whatever, the first time you get an alert on heavy weather with tornado warning, you pay attention to it. So, I mean, it is about habituating the public to that new.

So I thank you all, and I appreciate you still continuing to push this forward for folks to get it right.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Mr. Walz.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Meadows for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would agree with my colleague opposite, the first time I got the alert, you know, I started looking over my shoulder and—and try-

ing to figure out, well, how in the world did they know that it is coming at me? And so I would—I concur.

And I represent a rural district, so, you know, when we look at—I represent the mountains of western North Carolina. And, you know, a lot of people, they look at population centers, and they say, well, that is what it is all about, but candidly, when you have a disaster in those rural areas, it becomes even more problematic with logistics on just how to serve it, how to reach out.

But before I ask my question of Mr. Khan, I am going to come to you first, I want to thank the chairman. You know, when we deal with issues like this, nobody sees it as an important thing. It is not a high priority. It is not in—until there is a disaster, and then it comes back on the chairman and say, Mr. Chairman, why didn't you—you know, why weren't you proactive? So I want to say thank you for being proactive in doing this.

And, Mr. Khan, I want to focus to the US&R teams. Are they funded exclusively by the Federal Government, or is there a cost sharing with—with local jurisdictions on that?

Chief KHAN. Sir, there is a cost sharing. Some of it is tangible, some of it is not tangible. I can use my jurisdiction for example. As a metropolitan department, we share—it is almost an even split, without the deployment aspect of it, just maintaining the Type 1 team of about 70 members. To staff that, we have a little over 200 members in our system. The bottom line is, is it costs us just roughly what it costs the Federal Government to keep them up and running. What is not tangible would be the chief officers——

Mr. MEADOWS. Right.

Chief KHAN [continuing]. The training, the backfill welder training, things of that nature, which we get the reward, as I said in my testimony, of the experience for the training, the deployments themselves and some of the physical resources that we get. So we feel that that is a pretty even split in Phoenix, and just the experience of being part of a national response team.

So for us to go back to our elected officials and our policymakers in Phoenix, we can justify our participation in the program.

Mr. MEADOWS. So let me—I know US&R teams have been deployed to many disaster areas, including the World Trade Center, you know, Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy. Can you explain to me how these teams are chosen, because, you know, we have got uniquely defined groups, and then how are they called up and deployed?

Chief KHAN. Well, the process is actually managed out of—out of home office, the program office on C Street, through FEMA. There is a branch chief that coordinates it, and it is done through Mr. Farmer, Mr. Fenton, and Chief Endrikat. And then there are three regional sponsoring agency chiefs, one in the west is Ray Jones. He is soon to be retired. The central region is myself. And the eastern region is Chief Steve Cover.

As those orders come in, we will respond to the three closest teams. So if something happens in Florida, you are going to get the Florida teams to respond, unless somehow they are out of service because of the storm itself. Typically, we will send the three closest teams, and then we have a box formula that is a rotation, and

those members in the box formula as it rotates will be basically a numeric number that you have that you will rotate out, based on the number of teams you need. For Colorado, for example, you have got the surrounding teams——

Mr. MEADOWS. Right.

Chief KHAN [continuing]. Then you went to the box response.

Mr. MEADOWS. All right. So you have, it sounds like, a pretty good system for calling up and deployment. One of my concerns really has to do with the evaluation of the effectiveness of that response. And I am not asking you today in today's testimony to point out good and bad response teams, but I would be—if you could get back to the committee with some recommendations on where you can see how we evaluate that better, because, obviously, when the command center makes a deployment, there are some who are extremely good and there are some that have perhaps logistical challenges. And I would love for you to, if you want to comment, you can, and if not, come up with some recommendations for the committee on how we can address that.

Chief KHAN. I can give you a half answer.

Mr. MEADOWS. OK. A half answer is better than no answer.

Chief KHAN. We do an operational ready evaluation, which allows us to know if the teams are ready to be deployed. That is an ongoing process that we work on through home office here in Washington, DC, and through the strategic committee, which oversees the overall operation. Those give us an indication whether teams are ready to respond or not.

The other half of your question, I will defer to home office here and have them get back to you, sir.

Mr. MEADOWS. I thank the Chair's indulgence.

And I yield back.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Mr. Meadows.

The Chair recognizes Ms. Edwards for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to our ranking member for holding this hearing. I want to thank our witnesses for being here, but I have to tell you, I have been searching for the right word this morning to figure out how I am feeling about this, and I think the right word is flummoxed as to why we are here this morning on such an important subject of emergency alert that doesn't have a Democrat or Republican behind it, but what we don't have sitting at this table is a representative from FEMA. And the reason that we don't and the reason that you could only give a half answer, and with all due——

Mr. MEADOWS. Will——

Ms. EDWARDS. No, I will not yield. With all due respect to my colleague, a half answer is not acceptable when it comes to emergency alert.

And the reason that there is not a—there is only a half answer and that our witnesses are here sort of challenged to explain how it is that FEMA works in these circumstances is because FEMA is not at the table because the Government is shut down. And the Government is shut down because we have a handful of renegade colleagues who are determined, bound and determined to take this country down, to shut down this Government, and we ought to have FEMA——

Mr. BARLETTA. Ms.——

Ms. EDWARDS [continuing]. Have—I have my——

Mr. BARLETTA. Please——

Ms. EDWARDS [continuing]. My 5 minutes.

Mr. BARLETTA. Would you please keep our comments——

Ms. EDWARDS. I have my——

Mr. BARLETTA [continuing]. To the hearing, please.

Ms. EDWARDS. With all due respect, I will reclaim my additional 5 seconds to finish my statement as a Member of this House of Representatives.

And I will tell you, I want to know, because I have gotten one of those alerts. I have been around our beltway and gotten an alert for a hurricane—a tornado that was in fact coming right at me. I have gotten an alert that came at the same time on my—on my car device; I don't even know how it works. And so I want to answer those questions, because I think it is important for the American people, but I have to tell you this: It is unacceptable in this country for almost a million workers to be out of jobs today because the Government is shut down. It is unacceptable that veterans, seniors, people who are—actually have claims in to FEMA for disaster response and don't—can't have those claims moved because the Government is shut down. This is completely unacceptable.

And it is my colleagues on the other side of the aisle trying to have a pretense of a hearing in the face of a Government shutdown; this is not right for the American people. And I have to tell you, everybody on that side and on this side knows that we could have FEMA at this table today if we put a clean continuing resolution on the floor that fully funds FEMA and all of our Government agencies, that takes care of services for our veterans, our seniors and children who are going hungry today because of a Government shutdown. It is unacceptable in this country that we have a handful of renegades who are running this country——

Mr. BARLETTA. Ms. Edwards——

Ms. EDWARDS [continuing]. Running this——

Mr. BARLETTA [continuing]. Please keep your comments——

Ms. EDWARDS [continuing]. Running this Congress——

Mr. BARLETTA. Please keep——

Ms. EDWARDS. Renegade is a word. Renegade is a word, and that is what they are doing. They are running this country, they are running this Congress, and they are running us in the ground, and it—and the American people find this completely unacceptable. And as a Member of Congress who represents a lot of Federal employees—and I represent FEMA employees in my district who are sitting at home today; they are at home today. They can't come to work and do the job of the American people and serve the American people, and the reason that they cannot come is because some small band of people have decided that they are going to shut everything down because they want to deny health care to the American people? This is completely unacceptable. So I want to feed our young children and our women, infants and children.

Mr. BARLETTA. Ms. Edwards——

Ms. EDWARDS. I want to feed our women, infants and children, who deserve to have——

Mr. BARLETTA. Please—direct your questions to our witnesses, please.

Ms. EDWARDS. I want to make certain—I have a right to use my time the way that I want, Mr. Chairman—who would—who should have the ability to get services in this country; our veterans, who should have the ability to make sure that they have educational and avocational counseling and mental health services; to make sure that our emergency responders are able to respond appropriately should there be an emergency.

And my district is a home to the—to NOAA and to the weather center. And what if there is an emergency? Sure, we can monitor satellites, but do we have all hands on deck? We do not have all hands on deck. And I have to tell you, it is really disturbing.

And I respect the witnesses who are here today. I have work closely with CTIA. I think I am one of your award winners, as a matter of fact. I believe in what our broadcasters are doing in terms of public service and meeting their public responsibilities.

And, you know, to you, Mr. Chief, I appreciate what you are doing to make sure that our emergency response system works, but not to have FEMA at the table because of a Government shutdown is unacceptable.

And I yield my time. And I would love to have you back so that we really can ask you questions that are important for the American people. Thank you very much.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Ms. Edwards.

We will begin our second round of questions, and I will begin.

Mr. Courtney, timely and accurate alerts are critical in responding to a disaster. For example, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, a proper alert to deploy a river gauge on the Susquehanna River was not issued in Tropical Storm Lee. This resulted in significant flooding.

As a user of alerts and other information in the context of mass and medical care, how critical is it for you to receive accurate and timely alerts and information?

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you for that question, Chairman Barletta. It is absolutely critical that we receive timely information. We are not only consumers of the emergency alert system, of IPAWS, but we also constantly disseminate information to medical providers, to hospitals, to first responders, oftentimes proactive in advance of severe weather coming, things like that.

I think there is an opportunity to further develop more targeted messaging through the public alert system. We operate a number of programs that are looking at, you know, how do we pre-warn vulnerable populations who may be, you know, dependent on electricity due to medical devices that they have in their homes, you know, the opportunity to be able to target messaging to them, to, you know, get to power safe locations, to, you know, ensure that they have backup battery power for, say, home ventilators, things like that; it is critical that that information be sent out and targeted if we can.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you.

Mr. Fisher and Mr. Guttman-McCabe, this question will go to you. How important do you think public alert—public alerts are to saving lives? Do you think a modernized and integrated public

alert system will be able to save even more lives than the current system we have?

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. I guess, I will go first, Mr. Chairman.

The way we look at the system is we look at it as a range of complements; the IPAWS system to offset sort of the central point that pushes messages out to a significant range of different options for consumers to gather that information. So we think it is unbelievably valuable. Our industry actually signed on and committed to doing it voluntarily before we even knew what "it" was. The deadline for committing to deliver emergency alerts came before the committee finished determining what was going to be delivered, what it was going to cost, what impact it would have, and we took that as part of our sort of social responsibility and are happy we did.

We look at the systems—or at the different ways of delivering the technology as real true complements to one another. And as I was talking to our CEOs, when we were sort of pitching the idea of supporting legislation, it was around the time of the tsunami in south Asia. And one of the stories that I read talked about that if the people had been 400 yards off the beach, over 90 percent of them would have survived. And so, for us, it was just a matter of you just need a little bell ringer at times. You don't need full information; you just need to know—and, of course, on that beach, no one had a—people don't have radios. They don't have their television. They don't have their SSTRS system, but many have their mobile phones. And we looked at wireless as being a complement to that system and have embraced it and think that, you know, modernizing IPAWS on the IPAWS side of it and then working in coordination with the WARN Act portion on the wireless side is a sensible way to move forward.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Fisher?

Mr. FISHER. Yes. I would say it is obvious that as we continue to get more platforms included in EAS and with IPAWS that more lives will be saved, because we are communicating in every possible way at any possible time we can. But as we are progressing forward, we always have to remember that we need redundancy in whatever system we are developing, because nothing's 100 percent, and in an emergency, you can count on things failing. I am sure that Mr. Khan can definitely attest to that.

And in communications, while wireless is very good, and Internet is good, a lot is happening on that pipeline now. We have to remember there are other means we have to continue to support as backups that get around that, because we are getting so reliant as a Nation on data, that we think we plug things into that Internet connection, and it is always going to make it from point A to point B. And if something substantial happens, wire cut, fiber cut, international espionage, terrorism, whatever, disrupts that data, we can't have our communications. Our emergency communication is disrupted.

In Pennsylvania, we are still waiting for a PEP station, a Primary Entry Point, which is one of those means of a backup. A PEP station is a broadcast station that is hardened and ready for that eventuality. It is fed by both IPAWS and also by a dedicated phone line to an undisclosed location for security reasons, so that in the

event everything fails, the PEP station will still be out there to communicate and broadcast emergency messages that other stations can pick up in a daisy chain fashion and get across the State. But in Pennsylvania, we are without that right now. And we are hoping that as FEMA expands the PEP network of stations, which I believe there are probably 70 at this point in the country, that at least we get one station, especially in central western Pennsylvania, areas that would be without communications in the event all these other systems that we are working on fail.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Ranking Member Carson for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. Courtney, in your opinion, do you think that the WEA system should be used to alert the public to potential epidemics of infectious diseases or pandemics?

Mr. COURTNEY. Certainly, as long as—and I think Mr. Guttman-McCabe pointed this out, you know, as long as that information can be actionable, as long as folks know how to respond and what they should do as a result of those—those messages that are pushed out, most certainly, you know, awareness in creating that common operating picture, like I talked about earlier, that we do every day is really critical for, not only the public, but for emergency responders, first responders to be able to respond effectively to an emergency event.

Mr. CARSON. Mr. McCabe, given the success of the rollout of WEA, how do you balance the need to alert the public about an emergency without overwhelming the public with so many messages that they begin to ignore those alerts?

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. Sure. And thank you, Ranking Member. I think Mr. Courtney said it perfectly, that the buzz word being "actionable." You want to make sure that they are alerts that actually have a direct impact and people can respond to. I remember as I was testifying years ago on the WARN Act, I collected a binder full of alerts that came from two local areas—I won't say, because one we are in, and one I live in—but I remember getting alert about a rapid dog. I think they meant rabid dog, but they—so I got an alert about a rapid dog. Now, to make matters worse, I actually found out that the alert was 3 days old.

And so you hit sort of what we call really a threshold issue, which is, make sure we don't go down the path of the car alarm syndrome, right. You know, no one pays attention to car alarms anymore. If you hear a car alarm going off, you just keep walking past. We want to make sure that there is a balance. And we think Congress struck that balance: It was a Presidential alert, imminent threat to health or life, and AMBER Alert, and those were the only three categories. And as long as you can fit into that center category, which is where the overwhelming majority of alerts fit, I think then that is sensible.

I would—we actually got one out of a local county that said it was flu season. I don't think that is one you want to send, because you are diminishing the value of the actual alert. And we want people when they get those alerts in the middle of the night, and they are awakened for the first time, yeah, you can be angry that you are awakened, but you can realize that you were awakened for a

reasonable—a reasonable—or a good reason. And we look at the AMBER Alerts. We have had some people complain about being awakened at 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning because of an AMBER Alert. We just had a child that was recovered at 4:00 a.m. with an AMBER Alert that went out at 2:00 a.m.

And so for us, there is a balance. You have to—the alert originators have to strike and recognize that balance. And you want to make sure, as Mr. Courtney said, it is actionable. I think that is key.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you.

Mr. Fisher, Pennsylvania has developed a hub-and-spoke system for distributing emergency alerts in addition to daisy chain—a daisy chain system used through the PEP stations. How do you avoid redundancy and mixed messages when both systems are effectively used simultaneously?

Mr. FISHER. I am sorry. Would you ask—would you ask the last part of that question again.

Mr. CARSON. How do you avoid redundancy and mixed messages when both systems are used simultaneously?

Mr. FISHER. I would like to ask Matt Lightner, who is actually our engineer——

Mr. CARSON. OK.

Mr. FISHER [continuing]. PEMA and broadcasters employ. He works directly with PEMA and knows every detail about——

Mr. CARSON. Sure.

Mr. FISHER [continuing]. That system, and can answer this question.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you, Mr. Fisher.

Mr. BARLETTA. Could you please state your name for the record?

Mr. LIGHTNER. Sure. My name is Matt Lightner. I am the chairman of the State Emergency Communications Commission in Pennsylvania.

Our EMnet system we deployed in 2003. It actually was a model for the Nation when we deployed it. It is a satellite-based system, it is in all 67 of our county emergency operation centers and our State emergency operations center. It allows any of our emergency operations centers to instantly gain access to all of our broadcasters, via satellite and via Internet. So if the Internet is down, the system would work over satellite directly to the broadcasters.

All the messages are time stamped; so when a message is sent out, if it has arrived via multiple different means, the device on the other ends says I have already received this message from EMnet. Now I am getting it from IPAWS as well. I am going to ignore this message; it was already sent to the public.

Another great thing with the EMnet system is the reporting capability. Sending a normal emergency message, the emergency manager doesn't really know if the message went out over the airwaves. The EMnet system gives us response back immediately saying, this station carried your message, and it went out over the air, and the public was notified. So it is a great system that we have deployed in our State.

Mr. FISHER. I would like to follow up on the comment Mr. McCabe made about not overusing the system. One of my com-

ments in my testimony was training is essential. It is something we have learned in Pennsylvania.

When you give so much capability and so much ease to use the system, it is easy for someone who is not trained to alert you that there is a rabid dog or it is flu season, and that is a frustration to the entire process. People tune it out. People won't pay attention anymore. And as he said, it becomes a distraction. So the education and the communication on how to use this, when to use it, what is appropriate, what is not, restrains the inappropriate use so that when it goes off, you pay attention, is very critical.

Mr. CARSON. Possibly different tones and different buzzes for different messages or different alerts?

Mr. FISHER. Well, a low-priority message, like the rabid dog or flu season, is a nonpriority, that could be a text, a tweet, it could be broadcast just as an informational thing on radio without activating the EAS system.

EMnet actually has a second channel that we have just for that purpose, so if a county wants to tell a station something that is not on the level of an emergency alert, but they want to communicate with us that this area is having this issue right now, please ask people to stay out of it, we actually have a secondary path that they can communicate with a station and let us know that information so a disc jockey can just say, oh, by the way or something can be done at a lower level.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you, gentlemen.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Ranking Member Carson.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Mullin for 5 minutes.

Mr. MULLIN. I really don't have anything. I am just listening. Thank you.

Mr. BARLETTA. OK. Thank you, Mr. Mullin.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Walz for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALZ. I follow Mr. Mullin.

Mr. BARLETTA. OK. Thank you.

Mr. Fisher, last Congress, the National Association of Broadcasters supported IPAWS reform, and you mentioned in your testimony the importance of having a national working group for IPAWS, as proposed in the reform legislation. Such a working group would be composed of FEMA and other Federal, State, local and private sector stakeholders to ensure IPAWS continues to be developed in a way that makes sense. Why is this important?

Mr. FISHER. Well, personal experience, I have been in broadcasting for 37 years. I have watched the evolution of EAS. Fortunately, I was after CONELRAD, so I can't tell you anything about that. I am not that old. But I have watched it evolve through to where we are now with EAS. I have been involved with multiple committees, and I have watched what happens when you get stakeholders together in a room who can exchange experiences. And we meet once a year, occasionally twice a year, at the PEMA headquarters; that is Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency in Harrisburg, to bring all the stakeholders together, the State police, fire officials, National Weather Service in our area, broadcaster representatives. And they are just representatives. It is a room with maybe 10 or 15 people. And the communication that goes on

there helps us to evaluate what worked last time when we had to use the system, what needs to be changed, and also talks about who else do we have to include into the system to make it more robust, including at one point, we discussed how to get wireless onboard. How can we get the billboards onboard? Because we are trying as a group to work out how do we reach the American people. We get along pretty well. We have developed relationships, and it goes back and forth. And it has helped make a system, I think, in Pennsylvania, not to toot our horn too loud, a very robust, solid system that broadcasters can get messages out and emergency officials can get messages out in a very efficient way.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Guttman-McCabe, one of the key advantages of a modern digital alert system would be the potential to geo target alerts to only those people in the immediate danger area and avoid over-alerting people that are not directly affected.

Why do you think—what do you think about that concept, and what are some of the technical issues involved with geo targeting alerts to smaller locations?

Mr. GUTTMAN-MCCABE. Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the things—so I happen to benefit from being part of the Alert Advisory Committee that Congress established when we put the original rules together, and one of the things we debated or discussed, I guess—not debated but discussed in great detail was geo targeting. And what we ultimately came down to was to begin—it goes back to the "walk, don't run" thought I mentioned before—was let's begin at the county level. There is nothing magical about a county, but we decided to pick a county level, and that was the area that we were going to originally direct alerts to.

Already a number of the carriers even further geo target their alerts, and the CSRIC is actually looking at maybe sort of formalizing that, but in our world, you have to realize that because of the nature of our devices, our constituents are mobile, and so if you want to alert, you know, an area in the northeast of DC, the reality is you can't only send that alert to the northeast, because by the time the alert goes out, 20 percent of the population has moved into the northeast and 20 percent of the population has moved out.

So what we have found over time is that even with the capability to more—to have a more granular geo-targeted alert, we found that States or counties over—you know, take an area where they think the event might be happening and then pick the half dozen counties around it. And when we saw—I think all of us watched on TV that young woman who was kidnapped, a lot of the alerts went out from State—as they were realizing she was being moved to different States, alerts were going out statewide, because no one was sure which county she was in.

So I think having the capability to geo target more granularly makes sense, and I think in practice, it probably won't be used as often as we might think, because the constituents, because the users are mobile. And you certainly, you know, if you look at what just happened in—around the world with the attack on the mall, you don't want to just alert people at the mall; you want to alert everyone who might be driving to the mall. And so, you know, you want to make sure that, in essence, at times you over-alert because

of the mobile nature of the consumers, but having the capability makes sense. We are investigating it. We are looking at how you would, you know, operationalize that.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Ranking Member Carson if he has further questions.

Mr. CARSON. No.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you. I would like to thank all of you for your testimony here today. Your comments have been helpful to today's discussion.

If there are no further questions, I would ask unanimous consent that the record of today's hearing remain open until such time as our witnesses have provided answers to any questions that may be submitted to them in writing, and unanimous consent that the record remain open for 15 days for any additional comments and information submitted by Members or witnesses to be included in the record of today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

I would like to thank our witnesses again for their testimony today. If no other Members have anything to add, this subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:48 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

STATEMENT

OF

DAMON PENN
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
NATIONAL CONTINUITY PROGRAMS

AND

FRED ENDRIKAT
URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE BRANCH CHIEF

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

BEFORE
THE

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

"FEMA REAUTHORIZATION: ENSURING THE NATION IS PREPARED"

Submitted
By

Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

OCTOBER 2, 2013

Introduction

Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Carson and Members of the Subcommittee, this testimony is submitted jointly by Damon Penn, the Assistant Administrator of the National Continuity Programs (NCP) and Fred Endrikat, Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Branch Chief for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these important programs, which are valuable tools that help us achieve our mission to support our citizens and first responders across an all hazards environment.

First, we will discuss FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and how we are working with stakeholders, including federal, state, local, tribal and territorial authorities, as well as the private sector, advocacy and non-profit organizations, to continue to improve on our efforts to ensure we reach the American public with critical messages that can save lives and property. Second, we will discuss National Urban Search and Rescue task forces and how they are being deployed throughout America to rescue survivors.

IPAWS Overview

FEMA's IPAWS enables state, local, tribal, and territorial alerting authorities to send emergency alerts to citizens in their jurisdiction using multiple alerting channels simultaneously. The alerting channels available through IPAWS today are:

- Televisions and radios as part of the Emergency Alert System (EAS);
- Mobile phones and cellular devices through the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) interface;
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) All-Hazards Weather Radios;
- Internet websites and applications that monitor the IPAWS Public Alerts Feed; and
- Local siren systems, road signs, and other local systems that local communities choose to connect with IPAWS.

FEMA has worked over the past four years with emergency managers and public safety officials at all levels of government, the private sector, NOAA, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to develop and deploy the IPAWS capabilities that are being used across the nation today to send citizens alerts and warnings quickly. This tool allows communities to make choices to ensure the safety of their citizens.

Any public safety official, coordinated through their state, local, tribal or territorial government, can become an IPAWS user or alerting authority. The IPAWS Program Management Office

(PMO) assists all applicants with the process of becoming alerting authorities. All public safety officials using IPAWS to send public alerts must complete FEMA-sponsored training and have their own tool to interoperate with IPAWS and generate alerts. As of September 12, 2013, 33 states, two territories, and 163 local agencies have become IPAWS Alerting Authorities, and 11 states and 160 local agencies are presently in the application process. Since June 2012, the National Weather Service (NWS) has been using IPAWS to send WEA alerts for: tornadoes, flash floods, hurricanes, extreme wind, blizzards and ice storms, tsunamis and dust storms, and also began posting weather alerts to the IPAWS Public Alerts Feed this summer. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) coordinators in each state and territory have also been using IPAWS to send WEA AMBER alerts since December 2012.

Alert Channels Available Through IPAWS

Each of the IPAWS alerting channels offer a different avenue for public safety officials to send alerts that can save lives and reduce property losses. The integrated access to and use of multiple channels to send emergency alerts to the public provides for a higher likelihood that citizens in danger will receive the alert and further, if an individual receives the same alert from more than one communications channel, increases the likelihood that they will respond to the alert message.

IPAWS is the core system that serves as the foundation for several other systems, alerts and warnings.

EAS is the back bone of public communications provided by the broadcast, cable, and satellite radio and television providers across the nation. Known as "EAS Participants", broadcasters, cable television systems, wireless cable systems, satellite digital audio radio service (SDARS) providers, and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) providers have supported the capability for officials to address emergency alerts and information to the public for over four decades. EAS is used by authorities in a region in accordance with a state EAS Plan as well as NWS to deliver emergency alerts and information about emergency events to local populations. EAS is a component of the IPAWS but also maintains a traditional resilient broadcast method for communicating alerts between stations and to the public even when other communications channels fail.

FEMA, with assistance and partnership from the FCC and NOAA, is responsible for implementation, maintenance and operations of EAS at the federal level.

NOAA's All Hazards Weather Radio system has been accessible through IPAWS for approved authorities to send alerts about non-weather emergencies since 2010. Alerting authorities using IPAWS, who have been approved by the National Weather Service, may broadcast emergency alerts directly from NOAA Weather Radio transmitters via a system interface maintained between IPAWS and NOAA.

Wireless Emergency Alerts are the newest alerting channel that has been successfully used over the past year by local officials in New York City and Boston and widely by the National Weather Service and State AMBER coordinators through the NCMEC. WEAs can be sent from alerting authorities through FEMA's IPAWS directly to WEA-capable cell phones and other mobile devices in an affected area. WEAs are short messages that can appear like typical text messages, but unlike typical texts, these messages are broadcast to all capable phones within range of designated cell towers. WEA messages automatically "pop-up" on the home screen and include a unique attention tone and vibration cadence when received by a capable cell phone and include brief information about the type of warning, the duration of the warning, and who is sending the alert.

Internet web services and application developers may also choose to monitor IPAWS for display or delivery of alerts relevant to their users. Examples in development include smart phone apps, news and situational awareness webpages, and Facebook. Although no products have been deployed as yet, IPAWS is looking to leverage private sector innovation to explore new ways of alerting Internet users and other internet connected communications channels.

Most alerting authorities already have a range of unique tools, systems and technologies to alert and warn the public in their jurisdiction. These systems, which often include emergency telephone networks, siren systems, digital road signs, and email or text message subscription services, can be upgraded to interoperate with IPAWS. In fact, most local IPAWS users choose to use a local existing system to interoperate with IPAWS so that they can use a familiar system to generate local alerts and also utilize the IPAWS alerting channels.

IPAWS WEA Success Stories

The National Weather Service has been using IPAWS to effectively increase the distribution of severe weather alerts since June 2012 and has collected feedback from citizens about how the additional WEA alerting channel helped to save lives and property. Most notable was the account from a summer camp in Connecticut in July 2013. A camp staff member received a tornado warning via a WEA message and was able to evacuate 34 campers and staff from a domed athletic field just minutes before the winds from an EF-1 category tornado ripped the roof from the dome – spreading debris across the athletic field. Due to the manager's quick and correct response to the received WEA alert, no one at the summer camp was injured.

The Department of Justice's AMBER Alert Program, through the NCMEC, is relaying AMBER Alerts from law enforcement officials in accordance with state AMBER plans to send AMBER Wireless Emergency Alerts through IPAWS, and attributes the recovery of four children directly to this WEA message alert channel.

For example, on August 30, 2013, in High Point, North Carolina a student who received a WEA AMBER Alert describing a vehicle that was stolen from a grocery store on a Thursday night saw that vehicle on Friday morning while walking to her apartment. The University of North

Carolina at Greensboro student heard a baby crying inside of the vehicle and immediately called police. Because of the alert and because of the student's actions, the 17-month-old baby inside was saved. NCMEC recently acknowledged FEMA's contribution to these rescues, presenting Administrator Craig Fugate with an award on September 10, 2013 in recognition of the tremendous impact FEMA's IPAWS system has had in saving the lives of numerous children.

During Hurricane Sandy, New York City (NYC) officials used an IPAWS WEA to issue an evacuation order to citizens in specific evacuation zones. Later as the storm moved into the city, the NYC officials used an IPAWS WEA to instruct remaining citizens to take shelter, stay off the streets and only use 9-1-1 for emergencies. During the police activity that led to the capture of the Boston marathon bombing suspects, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency also used an IPAWS WEA in coordination with local media coverage to alert the public that the shelter in place order was being amended late in the day to allow people at work to go home.

Building Partnerships and Reaching Out

Partnerships are critical for the success of IPAWS to date and to ensuring the collective success of IPAWS going forward – not just in terms of ensuring that emergency messages are delivered to citizens on a variety of channels, but to educate, assist, and learn from stakeholders across the nation.

The IPAWS PMO collaborates with recognized government, industry leaders, and technical experts to ensure that IPAWS is practical for public safety officials at all levels of government, supports the private sector communications providers who enable the delivery alert and warning information directly to citizens, incorporates the latest technology, and is as effective as practical at alerting all Americans. Additionally, the IPAWS PMO identifies venues and opportunities to reach key audiences from all partner groups, continually gauges results, and when needed, develops methods for improving communications.

Strategic Outreach Plan

While much progress has been made, there is still more to do.

The IPAWS PMO recently released a Strategic Outreach Plan, which serves as a road map to increase the awareness and understanding of IPAWS, promote adoption and usage of the technology, strengthen existing partner relations and develop new partnerships and interests.

The IPAWS PMO's strategic direction addresses the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendations for "increased coordination and consultation with partners" and the IPAWS Strategic Outreach Plan helps the program continue to focus on these partnerships, acknowledging that they are a critical component to ensure that timely alerts and warnings are delivered to the American people.

In particular, the IPAWS PMO's 2013-2014 strategic outreach goals include:

1. Increasing the awareness and understanding of IPAWS by all partners and the public, including ensuring the public understand how to respond to alerts;
2. Increasing the adoption and use of IPAWS by all partners, including to provide resources to make collaboration easier, to secure partner commitment and to provide partners with feedback mechanisms; and
3. Strengthening existing partner relationships and develop new partnerships and interests, including with Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local authorities, as well as the private sector, advocacy and non-profit organizations.

This past year, to move forward on the first goal, FEMA developed Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for radio and TV, a 15-minute online course titled "IPAWS and the American People" and incorporated IPAWS and WEA information on Ready.gov. The PSA's were created to draw the public's attention and awareness to WEAs as a new and important lifesaving tool and directs viewers to learn more about lifesaving alerts on the new webpage at www.Ready.gov/alerts. The "IPAWS and the American People" course was designed to educate the public about the variety of alert and warning tools and technologies public safety officials can use to send them life-saving alerts and included a section focused on how the public should respond when they receive an alert.

The IPAWS PMO develops and provides informational resources for public safety officials, and works with all public safety officials who are interested in incorporating these and other products into local efforts to educate the public about emergency alerts.

To accomplish the second goal and increase adoption and use of IPAWS by all partners, FEMA frequently demonstrates a wide range of IPAWS capabilities while integrating alert origination tools, alert aggregation functions and alert dissemination technologies. During these demonstrations, IPAWS collaborates with numerous public and private sector partners to show alerts generated by multiple interoperable tools and systems as used by local and state agencies to activation and display of the alerts across all the IPAWS alerting channels in order to increase the impact of the demonstrations.

Additionally, the IPAWS PMO hosts regular webinars to speak about alerting system best practices, IPAWS specifics, and to inform about IPAWS compatible systems and technologies. These webinars are widely viewed and are tailored to respond to public safety officials and private sector feedback and requests for more information. The most recent webinar series addressed a request from alerting authorities for more information about alert origination software and tools that were interoperable with IPAWS. The next webinar series in development plans to address emergency alert redistribution systems.

Recognizing that well-trained users will make the best use of IPAWS, the IPAWS PMO assists public safety officials with all phases of the application process. Access to IPAWS is free;

however to send a message using IPAWS, authorized alerting officials must first select an IPAWS compatible alert originating tool, apply for a memorandum of agreement with FEMA, apply for public alerting permissions and complete FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Independent Study course IS-247a "Integrated Public Alert and Warning System."

To achieve our third goal, FEMA is working to standardize and expand the discipline of public alerting and promoting best practices. FEMA is working with alerting authorities to update public alert and warning plans, working with the scientific community to explore development of consistent alerting codes and symbology that could be used to replace text in alerts and warnings, and partnering with various access and functional needs representative groups to better understand alert and warning gaps.

The IPAWS PMO released the "IPAWS Toolkit for Alerting Authorities," which provides a collection of information for public safety officials related to why and how to become an IPAWS user. The toolkit contains information on IPAWS capabilities, alerting best practices, governance structures, technology requirements, operation and usage of IPAWS, testing and exercises, training, qualifying to be an authorized IPAWS alerting authority, building and strengthening relationships with private sector and other alerting partners and educating the American people about alerts and warnings. The IPAWS PMO actively promotes the toolkit and ensures it is available to all public safety officials.

The IPAWS PMO, in partnership with FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, hosts semi-annual roundtables for federal partners, private sector, and non-profit and advocacy organizations. The IPAWS PMO invites expert panelists to present at these roundtables, and the themes for past roundtables have included private sector and universities developing emergency communication technologies and products for Americans with Disabilities and access and functional needs. Looking forward, the IPAWS PMO has identified symbology for alerts and warnings as the theme for the next roundtable and will be facilitating working groups to advance this initiative.

Additionally, the IPAWS PMO published a white paper "Alerting the Whole Community: Removing Barriers to Alerting Accessibility" and continues to work with and train alerting authorities to communicate the benefits of IPAWS to the whole community within their jurisdiction, including Americans with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

For non-English speaking populations, the IPAWS PMO is participating on industry technical and standards working groups addressing multi-lingual alerting dissemination technologies and tools.

Since January 2010, the IPAWS PMO has participated in more than 300 events and activities that have engaged Americans across all IPAWS partner groups. Moving forward, IPAWS will continue to engage partners through conferences, webinars, roundtables, technical demonstrations, working groups and other events.

Following the IPAWS PMO strategic plan, and in response to the most recent GAO Report "Emergency Alerting: Capabilities Have Improved, but Additional Guidance and Testing Are Needed," the IPAWS PMO looks forward to collaborating with the FCC in using the 2011 national-level EAS test plan as a foundation to develop and implement a strategy for regular future national-level alert and warning tests.

This national-level test assessed the readiness and effectiveness of the system for the President to address the public during times of extreme national emergency. Radio and television broadcasters, cable, satellite, and wireline providers across the country participated in the test.

FEMA originated an Emergency Action Notification simultaneously to 61 Primary Entry Point stations that serve as national-level relay points. These PEP stations rebroadcasted the message in their coverage area to local primary stations and other monitoring stations.

The IPAWS PMO will continue to work to assist Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local alerting authorities to implement local alert and warning tests and exercises utilizing IPAWS.

IPAWS Goals and a Path Forward

The ultimate goal of IPAWS is to enable timely alert and warning to the public to ensure the preservation of life and property. Effective alert and warning provided to citizens in harm's way enables them to prepare for and protect against impending disasters thereby lessening the impact of and recovery time from natural disasters and other threats. FEMA understands that disasters are local and that local government has the primary responsibility to look after the welfare of its citizens, including the issuing of alerts and warnings. But FEMA also understands that consistent and effective alert and warning nationwide contributes to a stronger national preparedness posture, helping to mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and assisting local and state authorities plan for, implement, and use effective alert and warning systems. FEMA takes that responsibility very seriously and is constantly working to make our collective public alert and warning system as effective, reliable, integrated, flexible and comprehensive as it can be and accessible to alerting authorities at all levels of government.

To ensure that the American people are educated and informed, FEMA is working toward further developing partnerships and outreach efforts with other Federal agencies and the private sector to make the most effective use of available resources.

The IPAWS PMO, in partnership with Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local alerting authorities, public and private sector partners, Federal partners, and non-profit and advocacy organizations, will use every opportunity and available venue, to provide educational and actionable information to the American people.

National Urban Search & Rescue (US&R)

To achieve its mission of supporting citizens and first responders, FEMA uses tools including IPAWS alerts and warnings, and National Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) task force teams to achieve that mission.

FEMA has 28 mission-ready, National US&R task forces – complete with the necessary tools, equipment, skills and techniques – available for deployment to assist state, local, tribal, and territorial governments in rescuing survivors of structural collapse incidents or to assist in other search and rescue missions.

These task forces are located throughout the continental United States. Any task force can be activated and deployed by FEMA to a disaster area to provide assistance in structural collapse rescue, or they may be pre-positioned when a major disaster threatens a community. When activated by FEMA, the Task Forces become a Federal response resource that can be deployed anywhere in the Nation in response to a request for assistance by State, local, tribal, and territorial governments.

In response to the September flooding in Colorado, four federal US&R task forces were deployed (in addition to Colorado Task Force One that was utilized as a State resource) and assisted state and local authorities in rescuing survivors.

National US&R Response System Task Forces

Each National US&R Type I task force is made up of 70 multi-faceted, cross-trained personnel who serve in six major functional areas, including search, rescue, medical, hazardous materials, logistics and planning and who also include technical specialists such as physicians, structural engineers, and canine search teams. A task force is able to conduct physical search and heavy rescue operations in damaged or collapsed reinforced concrete buildings. It can also be divided into two 35-member teams to provide 24-hour search and rescue operations. Self-sufficient for an initial 72 hours, the task forces are equipped with convoy vehicles to support ground deployments and can be configured into Type III task forces to support events such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and other similar incidents.

US&R Task Force Capabilities

- Conduct physical search and rescue operations in damaged/collapsed structures;
- Provide reconnaissance to assess damage and needs, and to report results to appropriate officials;
- Render emergency medical care for trapped survivors, US&R personnel and search canines;
- Survey and evaluate hazardous materials threats;
- Assess and shut off utilities to homes and other buildings;
- Operate in a known or suspected weapons-of-mass-destruction environment;

- Provide structural and hazard evaluations of buildings; and
- Stabilize damaged structures, including shoring and cribbing.

As of 2008, the scope of Federal search and rescue operations under the National Response Framework (NRF) was expanded to address three main operational environments: structural collapse (urban) search and rescue; maritime/coastal/waterborne search and rescue; and land search and rescue. The NRF names four primary Federal partners who support such search and rescue operations: FEMA, the U.S. Coast Guard; the Department of the Interior/National Park Service; and the Department of Defense.

The Importance of US&R Teams

These US&R task forces are national assets that can be deployed by FEMA to assist state, local and tribal governments in rescuing survivors of structural collapse incidents or to assist in other search and rescue missions. They are a critical component of FEMA's response system, helping to achieve FEMA's mission of supporting our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards.

Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss these important programs, which are valuable tools that help us achieve our mission to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Testimony before the United States House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management

Regarding

FEMA Reauthorization: Ensuring the Nation is Prepared

Bob Khan
Fire Chief, City of Phoenix Fire Department
and
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Program
Central Region Sponsoring Agency Chief

October 2, 2013

Introduction:

Thank you, Chairman Barletta, Vice-Chair Farenthold, Ranking-member Carson and distinguished committee members for the opportunity to appear today before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management.

My name is Bob Khan. I am a 31-year member of the City of Phoenix, Arizona Fire Department, currently serving the residents, business owners and visitors of the greater Phoenix area as their Fire Chief. As such, I am the Sponsoring Agency Chief for ***Arizona Task Force 1***, one of the 28 Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Teams in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Urban Search and Rescue National Response System. I have been asked to serve the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Program as one of three Sponsoring Agency Chief Representatives, representing the ten Central Region teams.

US&R

I appear before you today as a Sponsoring Agency Chief. I want you to know how proud I am of this program. The men and women that serve our nation through the US&R program are competent and committed professionals that care deeply for the program and for the citizens that we serve. Each and every team member is a professional provider in his or her locale. Whether a firefighter or a medical doctor or a trained search-dog handler, these personnel respond to national disasters with the same skill sets that they apply every day in their hometowns. The concept is fairly simple: utilization of an all-hazards approach to incident mitigation utilizing special training, special equipment and special people.

The US&R system is part of a tiered approach to disaster management. The system has the capability to augment local and state resources with federally sponsored teams that can readily plug into operations at the local level following the National Incident Management System. These US&R teams, made up of local providers that are on their local payrolls until activated, are far less expensive to maintain than a resource that may otherwise be fully funded by the federal government. The 28 US&R teams and their localities benefit from the training, equipment and experience that come from being part of the program. Just as the system members apply the skills learned at home to national disasters, they apply the lessons learned while on federal missions to the emergency or planning needs of their local jurisdictions. The same search and rescue methods that were utilized and refined during the responses to the September 11th attacks, Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, and the tornado response in Oklahoma are performed daily throughout your hometowns in America by our members. Many of the planning methods learned by the team members in this system were applied just two weeks ago while responding to the Colorado floods.

All five of the task forces deployed to the recent flooding in Colorado were from the Central Region. Our training, equipment and processes worked and lives were certainly saved as a result. These deployed teams knew each other and operated from a common operating platform grounded in training, similar equipment and common policies. Many of the areas in Colorado, because of the flooding, were only accessible by aircraft or boats. Fortunately for the victims in

Colorado, all 28 task forces were able to increase their water operations capabilities by adding needed watercraft to their equipment cache during this past fiscal year, which allowed us to more effectively respond to the vast and complex needs that resulted from this catastrophic flooding. Several of the remaining 28 US&R teams were on standby at their points of departure, waiting to deploy as either augmentation or in relief of the first teams that had been deployed. The US&R Program Office also worked diligently to coordinate the deployment of the teams and to ensure the practices applied to any domestic response would also be consistently applied here. As the Central Region Sponsoring Agency Chief representative of the deployed teams, it was gratifying to know that federal support was there and that the activation orders were spelled out.

In the aftermath of the tornado-caused destruction in Oklahoma, capabilities brought to the theater of operation included structural evaluation of buildings by structural engineers including stabilization of damaged structures, i.e., shoring and cribbing of walls, roofs, and flooring, along with the critical expertise needed to determine the structural integrity of a building prior to inserting teams to assist with search and rescue efforts of any possible victims. In comparison to a typical local first responder, a US&R task force is able to conduct physical search and heavy rescue operations in collapsed, re-enforced concrete buildings with all the equipment and supplies necessary for the task force to be self sufficient for up to 72 hours without impacting the strained local resources needed by local authorities.

A prime example of how FEMA US&R task forces bring the ability to be a "force multiplier" was demonstrated by the eight US&R task forces that arrived in New York following the landfall of Hurricane Sandy. After search and rescue efforts were completed, all eight task forces were held in theater to assist local authorities with recovery efforts. Because of the support of all the sponsoring agency chiefs of each of the task forces, a multi-agency team took part in the humanity efforts needed in the heavily populated areas of New York City and on Long Island. Because they were also trained firefighters and paramedics, the task forces went door to door in high-rise buildings. Others went into the neighborhoods at the request of the New York City Office of Emergency Management. The task forces provided welfare checks and delivered desperately needed supplies to residents who were without both running water and electricity. Using their expertise in logistics, the task forces provided additional assistance in the following three days by setting up supply stations for those New York residents in need of food, water, toiletries and diapers.

Within 12 hours of tornados touching down in Oklahoma this past spring, FEMA US&R task forces were on the ground and in theater providing search and rescue efforts. An additional capability that each task force brought included human remains canine assets, along with civilian structural engineers that deployed with each task force. This asset assisted local authorities with the ability to quickly clear affected structures and neighborhoods.

With every deployment, we discover opportunities for improvement and we feel confident that after-action issues will be addressed by the US&R teams as well as the program office. I would like to thank Mr. Nimmich, Mr. Fenton, Mr. Framer and the entire US&R program staff for their efforts and support. Mr. Nimmich has clearly made every effort to make himself and his staff available to the Sponsoring Agency Chief's representatives and the Task Force Leaders' representatives. This increased spirit of cooperation will go a long way toward making the

program even better. This will ensure our teams are mobilized and transported to the disaster site within the window of opportunity necessary for successful search and rescue operations, whether in a domestic or foreign theater.

US&R Needs

From a Sponsoring Agency Chief's perspective, there are legal and financial liabilities that are of concern. We want to send the best trained teams to assist others while assuring our localities are not left vulnerable and exposed. In this economic climate, expenses that have been borne by sponsoring agencies in the past are being more closely scrutinized by our localities. Many of the sponsoring agencies are facing staffing cuts that have not been seen in thirty years. We are continually being asked to do more with less in our municipalities. It is increasingly difficult to place a fire company out of service for mandatory US&R training or equipment maintenance when we do not have enough resources to protect our community at the levels we have in the past.

We feel it important for this program to have consistent funding in order to support training and exercises, acquisition and maintenance of equipment and medical monitoring for the responders.

Workers compensation and liability protection for our civilian personnel are also of critical importance. There is a very real risk of injury and death to our task force members when they are deployed. God forbid anything awful were to happen to them in an already dire situation, but these are things that we have to think about and we want to ensure the proper liability protections, coverage and compensation are in place for that member and their family.

Additionally, we want to ensure our deployed members' jobs remain secure until they safely return home. These assurances protect civilian members of the US&R system (non-uniformed personnel such as physicians, structural engineers and canine handlers) from employment discrimination and retaliation as a result of engaging in federal US&R activities. For example, we faced this situation when one of our heavy riggers, Don Childress, faced termination from his civilian employer if he chose to respond with us to New Orleans. Fortunately for us and for the residents of New Orleans, Don came, but sadly, he did lose his job.

Conclusion

I am thankful to the Committee for this opportunity to discuss the US&R program and how it benefits our communities. We look forward to working with the Committee on the FEMA reauthorization and stand ready to assist in making this proven system better today and into the future.

Hearing on
"FEMA Reauthorization: Ensuring the Nation is Prepared"

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management

October 2, 2013

Statement of Barry Fisher

On behalf of the
National Association of Broadcasters

Good morning, Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Carson, and Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Barry Fisher. I am the General Manager of WFMZ-TV in Allentown, Pennsylvania, with service area coverage of the Lehigh Valley and Berks County. WFMZ is a community-oriented, independent television station, with 83 news broadcasts each week, and we also operate a 24-hour digital weather channel.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My testimony will address the valuable, often life-saving services that all broadcasters -- both television and radio stations -- provide during natural disasters and other crises. In particular, I will discuss broadcasters' indispensable role as the backbone of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and our interest in the continued roll-out of the Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS). I am pleased to share with you my views on how to improve our nation's emergency communications system in the digital age, and how reauthorization of FEMA may advance that goal.

I. Broadcasting Is the Most Important Source for Critical, Life-Saving Emergency Information for All Americans

Broadcasters' commitment to public service is never more apparent than during times of crisis. During an emergency -- particularly one that arises with little notice -- no other industry can match the ability of full power broadcasting to deliver comprehensive, up-to-date warnings and information to affected citizens.[1] Local television broadcasters reach 96.4% of the approximate 120.2 million households in the U.S.,[2] while local radio reaches an audience of more than 242.5 million Americans, or 92% of the population (ages 12+), on a weekly basis.[3] The wide signal coverage of broadcasters ensures that anyone in a car, at home or even walking around with a mobile device can receive up-

[1] "Broadcast radio receivers are ubiquitous. . . In the aftermath of a national, catastrophic event, alerting authorities can leverage operational area capabilities to transmit crucial information to the public through as many methods as possible. However, broadcast radio may be the most effective method since it is possible that terrestrial Internet Protocol (IP) networks and other pathways could be inoperable. . . ." *An Emergency Alert System Best Practices Guide – Version 1.0*, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, at 3, available at http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/ipaws/eas_best_practices_guide.pdf.

[2] Nielsen, Universe Estimates, as of August 26, 2013.

[3] Arbitron Radar, June 2013, http://arbitron.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=43&item=885.

to-the-minute alerts when disaster strikes. As a ubiquitous medium, broadcasters understand and appreciate their unique role in disseminating emergency information. Radio and television broadcasters are first informers during an emergency, and Americans know to turn to their local broadcasters first for in-depth coverage.

Radio and television stations are also our nation's most reliable network for distributing emergency information. Even if the electricity is out, causing the Internet and cable television to go down, and phone service is lost because networks are clogged or cell towers or phone lines are down, over-the-air broadcasters can remain on the air and received by battery-operated radios and televisions. For example, during Hurricane Sandy, approximately 25 percent of cell phone towers in the New York-New Jersey area failed, while virtually all radio and television stations were able to provide uninterrupted service.

Local radio and television stations have dedicated news and weather personnel who use their familiarity with the people and geography of their local communities to provide the most useful, informative news to their audiences, whether that includes information on where to shelter-in-place, which streets will serve as evacuation routes, or where local businesses may find fuel or generators.

Indeed, even with the recent, welcomed introduction of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) by the cellular industry, local radio and television stations remain the primary source for news and information regarding emergency situations. As a text-based message, WEA's are limited to no more than 90 characters. As a result, WEAs typically provide only the most rudimentary, bell-ringing data. Given that limitation, although WEAs are a welcomed development, this new EAS outlet only underscores the importance of broadcasters during times of emergency, as virtually all WEAs instruct citizens to "check local media" for further information regarding an emergency,[4] such as

[4] Broadcasters are also rolling-out Mobile EAS (M-EAS), which is a next-generation approach to public warnings that leverages the backbone of Mobile Digital TV transmissions. M-EAS utilizes terrestrial broadcasting rather than cellular network connectivity, which allows highly reliable message dissemination, even when cellular networks are down. M-EAS also enables rich

the path of a storm, shelter-in-place instructions, or where to locate assistance. Broadcasters are pleased to serve as the chief source for essential emergency information for all Americans, including wireless telephone subscribers.

Broadcasters deliver emergency information with passion, during times of crisis both large and small. For instance, WFMZ's coverage area includes several rivers that have experienced dangerous flooding in recent years. Viewers who live on the banks of these rivers rely on our news coverage to know if and when to evacuate. WFMZ also operates the 69 News AccuWeather Channel on digital channel 69.2, which provides continuous weather information, including up-to-the-minute updates on river flood stages. WFMZ routinely receives feedback from viewers about the comfort they enjoy in knowing that WFMZ is monitoring and reporting on the status of these rivers.

On a larger scale, broadcasters' commitment to emergency information was never more apparent than during Hurricane Sandy in October 2012. Overall, 147 fatalities were attributed to Sandy, with losses in the United States ranging from $50 billion to $71 billion. Fortunately, as the storm approached, radio and television stations in the path, including WFMZ, mobilized their staff and facilities, or the damage could have been even worse.

WFMZ provided round-the-clock coverage to keep our viewers informed on what to expect from the storm. Specifically, given the experience and expertise of our meteorologists and other local news reporters, we anticipated widespread power and communications outages. We repeatedly reminded viewers ahead of the storm of the many ways they can receive news about the storm, including a battery-operated television. This guidance was particularly appreciated by viewers in the counties we cover where an estimated 67 percent of residents lost power.

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multimedia alerts (*e.g.*, video, audio, text, and graphics) to mobile DTV-equipped cellphones, tablets, laptops, netbooks, and in-car navigation systems. M-EAS is compliant with Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) and designed for full incorporation into the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). *See* http://mobileeas.org/.

We also took advance precautions to ensure our ability to provide continuous service during the storm. For example, WFMZ pre-positioned news crews throughout the region so they could provide live, on-the-scene news without excessive travel, which was extremely dangerous and cumbersome during the storm. We also made sure that station personnel were equipped to deal with any possible obstacles that might limit access to our facilities. In fact, some staff even had to use chain saws to remove debris to clear a path to WFMZ's studio. Station management also ensured that we had an ample fuel supply to run our station on generator power for several days. The station, in fact, ran on our emergency generator for five days after losing power just hours into the storm. To maintain the flow of information to our local citizens, we partnered with local radio stations to simulcast our news coverage to reach people without battery-operated televisions, and streamed our newscast coverage online via Syncbak, which is an app for smartphones that allowed the few people who maintained wireless service to watch our news coverage in addition to web-based streaming.

Similar life-saving steps were also undertaken by other local broadcasters in the region. At the FCC's field hearing on Hurricane Sandy in February 2013, Dave Davis of New York City-based WABC-TV described his station's efforts:

> As our news department worked to gather the latest information... our engineering department made sure our own infrastructure was prepared... testing and tuning up all the generators, topping off fuel tanks, inspecting and securing rooftop and tower antenna installations, installing additional receive systems at the station, and testing backup transmission paths. We knew our life-saving information would not save lives unless we stayed on the air.[5]

These kinds of measures were typical of broadcasters, and proved extremely important as the storm knocked out other means of communication in parts of the tri-state area for

[5] Statement of Dave Davis, President and General Manager, WABC-TV, New York, & Vice Chairman, New York State Broadcasters Association, Inc., FCC, Field Hearing on Super Storm Sandy (Feb. 3, 2013), at 1-2.

almost a full week, including one-quarter of the cell phone towers in the storm zone.[6] As a result, all television stations and virtually all radio stations were able to remain on the air during the storm.[7] Even FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate recognized the critical importance of broadcasters, urging the 50 million people in the storm area to get a battery-powered or hand cranked radio before the storm to ensure reliable access to local news and weather updates in the event of power, Internet and cell tower outages.[8]

During and after the storm, many local broadcasters provided round-the-clock coverage, including WTNH in New Haven, Connecticut, which stayed on the air for over 40 hours with live, on-the-scene coverage in a 54-hour period, including one stretch of 28 ½ hours straight. WTNH reminded citizens to stock their homes with batteries and other essentials, and made sure to inform viewers that the station would live-stream all of its coverage during the storm. Similarly, WPRI in Providence, Rhode Island, provided critical information regarding evacuations, Red Cross and United Way and other information both on the air and on a dedicated web page it specifically created for Hurricane Sandy.

Many other radio and television stations along the northeast coast stayed on the air continuously for several days, providing life-saving information and a megaphone for public safety officials to announce evacuation, shelter-in-place, and other instructions.[9]

Local broadcasters also formed partnerships with other outlets to reach as many citizens as possible, including music and sports radio stations that simulcast storm

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[6] Brian X. Chen, *Cellphone Users Steaming at Hit-or-Miss Service*, New York Times (Nov. 2, 2012), available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/03/technology/cellphone-users-steaming-at-hit-or-miss-service.html?_r=0.

[7] "Batteries are drained, Internet connections long-gone. For the nearly 5 million households muddling through a fourth day without power in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, there's really only one medium that matters, and that's radio." Michael Learmonth, *Sandy Brings Back Prime Time for Original Wireless Network: Radio*, Ad Age (Nov. 2, 2012), available at http://adage.com/article/media/hurricane-sandy-brings-prime-time-radio/238114/.

[8] CBS Morning News (Oct. 29, 2012).

[9] New Jersey stations WSUS and WNNJ aired an interview with New Jersey Assemblyman Gary Chiusano in which the state government announced its plan for rationing gasoline. Statement of John Hogan, Chairman and CEO, Media and Entertainment, Clear Channel Communications, Inc., FCC Hearing on Hurricane Sandy (Feb. 5, 2013) at 9.

coverage provided by news-oriented radio stations, and television stations that simulcast their news over radio. Local broadcasters are competitors, but when disaster strikes, we work together to remain on the air and expand coverage. During times of crisis, it is a routine matter for broadcast engineers to help competing stations stay on the air.

Although the Internet was down for many in the storm zone, local broadcasters also leveraged digital outlets and social media to expand their reach to those who were able to maintain Internet access, such as WFMZ's arrangement with the online television service Syncbak. WFMZ, like most stations, also transmitted storm coverage 24/7 on their websites and social platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Page views of radio and television stations' websites were up by a factor of two to three times during the storm, presumably by many viewers outside the storm zone. Unlike other communications outlets, local broadcasters invest in journalism and employ experienced reporters. Citizens know that their local radio or television station is the best place to turn for reliable, accurate information during emergencies.

Following the storm, local broadcasters also took a leading role in helping to rebuild the impacted areas, from major telethons like the 12-12-12 (A Concert for Sandy Relief) that was carried nationwide on Clear Channel radio stations, to programs like "Operation Brotherly Love: Sandy's Aftermath," a joint effort of CBS Television's Philadelphia stations which raised substantial funds for the Red Cross Hurricane Sandy Response Fund. Radio and television stations are uniquely positioned to organize and publicize fundraising relief efforts, and they take pride in their ability to do so.

Local stations also offer hyper local weather alerts and information on multicast channels, such as WFMZ's 69 News Accuweather Channel on digital channel 69.2, which provides continuous coverage of local, regional and national weather conditions. TV stations are also in the process of rolling out innovative mobile DTV services, which will enable viewers to receive live, local broadcast television programming—including local news, weather, sports, emergency information, and entertainment programming—

on an "on the go" basis on mobile-DTV capable devices such as smart phones, laptop computers and tablets. Hundreds of stations around the country have commenced offering mobile DTV service, and hundreds of other stations have announced plans to continue the nationwide roll-out of mobile DTV in the near-term. Mobile DTV is a reliable and spectrally efficient (one-to-an-unlimited-number) means of disseminating emergency information to viewers. Following the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, residents reported that the country's mobile television service was a lifeline source of information, particularly in the wake of cellular network and power outages.[10]

In times of local crisis such as these, broadcasters provide outstanding service to their communities. Beyond anecdotal evidence, the importance of broadcasters during the storm is also borne out by statistics. For example, according to Arbitron, radio listening jumped 70 percent in New York City, 245 percent in Nassau/Suffolk, and 42 percent in Staten Island, during Hurricane Sandy. Similarly, following tornadoes that struck in Alabama in April 2011, Raycom Media conducted a survey of residents who were impacted. According to the survey results, a vast majority – 71% of adults – said they were warned about the storm by watching television.[11] An additional 10% of those surveyed learned of the tornadoes via radio. A mere 6% of respondents learned of the tornadoes through Internet, smartphones, or Twitter/Facebook.[12] This occurred despite the fact that 75% of those interviewed were at home during the tornadoes, presumably with access to the Internet and other sources of information.[13] This reliance on radio and television for dependable, up-to-the-minute information was true even for young citizens ages 18 to 24. We might expect this demographic to rely more on the Internet

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[10] *See, e.g.*, Michael Plugh, "What I Left Behind In Japan," *Salon.com* (March 22, 2011), *available at* http://www.salon.com/life/feature/2011/03/22/japan_i_left_behind/index.html. *See also* Live Blog: Japan Earthquake, *The Wall Street Journal* (March 11, 2011, 8:06 a.m. posting of Chester Dawson) ("Unable to use cell phones, many used their smartphones to tune into television broadcasts and find out what had happened. 'It's very convenient being able to watch live TV when the phones are down,' said Minori Naito, an employee of Royal Bank of Scotland in Tokyo. 'Otherwise, we'd have no idea what is going on.'").
[11] Alabama Tornado Survey, Billy McDowell, VP of Media Research, RAYCOM Media (May 2011).
[12] *Id.*
[13] *Id.*

and social media for information, but fully 77% of them reported that they tracked the storms via radio or TV.

II. Local Broadcast Stations Are the Backbone of the Nation's Emergency Alert System

In addition to the ongoing, comprehensive coverage that broadcasters provide during emergencies, we are also the backbone of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). EAS is a largely wireless network that connects over-the-air radio, television and cable television systems. The in-place infrastructure of EAS allows the prompt dissemination of alerts to the widest possible audience, or to target alerts to specific areas, as appropriate. EAS is intended for use during sudden, unpredictable or unforeseen events that pose an immediate threat to public health or safety, the nature of which precludes any advance notification or warning.

EAS was put into place on January 1, 1997, when it superseded the Emergency Broadcast System, which itself superseded the Control of Electromagnetic Radiation System (CONELRAD). In addition to alerting the public of local weather emergencies such as tornadoes and flash floods, EAS is designed to allow the President to speak to the United States within 10 minutes, although the nationwide federal EAS has never been intentionally activated, aside from the November 9, 2011, nationwide test discussed below. The EAS regulations are governed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and EAS is jointly coordinated by the FCC, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the National Weather Service (NOAA/NWS).

EAS is used via radio, television, and cable television. Sirius XM has been required to participate in EAS since 2006, and satellite television providers have been required to participate since 2007.

Messages in EAS are composed of four parts: a digitally encoded Specific Area Messaging Encoding (SAME) header, an attention signal, an audio announcement, and an end-of-message signal. The SAME header contains information such as who originated the alert, a brief description of the event, the areas affected, the expected duration of the event, and the date and time it was issued.

FEMA has designated and hardened certain radio stations as Primary Entry Point (PEP) stations, which are responsible for distributing presidential messages to other broadcast stations and cable systems. FEMA is in the process of modernizing and expanding the PEP system to include approximately 77 stations. This has been an arduous, long-term task, and broadcasters support FEMA's persistence to accomplishing this tremendous goal. We would encourage reauthorization and continued funding of FEMA to enable it to complete this project.

All EAS Participants, including broadcasters, are required to maintain FCC-certified encoder/decoder EAS equipment points that continuously monitor the signals of at least two nearby broadcast stations for EAS messages, one of which must be designated a local primary station, which is the first link to EAS message originators. Broadcasters typically work in partnership with state, county and local emergency managers and public safety officials on how best to deploy EAS in each state.

Although EAS can be triggered by the President, and state or local authorities under certain conditions, the majority of alerts are originated by local emergency managers and the NWS.

The specific content of EAS messages can vary depending on the nature of the emergency, but may include information on the timing and path of storms, evacuation plans and routes, shelter-in-place instructions, and America's Missing: Broadcasting Emergency Response Alerts, or Child Abduction AMBER Alerts, which help expand the eyes and ears of local law enforcement when a child is abducted. Nationwide, since the inception of AMBER in 1996, AMBER alerts have helped safely recover more than 656 abducted children.[14] In fact, the Amber Plan was originally created by broadcasters with the assistance of law enforcement agencies in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

EAS participation is an important component of broadcasters' public service. All EAS equipment is purchased by broadcasters at their own expense. All stations must test

[14] *See http://www.amberalert.gov/statistics.htm* (last visited Sep. 27, 2013).

their EAS systems on both a weekly and monthly basis. We have all seen or heard the familiar announcement: "The following is a test of the Emergency Alert System. This is only a test."

The FCC and FEMA conducted the first nationwide test of the EAS system on November 9, 2011. The broadcast industry fully supported this endeavor and lent our resources to the project. We worked closely with our federal and local partners to ensure that the national test was useful and informative. Broadcasters prepared for the national exercise by reviewing their internal EAS equipment and processes, and if appropriate, upgrading software or hardware in advance of the national test. Broadcasters also conducted an extensive nationwide awareness campaign in the days leading up to the test, to ensure that Americans understood that it was "only a test." The test was discussed on numerous high-profile newscasts and morning shows and repeatedly covered on radio talk shows. The broadcasting industry also created and distributed a variety of English and foreign language Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that were aired thousands of times as the test approached.

The goal of the test was to diagnose the efficiency and reliability of a nationwide EAS alert, and identify areas in need of potential improvement. In my view, the test was a success. It was the first time an official "live-code" national alert message was purposely deployed end-to-end throughout the system, under conditions simulating an actual emergency situation. Almost all broadcasters, including my station and virtually all broadcasters in Pennsylvania, were able to successfully rebroadcast the EAS test message they monitored and received, despite certain technical problems with the origination of the message which have now been addressed, including the need to improve the audio quality.[15]

[15] These problems included: (1) a "loop-back" of the digital message header codes emanating from one of the PEP stations that caused the test message initiating codes to repeat about every six seconds, which led some EAS equipment to seize upon receiving the second set of header tones; (2) FEMA's originating equipment had a clock error which caused some equipment to delay pass-through of the message by three minutes; and (3) a few scattered problems with reception of the test message through the PEP network of radio stations.

Broadcasters also support the FCC's ongoing review of the lessons learned during the nationwide EAS test. The FCC recently issued a Public Notice seeking comment from the public on issues that arose during the test, with a presumed eye towards launching a rulemaking proceeding in the near term.[16] Broadcasters appreciate the Commission's intent to further examine certain testing areas, and look forward to future nationwide testing that will help ensure the reliability of EAS. EAS is tested weekly by each radio and TV station and monthly within each state. Such tests allow message disseminators to confirm that their equipment is working properly, or to diagnose and fix any problems. We believe that there should be regular testing of the federal government's ability to send an alert message throughout the nation.

Although a success, the nationwide test highlighted the need for a redundant transmission architecture that does not rely solely on the PEP network. To some degree, this is being addressed with the recent transition to the new digital-based CAP and FEMA's use of the Internet as the backbone of IPAWS.

In June 2006, President Bush issued Executive Order 13407, entitled *Public Alert and Warning System*, which states:

> It is the policy of the United States to have an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible, and comprehensive system to alert and warn the American people...establish or adopt, as appropriate, common alerting and warning protocols, standards, terminology, and operating procedures for the public alert and warning system to enable interoperability and the secure delivery of coordinated messages to the American people through as many communication pathways as practicable...administer the Emergency Alert System (EAS) as a critical component...ensure that under all conditions the President of the United States can alert and warn the American people.

In response, FEMA has developed the IPAWS Program that is designed to improve public safety through the rapid dissemination of emergency messages to as many people as possible over as many communications devices as possible.

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[16] Public Notice, *Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Seek Comment Regarding Equipment and Operational Issues Identified Following the First Nationwide Test of the Emergency Alert System*, DA 13-1969 (rel. Sep. 23, 2013).

The transition to the digital CAP system has also raised the specter of cyber hacking that could disrupt EAS. For example, on February 12, 2013, a hacker was able to access the EAS equipment of a handful of stations in Montana and elsewhere, causing those stations to issue a false EAS alert concerning an attack by zombies. It is my understanding that the hacking was limited to a few isolated instances where individual stations neglected to reset the factory-set, default passwords on their new CAP-compliant EAS equipment and did not have adequate firewall protections on their networks. The breach did not occur at the message origination level, so there was no danger of a widespread false message. Broadcasters take cyber security very seriously, and this hacking situation was an excellent reminder for all EAS participants to double-check the security of their EAS equipment and their IT networks. The National Association of Broadcasters regularly reminds its members of best practices for security for the EAS and all station functions.

In my view, the continued success of EAS will largely turn on the expertise and ability of local authorities to fully deploy EAS and act as a "civil authority" with full access to the system. In the past, some of the isolated instances where EAS could have been used more judiciously directly resulted from a lack of awareness or expertise on the part of local officials concerning EAS. In this day and age, it is unacceptable that some local emergency managers remain unaware of the benefits of EAS, or how and when to trigger an EAS alert. Broadcasters would encourage the Committee to support FEMA's ongoing efforts to train state and local authorities on the proper use of EAS as it considers reauthorization of FEMA.

In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters (PAB), in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), has addressed this need via our use of The Emergency Management Network (EMnet). EMnet is a closed-loop system in which radio and TV stations have a dedicated terminal that delivers EAS warnings to stations and allows two-way communications between stations and PEMA officials. PEMA also provided EMnet terminals to local county Emergency Management

Agencies along with the necessary training to properly use the system. EMnet is a robust method of disseminating EAS information directly to stations in a "Hub and Spoke" approach in addition to the legacy "Daisy Chain" system. The two-way communications feature can help stations clarify important emergency information in a very timely fashion if required.

In the same vein, as mentioned above, FEMA is in the midst of implementing a next generation of EAS, although this effort is largely complete concerning broadcasters. This new system will modernize the technology used to deliver EAS messages from public safety officials to EAS Participants. Under the Commission's existing rules, broadcasters and other EAS Participants are required to process an EAS message that is formatted in this new "language," known CAP.[17]

Pursuant to FCC rules, EAS Participants have installed equipment capable of receiving a CAP-formatted message, at their own expense.[18] This was a substantial burden for many broadcasters. It is critical that our effort be matched by a commensurate investment of state and local jurisdictions, to ensure that their EAS equipment is able to both receive and transmit a CAP-formatted message.[19] This will ensure that the public will benefit from the next-generation of public alerting.

Third, authority for EAS is spread across multiple federal agencies with differing priorities, while the primary use of the system is by state and local officials. At present, there is no mechanism for the users of the system and the distributors of the messages to come together to discuss issues and work out problems. I respectfully request the

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[17] CAP is a messaging structure that allows emergency managers to provide in a digital format (protocol) detailed descriptions of an emergency event. It is an open, interoperable standard. *See Second Report and Order*, 22 FCC Rcd. 13285 ¶¶ 22-25 (2007). CAP is also backwards-compatible to work with EAS and the NWS' SAME (Specific Area Message Encoding) protocol. *Id.* at ¶ 5.

[18] *See*, In the Matter of Review of the Emergency Alert System; Independent Spanish Broadcasters Association, the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ, Inc., and the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council, Petition for Immediate Relief, *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, EB Docket No. 04-296, rel. May 26, 2011.

Committee to consider adopting language creating a national EAS working group or advisory committee, and direct it to meet on a regular basis and report back to this and other committees of jurisdiction, to ensure that the lines of communication remain open and that ideas for continuous improvement of the system have a forum in which they can be heard.

One other critical improvement can be achieved without expenditure of any funds. Specifically, broadcasters need credentialing from state and local authorities to allow them to access their facilities, such as studios and transmitter sites, during times of emergency. This will enable radio and television stations to repair or maintain their equipment and fully leverage their resources, local knowledge and training to keep the public informed during emergencies. While certain states accommodate broadcasters who need to access their facilities, such cooperation is not universal. Congressional action in this area could greatly enhance our ability to maintain operations and deliver vital information to our audiences.

A properly working EAS is a fundamental and essential component of our nation's Homeland Security, and is crucially needed in our state of Pennsylvania to respond to the myriad of potential man-made and weather-related threats facing our region. As mentioned, for example, my station's coverage area includes several rivers that sometimes cause dangerous flooding. Pennsylvania is also home to multiple nuclear power plants, defense contractors and military installations, shipping ports, busy railways, and numerous major trucking routes. As a large state, Pennsylvania also experiences a variety of dangerous weather conditions, including tornados, hazardous snow storms, and other emergencies.

I am grateful to Chairman Barletta and this Committee for hosting this hearing and for your interest in improving our communications to prevent the loss of life and property in the future. Disasters are bound to happen, despite our best intentions and preparation. We must take care not to overlook this opportunity to improve public warning and emergency communications in advance of the next event, instead of during its

aftermath. We should be planning for the next emergency, not preparing for the last one.

Thank you.

Testimony of

Chris Guttman-McCabe

Executive Vice President

CTIA – The Wireless Association®

on

"FEMA Reauthorization: Ensuring the Nation Is Prepared"

before the

House Transportation & Infrastructure

Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management

October 2, 2013

Testimony of Chris Guttman-McCabe
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Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management
October 2, 2013

Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Carson, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for affording CTIA[1] the opportunity to participate in today's hearing. My name is Chris Guttman-McCabe, and I serve as the Association's Executive Vice President. In this role, and mainly my previous role as CTIA's Vice President for Regulatory Affairs, I have been involved in the wireless industry's efforts to implement the Commercial Mobile Alert Service called for by the WARN Act, and I am pleased to update you today on the wireless industry's efforts to deliver a state-of-the-art alerting system to America's wireless consumers.

The Commercial Mobile Alert Service, which has since been renamed Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) by the Federal Communications Commission, grew out of the Warning, Alert and Response Network (or WARN) Act, which became law as Title VI of the SAFE Ports Act[2] in October 2006. CTIA supported enactment of the legislation, which was intended to harness the creativity of the wireless ecosystem and take advantage of the ubiquity of the mobile platform to augment the existing emergency alerting system without imposing new cost or technology mandates on the wireless industry. This approach was consistent with, and built upon, previous public-private partnerships that led to the successful creation of Wireless Priority Service (a collaborative effort between the National Communications System and the wireless industry)

[1] CTIA – The Wireless Association® is a nonprofit membership organization that has represented the wireless communications industry since 1984. Membership in the association includes wireless carriers and their suppliers, as well as providers and manufacturers of wireless data services and products. Additional information about CTIA may be found at http://www.ctia.org/aboutCTIA/.

[2] P.L. 109-347.

and the AMBER Alert program (a joint effort involving the Department of Justice, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and the wireless industry).

In the WARN Act, Congress developed an innovative procedure to address the problem of emergency alerting by securing the participation of interested non-governmental parties in the development and deployment of what has become a 90-character, geo-targeted, succinct alerting capability that would let consumers carrying a wireless device know that there is an imminent threat to health or safety. I am pleased to report, nearly seven years later, that what Congress envisioned in the WARN Act is working as designed to deliver AMBER alerts, imminent threat alerts, and, if necessary, Presidential alerts.

WEA went live in April 2012 and carriers serving 98 percent of U.S. wireless consumers have opted to participate in the program. Since going live, thousands of WEA alerts have been issued and many have played a key role in protecting the public.

For example, the first time an Amber Alert was sent out through the WEA system was in February 2013 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, when an 8-month-old was abducted by a family acquaintance. Within minutes of the alert going out, a teenager who received the alert on her device called 911 leading police to the red Kia Sportage described and the missing child.[3] This success was replicated in Pennsylvania in August of this year, when Hostyn Perez-Corza abducted 6 and 8 year old sisters after holding their mother hostage at gunpoint. An Amber Alert was issued to Berks, Chester, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery and Schuylkill counties. After

[3] http://www.twincities.com/ci_22642126/minnesota-cellphone-amber-alert-located-child-and-was.

receiving the Amber Alert, a hotel patron spotted the vehicle outside a hotel in the area. The girls were safely recovered and Perez-Corza was arrested.[4] Later in August, an Amber Alert issued over the WEA system led to the recovery of a 17-month old child abducted during an auto theft in High Point, North Carolina.[5]

WEA also has been used extensively to warn the public about impending weather situations that pose an imminent threat to public safety. Last fall, WEA alerts were used "widely and successfully" in areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.[6] Given the breadth and scope of Sandy, these alerts included blizzard warnings, flash-flood warnings, mandatory evacuation warnings, and shelter-in-place directives. The varying subjects of these alerts and the significant geographic scope over which they were distributed – from West Virginia to Maine – demonstrate the utility of the WEA service.

More recently, in July 2013, a WEA alert in East Windsor, Connecticut notified a camp counselor in a sports dome of an approaching tornado, something that is highly unusual in that part of the country. The counselor moved the 29 children and five counselors in her care to a shelter, as moments later the tornado ripped through destroying the dome.[7]

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[4] http://readingeagle.com/article.aspx?id=505366.

[5] http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/08/30/3151730/late-night-amber-alert-helps-find.html

[6] http://www.emergencymgmt.com/emergency-blogs/alerts/CMASWEA-Used-Extensively-for-103112.http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/13/us/flooding-colorado/index.htmlhtml

[7] http://articles.courant.com/2013-07-02/news/hc-tornado-warning-0702-20130701_1_windsor-locks-dome-national-weather-service-confirms

As these examples demonstrate, WEA is working, offering a valuable, mobile augmentation to the Emergency Broadcast System we all grew up with as it gives emergency managers a "game changer"[8] to inform and protect the public. And we're already working to make the system better through participation in the FCC's Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council (CSRIC) Working Group 2, which is addressing issues raised during WEA's implementation for post roll-out study. Specifically, the Working Group will review the WEA and develop appropriate recommendations for action, after examining (1) experiences with WEA since its April 2012 deployment; (2) any technological advances since the original WEA technical recommendations were submitted, and (3) any other relevant issues, as appropriate.

While industry is working hard to make WEA an on-going success, WEA's effectiveness also depends on how well the public understands and uses the system. While carriers and others in the industry can and do provide important assistance in the area of education, FEMA and other government agencies have an important role to play to promote uniform and comprehensive education across all parts of the country and all affected sectors of the emergency response community. We applaud FEMA on its recent roll-out of a Public Service Announcement on WEA and we agree that this should remain a focus for FEMA and the IPAWS office. Moreover, it is incumbent on alerting authorities to similarly educate their constituents about the alerts they may send, as only they have the knowledge to answer specific questions about incidents and

[8] http://fox6now.com/2013/07/02/cell-phone-users-unaware-of-new-emergency-alert-system/

alerts in their areas. A wireless provider's customer service rep lacks visibility into specific alerts sent and will not be in a position to answer a subscriber's questions about those alerts.

The wireless industry is committed to working with FEMA and the FCC to ensure that subsequent generations of the system support additional functionality and granularity. With this in mind, we do not believe that wireless carriers that participate in the wireless emergency alerting system should be subject to any new requirements that emanate from the implementation of IPAWS. While IPAWS may help to modernize the distribution of alerts on other communications platforms, the WARN Act framework remains the proper path to deliver and modernize emergency alerts provided over wireless networks. CTIA urges you to keep this in mind as you consider legislative efforts to modernize IPAWS or reauthorize FEMA.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing. CTIA looks forward to working with the Subcommittee, FEMA, and others in the public safety community to ensure that WEA continues to offer a unique and useful way to help protect the American public.

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TESTIMONY OF BOBBY A. COURTNEY
CHIEF PROGRAMMING OFFICER
THE MESH COALITION

Before the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management

October 2, 2013, Hearing
FEMA Reauthorization: Ensuring the Nation is Prepared

Good morning Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Carson, and Members of the Subcommittee. On behalf of the MESH Coalition, I appreciate the opportunity to describe our efforts to ensure that Central Indiana communities are prepared to respond to emergency events, and I applaud your commitment to these important issues.

I am pleased to report at the outset of my testimony that as a result of the cooperative efforts of Central Indiana healthcare, public health, emergency management and public safety partners through the MESH Coalition, the healthcare infrastructure in Central Indiana is well positioned to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a wide range of emergency events. While it would be hubris to guarantee a successful response to any incident, especially those that would almost certainly overwhelm any region's ability to respond, such as a direct nuclear or widespread biological attack, Central Indiana is a national leader in healthcare infrastructure resilience and we believe our systems and processes are some of the most robust and sophisticated in the nation.

I would like to address how we have developed this resilience, in part, through closely coordinated cooperation among the public and private sectors through the MESH Coalition. The MESH Coalition is a nationally recognized, nonprofit, public-private partnership that enables healthcare providers to effectively respond to emergency events and remain viable through recovery. We provide healthcare intelligence, community-based planning, policy analysis, and clinical education and training to our healthcare, public safety, public health, and emergency management colleagues. Our programs increase capacity in healthcare providers to respond to emergency events, protect our critical healthcare safety net, and promote integration and coordination between the government and private sector.

Today, I would like to share three points with the Committee:

1. The public-private partnership coalition model that our partners have developed here in Central Indiana is one of the most progressive models of healthcare emergency management in the United States, and we believe that this model can, and should, be replicated throughout the United States.

2. Through a comprehensive portfolio of programs, the MESH Coalition is continuously improving Central Indiana's ability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from both small and large-scale emergency events.

3. We believe that in order to promote the spread and adoption of healthcare coalitions like ours, we must work together to find creative and cost-effective means of providing sustainable, ongoing support to these efforts, while maintaining appropriate stewardship of public resources.

THE MESH COALITION MODEL

The MESH Coalition enables healthcare providers to effectively respond to emergency events and remain viable through recovery. Through the MESH Coalition, health care providers, public health practitioners, emergency medical service providers, emergency managers, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and private businesses are working together to plan, train, share information, and shape policies that protect the healthcare system and facilitate a more effective emergency response. Our public-private partnerships increase capacity in the healthcare system to respond to emergency events, protect our critical healthcare safety net, and promote integration and coordination between the government and private sectors.

This unique partnership was founded as a grant project of the Indiana University School of Medicine and Wishard Health Services with a $5M award from the United States Department of Health and Human Services Emergency Care Partnership Grant Program. The MESH Coalition was one of five organizations funded through this Program to develop innovative models for healthcare emergency management, and was the only nonprofit successfully formed because of the award.

Our Board of Directors is comprised of hospital chief executives and clinical leadership, as well as community partners. These entities include: The Indiana University Schools of Medicine and Nursing, The Marion County Public Health Department, Richard Roudebush Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Community Hospitals of Indiana, Inc., Franciscan St. Francis Health, Wishard Health Services, Indiana University Health, and St. Vincent Hospital & Health Care Center, Inc.

One of the unique aspects of the MESH Coalition that helps us be successful is our funding model, which pairs public grant funding with private fee-for-service and subscription funds – meaning that our coalition partners have all put "skin in the game," creating powerful incentives for executive and system engagement in critical emergency management activities. While historically we have received federal grant funding from the Emergency Care Partnership Program, the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) program, and the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), subscription fees from partnering healthcare organizations are nearly 45% of our total revenues. In addition, our fee-for-service programs continue to minimize the gap between private and public funding steams. This is of particular importance given that there have been significant reductions in federal grant programs, and we anticipate further cuts in the future.

CENTRAL INDIANA PREPAREDNESS

Central Indiana communities are as prepared as any other across the country to respond to an emergency event. However, we believe that an effective response is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to safeguard the healthcare infrastructure during emergency events. It is critical that we improve the overall resilience of our healthcare system to respond to a range of threats, then quickly return to baseline operations in order to provide effective care to our community. The MESH Coalition helps build resilience through four core services: (1) healthcare intelligence services; (2) community-based planning; (3) policy analysis; and (4) clinical education and training. I would like to take a moment to describe how each of these services better prepares Central Indiana to respond to a mass casualty event.

Healthcare Intelligence Services

In order for healthcare providers to effectively manage significant increases in patient volume during major mass casualty incidents, they must operate from a Common Operating Picture. To build this Common Operating Picture every day, the MESH Coalition conducts real-time monitoring of disparate data streams for potential threats to the healthcare sector. These data streams include open source sites such as news media and weather, restricted sources such as homeland security and other access-controlled portals, and radio communication sites such as those streaming aircraft and public safety radio traffic. In addition, we monitor and utilize social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, both of which have become de facto means of communications during emergency events.

The threats we detect are distributed to our partners via email, social and news media, public safety information channels, and the MESH Daily Situational Awareness Brief. The *Brief* is an email we send daily to healthcare providers, emergency managers, and public health professionals throughout Central Indiana, and it provides specific, actionable information on threats to the healthcare sector, from severe storms to emerging infectious diseases and everything in between. What makes the *Brief* unique is the inclusion of specific action steps that allow recipients to immediately improve their preparedness for potential emergency events. The *Brief* is frequently used in hospital team meetings and bed huddles as an intelligence source and discussion initiator.

At the direction of the Marion County Public Health Director, and in cooperation with the Indianapolis Division of Homeland Security, we also serve as the Marion County Medical Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MedMACC). The MedMACC is staffed and operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to provide a critical link between Marion County healthcare facilities, the Marion County Public Health Department, the City of Indianapolis, and the Indianapolis Division of Homeland Security. The MedMACC is activated to support mass casualty incidents like a recent bus accident on the northeast side of Indianapolis, to supporting emergency responders during large-scale events like the Indianapolis 500, to coordinating healthcare response during disasters like the stage rigging collapse at the Indiana State Fair in August 2011. In 2012 alone, the MedMACC was activated seventeen times.

During an activation, the MedMACC manages hospital surge by assisting with the distribution of patients. For example, during a mass casualty incident, the MedMACC is dispatched and completes just-in-time hospital emergency department polling. We relay this information to field command units via public safety radio systems to facilitate better patient transport decision-making and to avoid overwhelming any one facility. During large-scale emergency events, the MedMACC provides direction through an executive-level Policy Group consisting of individuals from various healthcare entities throughout Marion County, many of whom serve on our Board of Directors. The MedMACC also has the capability to identify and secure resources for healthcare providers and organizations, to assist public health authorities in providing care to vulnerable populations, and to provide just-in-time subject matter expertise on Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high-yield Explosives (CBRNE) threats, as well as emergency medical, legal, and policy issues. In the event of a regional mass casualty incident, we can also deploy critical resources such as core medical supplies, and up to four Multi-Agency Support Tactical Facilities, which are equipped to function as mobile field hospitals.

Community-Based Planning

Healthcare in Central Indiana is, to say the least, a highly competitive enterprise. In many communities, intense healthcare competition has made it challenging – or impossible – to bring providers together to prepare for disaster and crisis events. We are fortunate in Central Indiana, as our healthcare organizations fully understand that coming together to plan for emergency events saves lives and is in the best interest of everyone. In fact, our healthcare partners have made a commitment to not compete on emergency management issues, and the MESH Coalition is the result of that commitment.

Traditionally, healthcare emergency planning has focused on preparing hospitals to be "floating islands" capable of withstanding emergency events and remaining open to provide patient care. This approach has resulted in redundant spending on equipment and supplies in hospitals across the country. Working in silos is not an effective approach to emergency preparedness. Through the MESH Coalition, Central Indiana hospitals team up to share resources and engage in joint emergency planning. Each month, Hospital Preparedness Officers throughout Indianapolis work together in MESH Coalition working groups to collaborate on policy, training, and exercises. Using this community-based approach, we include stakeholders such as hospitals, first responders, and other local officials to coordinate and prepare for potential threats, as well as large-scale anticipated events such as the Indy 500 and the NCAA Final Four. This enables staff to develop effective plans and programs while generating new knowledge about healthcare emergency management.

One example of this innovative approach to healthcare emergency planning is highlighted by our community's preparation for Super Bowl XLVI, where we created the Super Care Clinic®. As part of the Super Bowl Village, and in partnership with the Super Bowl Host Committee, the Super Care Clinic® represents an innovation in how volunteers and attendees are treated at large-scale events. Located inside Indianapolis' Union Station, this fan-facing forward medical station served as a clinic for fans, but was intentionally designed as a surge management strategy in the event of a mass casualty incident. In an extraordinary gesture, caregivers from

Community Health Network, Franciscan Alliance, Indiana University Medical Group, St. Vincent Medical Group, Wishard Health Services, and Indiana University Health volunteered their time to work at the clinic during the entire week of Super Bowl activities. This was the first clinic of its kind to be created in the United States and serves as a model for providing healthcare services during other mass gathering events.

The MESH Coalition has also established a host of professional working groups to address emergency preparedness issues for vulnerable populations. The Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Working Group, for example, works to ensure that healthcare organizations are able to detect and respond to domestic violence during emergency events, and that residential and non-residential Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence providers are able to continue perform essential functions during an emergency event. Similarly, the Maternal/Child Health Working Group works to ensure the needs of new and expectant mothers and their children are considered in the disaster planning process. This group, in partnership with the Indiana State Department of Health and providers from Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health and Peyton Manning Children's hospital at St.Vincent, is currently overseeing the development of a registry of Central Indiana home ventilator dependent children, with the ultimate goal being to provide early warning during emergency events. This registry is the first of its kind in Indiana and is designed to engage patients and families in strategies that increase community resiliency by protecting access to electricity during natural weather events. Weather-related power outages are common in Indiana and loss of electricity can be catastrophic to these patients and their families.

Beyond facilitating regular working groups, we also recognize that the healthcare response in Central Indiana is critical to both Regional and Statewide response. By working together with the Marion County Public Health Department and the Indiana State Department of Health to plan for seasonal flu outbreaks and emerging threats such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS CoV) and the Avian Influenza A virus, we have helped the Central Indiana healthcare community maintain necessary readiness to respond to all types of biological hazards, whether they are naturally occurring or an act of terrorism.

We have also taken a leadership role in wider community-planning efforts. For example, in 2011 we designed, coordinated, and executed the first full-scale exercise between the City of Indianapolis and the Central Indiana healthcare community, which focused on testing portions of the downtown Indianapolis Evacuation Plan, and have also worked with local, state, and federal partners to plan for terrorist incidents by participating in the Joint Counterterrorism Awareness Workshop Series. In partnership with the Indiana State Department of Health and healthcare providers throughout the state, we are currently developing a statewide plan for responding to burn mass casualty incidents.

Policy Analysis

Healthcare systems are in the business of taking care of patients and saving lives, not necessarily responding to disasters. Moreover, they generally do not have the resources to address the policy, legal, and regulatory issues associated with emergency events. The MESH Coalition is a resource for our partners because we can provide objective analyses of the most pressing disaster-related policy issues facing Coalition partners. This analytical work supports our

mission to enable healthcare providers to respond effectively to emergency events and, importantly, remain viable through recovery. In other words, we help our coalition partners to think not only about responding to disasters, but also to plan for long-term sustainability following an emergency event.

Revenue cycle protection is a considerable factor in ensuring the availability of healthcare during and after an emergency event. In a large-scale emergency, care may be administered at Alternate Care Sites—substitute locations that serve to expand the capacity of a hospital or community to accommodate or care for patients. Given the scope of Federal Emergency Management Agency public assistance grants, reimbursement through Federal Healthcare Programs such as Medicare and Medicaid is critical to a hospital's financial viability when care is provided in an alternate location. However, depending on state licensure rules, these Alternate Care Sites may operate outside of the scope of the hospital's existing license, creating compliance issues, which may jeopardize reimbursement.

Several states have developed solutions that allow hospitals to establish an Alternate Care Site without jeopardizing reimbursement. For example, the Arizona Department of Health Services permits hospitals to provide off-site services without a separate license during a public health emergency declared by the Governor. In North Carolina, at the request of the State Emergency Management Agency the Division of Health Service Regulation can waive rules for hospitals providing temporary services during a declared emergency. In Texas, the law exempts temporary emergency clinics in disaster areas from licensure requirements.

In addition to these statutory solutions, many state departments of health are granted broad waiver authority during emergencies. For example, the New Jersey Department of Health has the authority to waive hospital-licensing rules upon determining that compliance would create a hardship for the hospital and that the exception would not adversely affect patients. We in Indiana, on the other hand, have no mechanism for waiving hospital licensure requirements. As such, the MESH Coalition is actively working with the Indiana State Department of Health to ensure that safe and effective healthcare can be provided in an Alternate Care Site, while at the same time enabling hospitals to receive reimbursement for their services and thereby protecting the long-term viability of our healthcare infrastructure following a large-scale emergency event.

It is also important that clinicians and policymakers understand the nuances of what the Institute of Medicine has come to refer to as "crisis standards of care," or the optimal level of care that can be delivered during a disaster. Clearly, this complex issue has far reaching implications in terms of one's ethical responsibility and legal liability. During an emergency event, victims are entitled to expect reasonable care under the circumstances. The Indiana State Department of Health has taken a leadership role on this issue by providing guidance for providers on how to develop consistent procedures for allocation of scarce resources in the event of an officially declared public health emergency, in addition to recommending an ethical framework and clinical algorithms. MESH Coalition staff have also sought to protect individuals' rights to reasonable care, and support effective healthcare response, by effectively explaining this issue to healthcare providers both locally and nationally.

Clinical Education and Training

Locally, one of the MESH Coalition's most important contributions to Central Indiana is the clinical education and training we provide to a wide array of stakeholders. While traditional healthcare emergency management education and training programs have focused on emergency management core-knowledge such as the Incident Command System (ICS), evidence from mass casualty and disaster events demonstrates that effective healthcare response requires—first and foremost—well-trained providers who are able to make good decisions under tough conditions. As a result, we have developed and implemented courses in emergency response and clinical decision making that are hands-on, practical, and utilize high-fidelity simulation to prepare providers to respond to all-hazards scenarios. To date we have trained thousands of responders, including physicians, nurses, EMTs, paramedics, police officers, firemen, and members of the public.

The benefit of courses being developed and conducted by the MESH Coalition is that we are capable of reaching a wider range of participants than any single organization, and we are able to provide centralized resources, thereby lowering per unit costs. Group offerings such as Simple Triage and Rapid Treatment (START) training, mass casualty exercises, limited-resource emergency care courses, and operational hazardous materials training also give participants from different healthcare organizations the experience of learning together. This method creates consistency between and among providers, which in turn leads to a uniformity of response during an emergency event. In addition, we offer regular Continuity of Operations planning workshops, Emergency Operations Planning workshops, and crisis communications workshops to partner organizations in order to further build our community's response capacity.

To facilitate learning opportunities from around the world, we also coordinate an annual Grand Rounds series that brings national and international experts in healthcare emergency response to Indianapolis to present cutting-edge ideas and programs. These events are free, open to the public and, through our partners at the Indiana University School of Medicine, eligible for Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Education Units at no cost to attendees. The 2012-2013 Grand Rounds series included presentations on Continuity of Operations Planning by Dr. Paul Kim, M.D., who is the Director of Incident Management Integration for the National Security Staff in the White House, and on Denver's mass casualty emergency response to the Aurora Colorado theater shootings by Christopher Colwell, M.D., who is the Chief of Emergency Medicine at Denver Health.

In addition to our group trainings and Grand Rounds, we have a strong commitment to clinical education, as evidenced by our multi-disciplinary internships and fellowships. Each year we provide opportunities for physicians, nursing students, public health graduate students, law students, and librarians to learn from a team of dedicated professionals and gain valuable experience in healthcare emergency management. In 2012, the MESH Coalition collaborated with the Indiana University School of Medicine to create a Disaster Medicine Fellowship. The fellowship recently welcomed its first fellow, who will spend time this year travelling with our executive staff to Monrovia, Liberia, where they will help that community's largest hospital redesign its emergency department and help build the hospital's emergency management plan. Concurrently, we will have an opportunity to learn from hospital and community leaders about

how they have maintained healthcare resilience through significant social crises. This experience will no doubt provide valuable strategies that can be implemented in our own community and further enable us to better respond in situations where resources are limited.

THE PATH FORWARD

As previously noted, we are extremely proud of the vision our Central Indiana partners have had in the development the MESH Coalition. We are also convinced that the future of healthcare emergency preparedness is directly tied to the development of public-private healthcare coalitions such as ours. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has also acknowledged this future by requiring Hospital Preparedness Program and Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant program grantees to form strong and resilient coalitions.

We are helping to promote "coalition building" through our partnership with the Northwest Healthcare Response Network in Seattle and the Northern Virginia Hospital Alliance in the Capital Region and Virginia. This partnership, the National Healthcare Coalition Resource Center (NHCRC), is sponsoring an annual National Healthcare Coalition Preparedness Conference, and is available to provide technical assistance and training opportunities to assist communities in meeting their grant deliverables to develop functional healthcare coalitions.

However, there are challenges associated with the current funding mechanism and, as stewards of public resources, we must be creative about incentivizing the development of healthcare coalitions. This does not mean that there is no role for federal support. While grant funding alone is not a sustainable solution to protecting and preserving public health and safety, private sector healthcare should not be solely responsible for preparing and responding to issues of national significance. This is why the Federal Emergency Management Agency's role in supporting citizens and first responders to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all hazards is so critical. Hospitals cannot, and should not, be expected to shoulder this burden alone. Hospitals deserve a predicable way to manage the expense of providing care during an emergency event. Indeed, the coalition model must continue to be a strong public-private partnership, and not become a private-private partnership.

CONCLUSION

Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Carson, and Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the MESH Coalition, I thank you for the opportunity to describe our efforts to ensure that Central Indiana communities are prepared to respond to emergency events. We are thrilled to be included today, and we hope that our experiences will provide insight for other communities across the country. Thank you again for your leadership on this important topic. I am happy to respond to any questions my might have.

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Testimony for the Record

Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Hearing on
FEMA Reauthorization: Ensuring the Nation is Prepared
October 2, 2013

Chairman Barletta and Ranking Member Carson,

Thank you for developing legislation to reauthorize the Federal Emergency Management Agency and several of its important programs related to preparedness, response and recovery. We appreciate the focus on the importance of collaboration with state and local partners for the success of these programs. **The Association of State Floodplain Managers would like to focus as well on the importance of hazard mitigation in assuring that the nation takes necessary steps to reduce loss of life and property due to natural disasters.**

Since your Subcommittee has jurisdiction over the most important programs addressing hazard mitigation, we would like to stress the increasing importance of these efforts as we expect to confront more frequent and more severe natural disasters. The costs to the nation in lives, property and taxpayer funds continue to increase, so investment in reduction of those costs must increase as well.

The Association of State Floodplain Managers, Inc. (ASFPM) and its 35 Chapters represent over 15,000 state and local officials and other professionals who are engaged in all aspects of floodplain management and hazard mitigation, including management, mapping, engineering, planning, community development, hydrology, forecasting, emergency response, water resources, and insurance for flood risk. All ASFPM members are concerned with working to reduce our Nation's flood-related losses. Our state and local officials are the federal government's partners in implementing flood mitigation programs and working to achieve effectiveness in meeting our shared objectives. Many of our state members are designated by their governors to coordinate and implement the National Flood Insurance Program which includes flood risk identification and mitigation, and many others are involved in the administration and implementation of FEMA's other mitigation programs. For more information on the Association, our website is: http://www.floods.org.

HMGP and PDM

The Hazard Mitigation Grant program and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program are complementary and comprise both pre-disaster and post-disaster support for actions to reduce future damage from all forms of disasters.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) uses funds from the Disaster Relief Fund to support re-building smarter after a disaster when property owners are particularly open to consideration of future loss reduction options. While there have been some administrative and even statutory impediments to efficient use of HMGP funds, ASFPM is very appreciative of legislation promoted by this Subcommittee to make significant improvements: the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act (SRIA). For example, the Advanced Assistance provisions under SRIA provide much needed clarification and expedited relief to ensure that mitigation projects are identified, developed and ultimately implemented in a timely manner.

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation program (PDM) is an essential means of encouraging mitigation actions in areas where there is no current declared disaster.
Through its per-state allocations of a portion of its funds, PDM is often a critical component in assisting states to maintain an on-going mitigation support capability.
Many parts of the nation may not have frequent disaster declarations, but do periodically suffer severe damage. Actions supported by PDM in such areas have resulted in diminished losses, as was the case in Vermont, for example, following Hurricane Irene. With implementation underway of legislative changes to the National Flood Insurance Program, resulting in some dramatic increases in flood insurance premiums, interest has grown in hazard mitigation actions to reduce risk and "buy down" premiums. The removal of built-in subsidies or discounts makes the true risk more apparent.

The cost of disasters in the nation continues to escalate. **ASFPM suggests that a GAO report to the Congress on the costs to taxpayers of natural disasters would be helpful in framing discussion of future investment in hazard loss reduction.** We appreciate this Subcommittee's interest in and support for wise steps to reduce losses and we also **suggest that some indication of the importance of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program would be an important and useful observation in the Committee's report on this bill.**_ We make this suggestion in particular because funding for this essential program has not been included in the past two Administration budget requests. Fortunately, both House and Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittees have noted the value of the program and have included some funding.

Hazard Mitigation Plans

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 did not specifically provide for inclusion in Hazard Mitigation Plans of information about levees in the area of jurisdiction. FEMA allows for consideration of levee related information in the plans, but has not moved to require these data in mitigation plans without guidance from the Congress. The National Committee on Levee Safety, a Congressionally established entity, recommended inclusion of levee information in hazard mitigation plans in its report to Congress in January, 2009. This would ensure that levee risks are identified and

considered in community and state hazard mitigation plans. **We would suggest that the Committee report direct FEMA to require inclusion of levee presence and associated risks in hazard mitigation plans.**

The members of the Association of State Floodplain Managers appreciate this opportunity to share our views and suggestions with you. Please contact ASFPM Executive Director Chad Berginnis with any questions. He can be reached at (608) 828-3000 or cberginnis@floods.org.

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