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**TESTIMONY  
BEFORE THE**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
REGARDING**

**PREPAREDNESS FOR THE 2007 HURRICANE SEASON**

**THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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**Introduction**

Thank you Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King, and distinguished members of the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you on preparedness efforts for the 2007 Hurricane Season. I am Craig Fugate, the Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. I have over 25 years of experience in state and local emergency management, serving in various positions including ten years as the Emergency Management Director for Alachua County, Florida, Chief of the Bureau of Preparedness for the State of Florida, and the appointment to my current position in 2001. I continue to serve and have been reappointed to my position by Governor Charlie Crist. In my time with the State of Florida, I have served as the Governor's authorized representative for major disasters such as the 2004 Hurricane season including Hurricanes Charlie, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne and coordinated the State Emergency Response Team (SERT)'s response for all Florida disasters and for state-to-state mutual aid for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Emergency management is built upon three very basic concepts: 1) All-hazards preparedness is the foundation in which readiness is built for all disasters regardless of the cause or size; 2) The emergency management cycle includes preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation; and 3) All disasters are local. There are several key areas that I wish to discuss with you today that need to be addressed in order to secure our preparedness for all disasters:

- 1. We must maintain an all-hazards approach to emergency management;**
- 2. Funding for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program should be increased, at least restored to FY 2005 levels;**
- 3. We need federal support of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC); and**

**4. The FEMA Temporary Disaster Housing Program can be more effective with a transition plan that includes HUD resources.**

**MAINTAINING THE ALL-HAZARDS APPROACH TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

All-hazards emergency preparedness is the key building block and foundation for emergency management. Natural hazards continue to be the pervasive disaster that occurs regularly. In the past several years, major disaster declarations were for events including severe storms and tornadoes, typhoons, tropical storms, multiple hurricanes, flooding, ice storms, snowstorms, and wildfires. Natural disaster preparedness must not suffer as a result of homeland security efforts, but rather should be viewed as the most frequent opportunity to validate domestic preparedness efforts and to also build best practices. We need to start looking at the system in terms of hazards preparedness. Furthermore, our emergency response system must be built for all-hazards and terrorism should be a component of the system. We cannot afford to build duplicate systems by hazard or to eliminate programs to support the homeland security effort. An all-hazards approach should be viewed as building a single team to deal with a large variety of hazards.

Since I have been with the State of Florida, we have had had 22 major disaster declarations, five emergency declarations, and 45 fire management assistance declarations. While hurricanes are the most urgent and prevailing threat we have faced, we do not prepare for hurricanes alone. Florida was the first state with anthrax cases in 2001, the terrorists for 9/11 trained in Florida, we have three commercial nuclear power plant sites, host major sporting events including Superbowls, and boast three national championships in the past two years in college football (2006) and basketball (2006 and 2007). We have extensive threats for tornadoes, flooding, fires, and severe freezing. You will recall the February 2, 2007 tornado that left 21 people dead and destroyed hundreds of homes with more than \$17 million in federal assistance for victims. Additionally, we have done significant influenza pandemic planning for our large special needs populations and planning for mass migration incidents from the Caribbean.

While every state may not experience a disaster every single year, preparedness is essential. Florida took the lead in ensuring that localities were prepared for any disaster when our state legislature made changes after Hurricane Andrew that a surcharge is set aside for emergency preparedness from every insurance policy written in the state. This fund called the Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Trust Fund, which exists only in Florida, helps us to ensure that localities have the necessary means to prepare for disasters and citizens do their part too. In addition, we utilize the only all-hazards funding source, the Emergency Management Performance Grants to supplement these funds to build our key preparedness programs.

Hazards need to be explored in the context of disasters too. A disaster is really caused by humans as a result of getting in Mother Nature's way. Humans build in harms way, we traditionally build at the cheapest costs, and we build power grids that are subject to wind damage. When we prepare for terrorism, we harden critical infrastructure and look for ways to prevent events. We develop strong public health systems and plans to address pandemics. However, addressing

hazards before a natural disaster means stronger building codes, enforcing those codes, heeding warnings ahead of disasters and having business and family plans in place when disaster does occur. We have to begin looking at the complexities and scale of the consequences of hazards.

The federal government must continue its commitment to ensuring national security through all-hazard preparedness. Without adequate numbers of state and local personnel to operate the all-hazards emergency management system, the infrastructure used to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all disasters will collapse. Unfortunately, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita illustrated the need for adequate emergency management systems from the ground up. Instead of making unbalanced investments towards terrorism preparedness, we must maintain an all-hazards approach and shore up the foundation of our response system for all disasters regardless of cause.

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING** **EMPG is the only program for All-Hazards Preparedness**

Natural disasters are certain and often anticipated. Every state must be able to plan for disasters as well as build and sustain the capability to respond. EMPG is the only source of funding to assist state and local governments with planning and preparedness/readiness activities associated with natural disasters. At a time when our country is continuing long term recovery efforts from one of the largest natural disasters in history and making strides to improve the nation's emergency preparedness/readiness, we cannot afford to have this vital program be just maintained. EMPG is the backbone of the nation's all-hazards emergency management system and the only source of direct federal funding to state and local governments for emergency management capacity building. EMPG is used for personnel, planning, training, and exercises at both the state and local levels. EMPG is primarily used to support state and local emergency management personnel who are responsible for writing plans; conducting training, exercises and corrective action; educating the public on disaster readiness; and maintaining the nation's emergency response system. EMPG is being used to help states create and update plans for receiving and distribution plans for emergency supplies such as water, ice, and food after a disaster; debris removal plans; and plans for receiving or evacuating people – all of these critical issues identified in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the following investigations and reports.

#### **State and Local Match**

EMPG is the only all-hazards preparedness program within the Department of Homeland Security that requires a match at the state and local level. The match is evidence of the commitment by state and local governments to address the urgent need for all-hazards emergency planning to include terrorism. EMPG requires a match of 50 percent from state or local governments. According to the National Emergency Management Association's (NEMA) 2006 Biennial Report, states were continuing to over match the federal government's commitment to national security protection through EMPG by \$96 million in FY05, which is an 80 percent state and 20 percent federal contribution. To bring all state and local jurisdictions up to the fifty percent level, \$135 million is needed. This would allow as many as 3,030 additional

local jurisdictions to become part of the program. To bring non-participating jurisdictions into the program at the 50 percent level requires an additional \$152 million.

### **EMPG Helps Ensure Personnel for Mutual Aid**

During the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons, the interdependencies of the nation's emergency management system were demonstrated and one of the success stories was the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). EMAC enabled 48 states, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico to provide assistance in the form of more than 2,100 missions of human, military and equipment assets and over 65,000 civilian and military personnel and equipment assets to support the impacted states. The estimated costs of these missions will exceed \$829 million. Of the personnel providing assistance through EMAC, 46,503 were National Guard personnel and 19,426 were civilians. Many of the civilians sent to provide assistance are supported by the EMPG program in their state. The nature of the nation's mutual aid system vividly shows the need for all states to have appropriate capabilities to respond to disasters of all types and sizes. In Florida we used EMPG to build self-sustained response teams that are able to respond to disasters in our state and in neighboring states when called upon to provide assistance. The increased reliance on mutual aid for catastrophic disasters means additional resources are needed to continue to build and enhance the nation's mutual aid system through EMAC.

### **Appropriate Support Needed to Strengthen Program**

While EMPG received modest increases in 2003 and 2004 after ten years of straight-lined funding, the program needs to be adequately resourced based on building capacity. The increased flexibility of EMPG is offset by funding shortfalls estimated in the NEMA Biennial Report in 2006 to be over \$287 million for all 50 states. The current total need is \$487 million. The Post-Katrina FEMA Reform Act authorized EMPG at \$375 million for FY 2008.

Clearly, Congress wants to understand what is being built with these investments, especially in tight fiscal conditions. The 2006 Quick Response Survey found that if states were to each receive an additional \$1 million in EMPG funding for FY 2007, states would use the following percentages for each of the following activities: 88 percent of states responding would use the funding to support the update plans including evacuation, sheltering, emergency operations, catastrophic disasters and others; 83 percent would provide more training opportunities for state and local emergency preparedness and response; 88 percent would provide additional preparedness grants to local jurisdictions; 69 percent would conduct more state and local exercises; and 61 percent would use funding for state and local NIMS compliance. (States were able to respond to multiple activities, as each state has multiple emergency preparedness priorities.)

Last year's Nationwide Plan Review Phase 2 Report completed by the Department of Homeland Security found that current catastrophic planning is unsystematic and not linked within a national planning system. The report cites that, "This is incompatible with 21<sup>st</sup> century homeland security challenges, and reflects a systematic problem: outmoded planning processes, products, and tools are primary contributors to the inadequacy of catastrophic planning. The results of the Review support the need for a fundamental modernization of our Nation's planning process. The report

goes on to explain that all states do not adequately address special needs populations, continuity of operations, continuity of government, evacuation plans, and resource management. EMPG is the ONLY source of funding that can address these significant and immediate needs. The current EMPG shortfall does not take into account these findings.

### **BUILDING OUR NATION'S MUTUAL AID SYSTEM THROUGH EMAC**

The response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita resulted in the largest deployment of interstate mutual aid in the nation's history through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). As mentioned previously, EMAC deployed personnel comprised of multiple disciplines from all member states to respond to Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Texas. The process enabled National Guard, search and rescue teams, incident management teams, emergency operations center support, building inspectors, law enforcement personnel, and other disciplines to immediately assist the requesting states in need of support. The National Guard even chose to continue under EMAC when deployed under Title 32 because of the organization, liability protections, accountability, and tracking abilities EMAC provides.

EMAC was created after Hurricane Andrew by then-Florida Governor Lawton Chiles. The system was developed through the member states of the Southern Governors' Association to establish mechanisms to enable mutual aid among member states in emergency situations. The Southern Regional Emergency Management Assistance Compact (SREMAC) was signed by participating Governors in 1993. Following recognition of SREMACs nationwide applicability by the National Governors' Association and FEMA, Congress enacted EMAC in 1996 (P.L. 104-321). Currently all 50 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia are members of EMAC. EMAC requires member states to have an implementation plan and to follow procedures outlined in the EMAC Operations Manual. EMAC takes care of issues such as reimbursement, liability protections, and workers' compensation issues.

The following is a synopsis of the historical support that the state of Florida provided to Mississippi in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the largest support mission in the history of EMAC. The State of Florida, acting under provisions of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact and a direct request from the Governor of Mississippi, deployed a self-contained response team on the day of landfall to the impacted coastal area of Mississippi (3 coastal counties of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson; 3 contiguous inland counties to the north consisting of Pearl River, Stone, and George). By the evening of landfall on August 29, 2005 assets of law enforcement, firefighting, search and rescue, medical, Incident Management Teams, and others were in the area of operations in coastal Mississippi performing lifesaving, safety, and security missions. Major logistical assets were sent to the area, as well, to include ice, water, food, fuel, and other commodities to support initial response operations. Due to the dire situation caused by Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi coast, the mission of the Florida Task Force grew significantly and commodities and personnel continued to flow from the State of Florida continuously until the end of October 2005 (note: some smaller level missions continued with Florida support up until November 2006). The Florida Task Force set-up a major command and logistical staging area at Stennis Space Base which became the hub of the operation. This command communicated with and supported Incident Management Teams from Florida which were located in the 6 assigned counties to support the local Mississippi Emergency Management

Directors. In relation to this effort, it must be noted that the State of Florida had itself been impacted by Hurricane Katrina (a weaker storm at that time) prior to its passage into the Gulf of Mexico. It is a tribute to the entire Florida State Emergency Response Team (state and local government, private entities, faith based organizations, etc...) that they were able to effectively rise to the challenge of responding to the South Florida impact of Hurricane Katrina while providing significant and necessary assistance to our neighbors on the Gulf Coast.

### **Overview of EMAC Support to the State of Mississippi**

- **COMMODITIES:** *(Purchased and provided by the State of Florida)*
  - Water - 768 truckloads – 3,648,000 gals.
  - Ice - 457 truckloads – 19,194,000 lbs.
  - Juice - 16 trucks – 16,000 cases
  - Shelf Stable Meals – 138,000 meals
  - USDA commodities - 6,000 cases
  - Baby food, formula, etc. – 20,892 cases
  - Baby supplies (nipples, diapers, wipes) - 4,962 cases
  - Adult diapers, wipes - 376 cases
  - Children Liquid Supplement – 10,200 cases
  - Adult Liquid Supplement - 5,100 cases
    - 1,304 State Trucks of Commodities
    - 2,057 Trucks Total of Commodities
  
- **PERSONNEL and TEAMS:**
  - 6,404 Personnel Total
  - Three Area Command Teams with 115 personnel to manage entire area of responsibility of six counties
  - Six Incident Management Teams sent to County Emergency Operation Center's
  - Three Logistics Management Teams
  - Urban Search and Rescue Teams
    - Three Type I Teams
    - Four Type II Teams
    - Two Water Rescue Teams
  - One Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Coordination Team
  - 767 Law Enforcement Personnel with vehicles and equipment
  - 207 Fire Fighting Personnel
  - 70 ALS Ambulances and EMS personnel
  - 710 Medical Personnel in various disciplines
  - 30 Elder Care Specialists
  - 1 School Recovery Team
  - 1 FDOT Advance Recon Team (10 personnel)
  - 1 FDOT Bridge Recovery Team (7 personnel)
  - 14 Public Information Officers
  - 497 National Guard Personnel (also sent aircraft and equipment)
    - 3 zodiac boats w/trailers

- 3 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV's)
- 2 GSA vans
- 2 UH-60 "Black Hawk" helicopters
- 1 CH-47 "Chinook"
- 4 Hazmat Teams (8 personnel)
- 14 Volunteer, Donations and Reception Center Personnel
- 13 Animal Control Teams (60 personnel)
- 1 State Animal Response Team (5 personnel)
- 16 Water/Wastewater Facility Teams (101 personnel)
- 4 Communications Personnel
- 38 Recovery Personnel

Continued support of EMAC will allow Florida to focus on the implementation of lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, such as training and education for all mutual aid stakeholders, resource typing and credentialing, and information and resource management.

### **ADDRESSING TEMPORARY DISASTER HOUSING PROGRAM CHALLENGES**

Housing is often seriously impacted following natural disasters, leaving many families in the impacted areas with no place to call home. Disaster housing consists of three phases:

1. The initial phase focuses on retaining citizens in the affected area and providing interim housing solutions for them.
2. The next phase focuses on rebuilding local housing resources.
3. The final phase deals directly with developing long-term redevelopment strategies.

Providing housing assistance following a disaster can not just be based on expiration dates and eviction dates; the focus must be on long term housing solutions for the affected area. Disaster case management of survivors that deals with the entire scope of housing and human needs is necessary throughout all the phase to transition those affected from interim situations into longer term solutions. Typically in a community where the ability to transition disaster survivors into permanent housing is problematic, there is usually an existing housing problem before the disaster struck the community.

A disaster housing partnership between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) would provide a disaster housing solution that is more responsive, flexible and would provide a more cost effective long term disaster housing solutions. Bringing HUD's financial resources and their subject matter expertise regarding building loans, subsidies and land management into the fold early on in the disaster housing process, would greatly improve an impacted community's ability to recover and develop long-term housing solutions and strategies. Additionally, HUD is capable of providing case management experience for permanent solutions for affected citizens that will provide permanent solutions to local situations. Case management will result in accountability on all levels of disaster housing.

### **CONCLUSION**

The first goal the State of Florida looks at when preparing for any sort of disaster is how we can best serve our citizens. This goes back to my previous statement regarding the fact that all disasters are local and that all groups involved in responding to disasters must use a team approach, regardless of the type of disaster, to prepare for and respond to these events. This team approach is imperative when addressing the federal role in responding to disasters, it is important that the response from the federal level is one of a supporting role for state and local emergency management, it cannot supplant these efforts.

Florida is successful and is looked to as a leader due to the fact that our leadership has invested in emergency management through the creation of the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund and Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Trust Fund. Additionally, the state has worked to develop strong partnerships that will ultimately insure the state's success in affecting positive outcomes for those impacted when a disaster occurs in our state. This type of investment was on display recently when the Florida Legislature, based on Governor Crist's budget recommendations, approved an appropriation of \$895,000 in the state's FY 07-08 budget to upgrade Florida's State Warning Point. The Florida State Warning Point is a function of the Division of Emergency Management and is housed in the Emergency Operations Center. The Florida State Warning Point is responsible, through Florida Statutes and federal regulations, to be the central clearing house for all emergencies occurring in the State that require response by or resources from multi-county incidents, multi-State agency incidents or any incident requiring County/State/Federal communications and/or coordination.

With the passage of the Post-Katrina FEMA Reform Act, Congress has affirmed their support for ensuring preparedness for our nation's continuous vulnerability against all-hazards. We must continue to build national preparedness efforts with a multi-hazard approach. We appreciate Congress' increased attention and focus on disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts. We ask that Congress look at ways to immediately influx the system with resources, encourage and reward innovation in order to face the challenges of the day. We cannot afford to continue to repeat history as we did with Hurricane Andrew and Hurricane Katrina. We must, once and for all, learn the lessons of the past and resolve ourselves to ensure that Federal, State and local governments have adequate funding for baseline emergency preparedness so exercises and training can ensure that plans and systems are effective before a disaster.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before your committee today and want to affirm Governor Crist's dedication to continually working with our federal partners to improve the nation's capabilities to respond to all types of hazards that our communities may face on a daily basis.