



October 25, 2013

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The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Ranking Member, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member Rahall:

On behalf of the National Emergency Management Association, we wish to congratulate you on your recent introduction of the *FEMA Reauthorization Act of 2013* (H.R. 3300). NEMA represents the state emergency managers of all 50 states, the Territories, and District of Columbia. We appreciate the Committee's action on this legislation and recognize many of the provisions as those supported by NEMA for many years. Your efforts will surely strengthen emergency management capabilities across the country.

The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) stands as a valuable tool for state and local government warning functions. Alert systems represent critical components of local and state emergency operations plans, so it remains essential the IPAWS system is integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive. One area that NEMA has been concerned with in the past has been coordination with State and local governments. The creation of an advisory council, as outlined in this bill, will help establish a clear system requirement and capabilities of IPAWS which will allow stakeholders including federal, State, local, and private sector entities to have a clear method of providing input through the temporary advisory committee

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams serve an invaluable function in the immediate response to disasters and by allowing direct authority to the program, these teams will have a formalized link to FEMA. HR 3300 makes significant strides toward addressing USAR issues by codifying the current USAR Reponse System in statute and clarifying liability and compensation issues related to participants in the System. By organizing reforms to the program, USAR teams will continue to perform their intended function while also protecting the brave men and women who participate in critical missions.

Perhaps most importantly, NEMA supports Section 202 to reauthorize the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). EMAC reauthorization is necessary to ensure the program can continue to coordinate state to state mutual aid and that the lessons learned from previous disasters are put into place regarding this vital program. The bill reauthorizes EMAC at \$2 million annually through fiscal year 2016 which would enable EMAC to continue to build stronger coordination with FEMA, various emergency response disciplines, and state and local governments in anticipation of a disaster requiring state to state mutual aid.



NEMA recognizes all the time and effort that has gone in to this legislation, and we appreciate the work of this Committee to engage the emergency management community along the way. We remain available as a resource for you and your staff as this effort continues and should you need any additional information or have questions regarding NEMA's policy positions, please do not hesitate to contact Matt Cowles, Director of Government Relations at (202) 624-5459.

Sincerely,



Charley English
President, National Emergency Management Association
Director, Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security