

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Remarks in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

August 26, 2011

Hurricane Irene

Good morning, everybody. I want to say a few words about Hurricane Irene, urge Americans to take it seriously, and provide an overview of our ongoing Federal preparations for what's likely to be an extremely dangerous and costly storm.

I've just convened a conference call with senior members of my emergency response team and directed them to make sure that we are bringing all Federal resources to bear and deploying them properly to cope not only with the storm, but also its aftermath. I've also spoken this morning with Governors and mayors of major metropolitan areas along the eastern seaboard to let them know that this administration is in full support of their efforts to prepare for this storm and stands ready to fully support their response efforts. And we will continue to stay in close contact with them.

I cannot stress this highly enough: If you are in the projected path of this hurricane, you have to take precautions now. Don't wait. Don't delay. We all hope for the best, but we have to be prepared for the worst. All of us have to take this storm seriously. You need to listen to your State and local officials, and if you are given an evacuation order, please follow it. Just to underscore this point: We ordered an aircraft carrier group out to sea to avoid this storm yesterday. So if you're in the way of this hurricane, you should be preparing now.

If you aren't sure how to prepare your families or your home or your business for a hurricane or any other emergency, then you can visit Ready.gov—that's Ready.gov—or Listo.gov—that's L-I-S-T-O.gov.

Now, since last weekend, FEMA has been deploying its Incident Management Assistance Teams to staging areas in communities up and down the coast. FEMA has millions of liters of water, millions of meals, and tens of thousands of cots and blankets, along with other supplies, pre-positioned along the eastern seaboard. And the American Red Cross has already begun preparing shelters in North Carolina and other States.

These resources are all being coordinated with our State and local partners, and they stand ready to be deployed as necessary. But again, if you are instructed to evacuate, please do so. It's going to take time for first-responders to begin rescue operations and to get the resources we've pre-positioned to people in need. So the more you can do to be prepared now—making a plan, make a supply kit, know your evacuation route, follow instructions of your local officials—the quicker we can focus our resources after the storm on those who need help the most.

To sum up, all indications point to this being a historic hurricane. Although we can't predict with perfect certainty the impact of Irene over the next few days, the Federal Government has spent the better part of last week working closely with officials in communities that could be affected by this storm to see to it that we are prepared. So now is the time for residents of these communities—in the hours that remain—to do the same. And FEMA and Craig Fugate, the director of FEMA, will be keeping people closely posted in the next 24, 48 hours.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:28 a.m. in the Fisher House at Blue Heron Farm.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Martha's Vineyard, MA.

Locations: Martha's Vineyard, MA.

Names: Fugate, W. Craig.

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