

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS



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The Honorable Lincoln Chafee
United States Senator
170 Westminster Street, Suite 110
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Subject: Written presentation for the 20 April 2006 Hearing on Rhode Island Homeland Security Priorities, Preparation for the 2006 Hurricane Season

Dear Senator Chafee:

I am grateful for the opportunity to present and discuss the State of Rhode Island's Preparation for the 2006 Hurricane Season and to address the specific involvement by the Office of the Adjutant General in that preparation. This document provides background information about the Rhode Island State Area Command (STARC) and is applicable to the preparation for the 2006 Hurricane Season.

Organization

The Adjutant General is a cabinet level position in Rhode Island State government. The Adjutant General through the State Area Command directs the establishment, operation, organization and maintenance of the military forces of the State, composed of the Rhode Island Army and Air National Guard, the Rhode Island National Guard Reserve (State Security Brigade) and the State Militia. Sub-programs include Administration (Adjutant General, fiscal support, military funerals, educational benefits), Military Property (utilities, janitorial, maintenance, supply purchases, military vehicle repairs), Army Guard (operations, maintenance, and personnel support) and Air Guard (operations, maintenance, personnel support, Quonset firefighters and security guards). Responsibilities include training and preparing military forces of the state to support active forces in the defense of our nation and its national security interests; providing peacetime responses to state emergencies; participating in counter-drug efforts and initiating drug demand reduction programs within our communities; overseeing the Governor's Plan for Homeland Security; overseeing the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency by planning and implementing all state hazard preparedness programs.

Disaster Preparation

The Rhode Island National Guard and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency within the Rhode Island State Area Command, maintain full spectrum response capability. Planning, preparation, operational control, response, and recovery competency and readiness are maintained as core competencies. Continuous and dynamic review of existing plans is conducted to keep them current.

Continuity of operation plans is current for the Rhode Island Army and Air National Guard. Rhode Island military support plans to Civilian Authorities are current.

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency has contracted with a vendor to write a "Hurricane Response Plan," which will become an annex to the State's Emergency Operations Plan. The plan is to be completed by 1 June 2006. Coordination with other State agencies and the thirty nine municipalities in the State is on-going, dynamic and aggressive to collaborate and coordinate response capabilities through the planning and preparation process.

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency provides training and training opportunities with State and Federal resources to ensure multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction response capability. Collaboration with agencies and communities to conduct exercises with an "all hazard" approach are being conducted. These exercises focus on command and control through the Incident Command System, plans and preparation following the National Incident Management System and the National Response Plan.

Most noteworthy for hurricane response capability are the efforts to establish a network radio communication bridge throughout the state with an 800 MHz system and the installation of a functional Emergency Operation Center at the Command Readiness Center in Cranston. The 800 MHz system, providing an integrated radio network for all first response emergency agencies, is approximately one third complete. The State Emergency Operation Center is projected to be completed by 1 June 2006. Both projects are supported by Federal, State and Local funds.

The Rhode Island National Guard has been postured in a state of readiness since the attacks of 11 September 2001. A twenty four hour, seven days a week Joint Operation Center (JOC) is maintained at the Command Readiness Center in Cranston. The JOC monitors State and national, military and civilian communication pertaining to homeland security, natural disaster conditions, and military operations. The JOC is able to communicate inter-agency, multi-jurisdiction, and multi-agency. The JOC is able to contact the chain of command of the Rhode Island State Area Command 24/7.

Resources

Hurricane preparedness and response capability, as well as capability for all hazards, is dependent on time and funding. The following are key areas requiring additional funding for full spectrum, all hazard capability in the State of Rhode Island:

Emergency Operations Center: The Military Staff requested funds for a new project to create an Emergency Operations Center at the Command Readiness Center. This funding will provide the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency with an Emergency Operations Center by renovating a storage area at the Command Readiness Center.

The current area for the Emergency Operations Center does not support the space needed to post a complete mapping and task board system used during mock and actual disaster exercises. The Federal Emergency Management Agency mandates a minimum requirement that an Emergency Operations Center be self sufficient for a two-week period. This includes a generator for electricity, heat, food, water, and sleeping space. Currently, the agency has a generator but no storage space for food or water and no sleeping space. The agency has identified a portion of the Command Readiness Center, which is currently being used as storage space, that it believes can be renovated to meet certain Federal Emergency Management Agency standards.

Emergency Operations Center-New Building: The Governor's Office requested funds to renovate the Varley Building on the grounds of the Pastore Center as an Emergency Operations Center. This funding will provide the Emergency Management Agency with a building adjacent to the Command Readiness Center at 645 New London Avenue in Cranston.

Under the agency's plan, the Emergency Operations Center would provide a central location for the coordination of state agencies, local governments, Red Cross, and the media. Federal funds will support 50 percent of the feasibility study for design cost. This facility will also house the E-911 Emergency Telephone System alternate public safety answering point.

800 Megahertz Statewide Radio Communication System: An approximate \$33 million is required to fully fund the current project to its completion by FY 2008. Approximately one third of the system back bone is completed with approximately one third scheduled for completion by the end of FY 2006.

Military Construction: The 19 facilities and installations of the Rhode Island National Guard serve as multi-function centers for military training, staging areas for equipment and personnel, and emergency temporary shelters. The Rhode Island National Guard has begun an aggressive program to repair, upgrade and replace structures and facilities to meet the needs of a modern future and forward thinking organization. The facilities and installations are the cornerstone for military readiness to respond to State and Federal missions. Continued Congressional support for funding is needed to accelerate military construction projects, ensuring readiness for full spectrum operation.

Military Equipment: The Global War on Terrorism has been hard on the Rhode Island National Guard's equipment. Equipment to support training, war fighting and State emergency capability is degraded by three factors. The first being that the National Guard was resourced at C3 prior to 9-11, leaving it short of full Tables of Equipment allowances. Secondly, the National Guard was not fully modernized with the latest technology of equipment and was authorized non-compatible substitutions. Thirdly, equipment from National Guard units deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have been required to leave equipment behind in theater. The result is an equipment shortfall in the millions of dollars that degrades the ability to train, deploy for war fighting, and respond to State wide disasters.

Manpower: The Rhode Island State Area Command requires additional manpower to sustain the increased operational tempo for all hazards, full spectrum operation. The Rhode Island National Guard is funded to staff full time manning at approximately 45%. An increase in Technician and Title 32 staffing is needed to support operational tempo demands. Increased demands by Federal agencies for planning, preparation and exercises necessitate the need for State Active Duty augmentation. The Stafford Act limits The Adjutant General’s ability to augment with State Active Duty personnel until a disaster is declared. Federal funding under the Stafford Act to support personnel augmentation during the planning and preparation phases of an anticipated State wide emergency is needed.

Strategic Outlook

The Rhode Island State Area Command comprised of the National Guard and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency will be an Army, Air Force and Emergency Management Agency structured, equipped and trained for full spectrum contingencies to support both the State and Federal missions. The agency will be prepared to focus all of its assets and capabilities for joint, multi-agency, and multi-jurisdiction operations in an “all hazard” environment. The strategic objectives of the agency are:

Strategy-EM1: Establish the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency as the Coordinating Agency for State-wide Emergency Management.

Objective: Elevate the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency as the single coordinating agency for all multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction incidents within the State.

Objective: Establish a unified State-Joint Operation Center.

Strategy-EM2: Establish a “Network Centric” approach to all hazard incident response coordination for consequence management.

Objective: Establish communication protocols following the organizational construct within the Incident Command System.

Objective: Secure the Information Technology (IT) bridge to support the network for voice, digital, and video capabilities.

Objective: Establish the Information Technology (IT) architecture to support the continuity of government (COG) from a primary and alternate location.

Objective: Establish a common operating picture (COOP) for tactical, operational, and strategic levels of organization, using IT and data management processes.

Strategy-EM3: Achieve All Hazard operational command and control.

Objective: Achieve 80% plans and preparation for the most likely and immediate State-wide hazards.

Objective: Train all agencies for response and recovery through a progression of table-top and field exercises.

Objective: Secure Federal funding and programs for response agency training, planning, and preparation.

Objective: Ensure the National Incident Management System (NIMS) is fully implemented.

Strategy-EM4: *Establish a state-of-the-art Emergency Operation Center facility.*

Objective: Secure Federal funds and matching State and local funds to construct a multi-agency facility, designed for 24/7 and extended periods of operation.

Objective: Secure a redundant IT backbone for data and voice communication.

Strategy-MIL1: *Recruit and Retain Soldiers and Airmen to meet or exceed the State's end strength goal.*

Objective: Develop a way ahead that ensures a total Army end strength of 2150 Soldiers.

Objective: Develop a way ahead that ensures a total Air end strength of 1850 Airmen.

Strategy-MIL2: *Focus State and National support for Army and Air mobilization and deployments in support of full spectrum operations.*

Objective: Train and equip Soldiers and Airmen for the war fight.

Objective: Secure and coordinate Family Support, Employer Support (ESGR), Chaplain Services, Veteran's Services, State and Federal legislation for Soldiers, Airmen, Civil Servants, families, and employers.

Objective: Resource Unit Status Report readiness to a goal of C1, modernizing the force and accepting no authorized equipment substitutions and focusing on 100% DMOSQ.

Strategy-MIL3: *Secure Army and Air force structure that ensures full spectrum capability for the Federal and State missions.*

Objective: Retain structure supported by demographics for end strength.

Objective: Retain a balanced mix of combat and combat service support structure.

Objective: Support Air Force multi-compo Transport Wing structure initiative.

Objective: Develop a position of influence for Rhode Island force structure needs based on end strength dominance instead of accepting service directed alternatives.

Strategy-MIL4: Aggressively secure Federal military construction (MILCON) funding to repair, replace and upgrade military installations and facilities.

Objective: Develop a near term and long range construction improvement program for all installations and facilities.

Objective: Secure matching State and local government matching funds to take advantage of Federal fund availability.

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency

The Rhode Island Emergency Management (RIEMA) is the coordinating agency for multi-jurisdiction and multi-agency response in the State of Rhode Island for all emergencies including natural and technological hazards such as fires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, winter storms, chemical releases, weapons of mass destruction and terrorism incidents. Agency services include:

- Develop, review and enhance the State's disaster preparedness and recovery plans for "All Hazards"
- Distribute and coordinate those plans on a State-wide basis
- Operate, maintain and enhance the State's Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Operate, maintain and enhance the State's Mobile Command Center.
- Manage and coordinate state-wide response to and recovery from natural, technological, and terrorism disasters.
- Coordinate the State's disaster response/recovery needs with Federal agencies.
- Serve as a coordination point for federal disaster relief programs
- Plan, conduct and critique exercises that test and improve preparedness
- Develop, distribute and provide instruction on guidelines for citizen, business and industrial disaster planning.

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency assists and supports the State in reducing loss of life and property from all hazards, providing for the safety and security of the State of Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency is the official coordinating agency of the State of Rhode Island for the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency in times of state, national, multi-jurisdiction and multi-agency emergencies/disasters. The State's disaster preparedness plans are constantly being reviewed, assessed, updated and tested. Our mission is the protection and safety of the lives and property of the citizens and visitors of Rhode Island.

Although the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency provides for disaster response and recovery for the entire State, local governments, including individual cities and municipalities, and fire/law enforcement districts must develop their own Emergency Disaster Plans in concert with the State and Federal Response Plans.

Emergency planning, preparation, response, operation, and recovery in the State of Rhode Island is a collaborative multi-jurisdiction and multi-agency effort, including transportation,

emergency medical services, law enforcement, fire services, engineers, the private sector, the National Guard, and Coast Guard, to name a few.

The Rhode Island National Guard

The Rhode Island Army National Guard maintains 16 armories, and is present in 13 communities. The Rhode Island Army National Guard traces its history from the first colonial defensive force established in the town of Portsmouth, Rhode Island in 1638. This group of citizen soldiers consisted of two sergeants, two corporals, and one clerk. From this humble beginning the State's military grew, providing forces in many conflicts during the pre-revolutionary period, the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, the Mexican Border, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Stabilization Forces (SFOR) in the Balkans, and most recently Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Today, the Rhode Island Army National Guard consists of a force of over 4,000 dedicated men and women, who are prepared to serve our State or Nation in a variety of military specialties. Rhode Island has citizen Soldiers and Airmen qualified in military occupational specialties which include Artillery, Infantry, Signal, Engineer, Aviation, and Military Police. Since 11 September 2001, over 3,200 Rhode Island National Guardsmen have been activated and deployed out of the state in support of the Global War on Terrorism. They have additionally responded to assist in Hurricane Katrina.

The Joint Force Headquarters, Rhode Island National Guard (RING) provides command and control of the major elements of the Rhode Island National Guard, the 56th Troop Command, 103rd Field Artillery Brigade, 43rd Military Police Brigade, 143rd Airlift Wing, 281st Combat Communications Group, 102nd Information Warfare Squadron, Special Operations Detachment G, and the RING Medical Command. Additionally, the Joint Force Headquarters is capable of providing command and control for any Joint Task Forces which may be formed in the state during emergency situations.

The JFHQ-RI is comprised of four (4) main areas; a Command Group, a Personal Staff Group, a Coordinating Staff Group, and a Special Staff Group. In addition, the Headquarters Detachment, JFHQ, provides administrative support to the soldiers assigned to the command elements.

The Rhode Island National Guard has two missions. The Federal Mission, at the direction of the President of the United States is to:

- Support US military strategy
- Train and prepare for war
- Promote stability and thwart aggression
- Supplement active forces in Operations Other than War

The State Mission, at the direction of the Governor of the State of Rhode Island is to:

- Protect life and property
- Preserve peace and order
- Provide military support to civil authority

Conclusion

The Adjutant General, with the full resources of the Rhode Island National Guard and the Emergency Management Agency, must ensure that plans, preparation, response and recovery for the full spectrum of hazards are accomplished to support both State and Federal missions and contingencies.

Together with our local State and Federal crisis and consequence management agencies; the Rhode Island Military Staff under the Adjutant General are responsible for the safety and security of Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Military Staff will accomplish this through a network centric approach as the coordinating agency for multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction incident management. The Rhode Island Military Staff will pursue its strategic objectives toward full spectrum inter-agency capability.

ROBERT T. BRAY
Major General, RING
The Adjutant General
State of Rhode Island

Executive Summary of Probability of Northeast Hurricane 2006

Prepared by Amy Grzybowski
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The northeast region of the United States experienced its worst hurricane in 1938, in what was named the “Long Island Express.” This hurricane ravaged through Long Island and then struck Providence, Rhode Island, killing over 600 people in its path. The devastation totaled more than \$306 million which, “when adjusted for inflation, would total nearly \$6 billion today” (AccuWeather). This hurricane left Providence 10 to 15 feet underwater. However, today, because of the dam that was built in Providence to avoid a repeat incidence, a hurricane of that magnitude would cause much of the smaller towns within Rhode Island to experience a similar fate with more devastation than in 1938.

History and research suggest that hurricane patterns, as well as other weather phenomena, are cyclical. According to Chief Forecaster of the AccuWeather.com Hurricane Center on March 20, 2006, “the weather patterns and hydrology we’re seeing in the oceans” and the “above-normal water-temperatures are reminiscent of the pattern that eventually produced the 1938 hurricane that struck Providence.” This storm produced maximum gusts of 186 mph, a 15 to 20 foot storm surge, and 25 to 50 foot waves.

According to National Geographic researcher Willie Dye “meteorologists have noted that hurricane seasons run in alternating cycles of active and less active seasons. These cycles last from 25 to 40 years” (Dye). The active seasons are thought to occur because of salt in the ocean water. When there is more salt in the water the water is warmer, and leaves for a higher incidence of hurricanes. It is believed by meteorologists that the cycle of active seasons started in 1995 and could continue for another 15 to 30 years (Dye). The warmer water allows the hurricane to produce and retain immense power.

Hurricanes that make landfall in the Northeast usually form near the Cape Verde Islands. They then approach the Bahamas and are then sent northward if they are fast-moving and powerful. The faster they move over water the more power they retain. “The biggest impacts for the Northeast are the storms that are moving at 30 to 40 miles an hour as they come out of the lower latitudes” (Dye).

Dr. Philip Klotzbach and Dr. William Gray from the Department of Atmospheric Science at Colorado State University, have been making hurricane forecasts for 22 years. As of April 4, 2006, for the 2006 hurricane season they are predicting 9 hurricanes in the Atlantic Basin, 5 of which are going to be intense hurricanes (Category 3 or above). They predict that there will be a total of 45 hurricane days throughout these storms. It is predicted that the east coast has a 64% probability of getting a Category 3-4-5 in the upcoming season. To make their predictions they utilized 52 years of past global reanalysis data and their analog forecast. Their full report scientifically explains their analysis and predictions.

Many people feel that the higher incidence of hurricane activity is directly related to global warming, however Klotzbach and Gray feel that “this large increase in Atlantic major hurricanes is primarily a result of a multi-decadal increase in strength in the Atlantic Ocean thermohaline circulation (THC) which is not directly related to global temperature increase.” Klotzbach and Gray do insert a disclaimer in their report that states that sometimes their predictions could fail and that it is not easy to ascertain where on the Atlantic Basin their hurricanes may hit landfall and they also feel this year may produce a lower incidence of hurricanes that actually hit land than last year. Dr. Klotzbach and Dr. Gray will give their next seasonal update on May 31, 2006. The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration will publicly present their predictions on May 15, 2006.

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