

**PRESS****RELEASE**

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BREAKING NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Keeping an Eye on Sandy

WASHINGTON—The Recovery Board, scheduled to expire later this year, has been extended until September 2015 to monitor the \$60.2 billion aid plan for victims of Hurricane Sandy.

In a blog posted today, Kathleen S. Tighe, the Chair of the Recovery Board, explained how the Board will work closely with the Office of Management and Budget, the Inspector General community, and other federal and state agencies to oversee Sandy spending. "In short," she wrote, "Congress clearly wants to ensure that aid funds are not misspent or diverted improperly."

The text of Tighe's blog follows:

The Recovery Board was scheduled to expire on September 30 under the Recovery Act. However, a \$50.5 billion emergency aid plan for victims of Hurricane Sandy extends the life of the Board and directs the panel to keep a close eye on how the funds are used. The plan, adopted by Congress, was signed by the President in late January.

"Through September 30, 2015," the law says, the Recovery Board "shall develop and use information technology resources and oversight mechanisms to detect and remediate waste, fraud, and abuse" in the aid program. Earlier in January, Congress approved a \$9.7 billion aid bill, bringing total Sandy assistance to \$60.2 billion.

The measure directs the Recovery Board to coordinate oversight with the Office of Management and Budget, along with the Inspectors General and heads of each federal agency that receives Sandy money. The Board also is required to submit quarterly reports to congressional appropriations committees with respect to its oversight activities.

In short, Congress clearly wants to ensure that aid funds are not misspent or diverted improperly. The money is designed to help rebuild the lives of the victims of superstorm Sandy, which invaded the East Coast and left a path of devastation in late October. New Jersey and the New York City area were especially hard hit.

(more)

The Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board was created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to oversee the expenditure of Recovery funds and bring transparency and accountability to the process. The Board consists of a Chair, Kathleen S. Tighe, and 11 federal Inspectors General. The Board runs the Recovery.gov website that provides information on the Recovery initiatives and spearheads an accountability effort that involves both federal and state investigators and enforcement officials.

The Recovery program and the Board, its oversight arm, were established in February 2009 as the financial crisis was in full swing. The Board created the Recovery Operations Center, an analysis center designed with fraud prevention and detection in mind. Analysts use advanced analytics to search massive amounts of data, looking for early warning signs of trouble linked to recipients of Recovery funds. This data includes criminal convictions, lawsuits, tax liens, bankruptcies, risky financial deals, and other telltale signs of problems. When a problem is spotted, analysts review the issue and forward their information to the relevant Inspector General for additional inquiry.

The ROC, in coordination with the Inspector General community, will serve as the focal point of our efforts to monitor Hurricane Sandy aid. In overseeing Sandy funding, the Board is expecting to support state auditors, state Attorneys General, and appropriate law enforcement task forces around the country.

--Kathleen S. Tighe, Chair, Recovery Board, and Inspector General, Department of Education

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