

STATEMENT

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“THE NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS REPORT: ASSESSING THE STATE OF
PREPAREDNESS”

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Submitted
By

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, Good Morning. I am Timothy Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness at the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). On behalf of Secretary Napolitano and Administrator Fugate, I thank you for the invitation to testify today on the state of our nation's preparedness.

We appreciate the Committee's continued interest in and support for national preparedness. We also appreciate your interest in defining and measuring the progress we have made over more than a decade of considerable effort.

Since the September 2001 terrorist attacks, we have made significant and measurable strides toward improving preparedness for the hazards faced by all levels of government and all segments of society. We have improved our preparedness for the threats posed by those who wish to bring us harm as well as for the myriad natural and technological hazards that face our communities face every day.

This Administration came into office recognizing the significant progress that had been made in improving the Nation's preparedness since September 2001 and cognizant of the need to better understand and explain that progress—both qualitatively and quantitatively. As former first responders, local emergency managers and state homeland security officials, Administrator Fugate, Deputy Administrator Serino and I understood that the investments made by the American people over nearly a decade have significantly improved the capabilities and readiness of our police, fire-fighters, emergency medical technicians, public health workers and other first responders. But we also recognized that we lacked the measuring systems and, in many cases, the data that would allow us to answer the question we were being asked by Congress, by the President, and by the American people: Are we better prepared now than we were on September 11, 2001?

We are better prepared, and based on our work over the past few years we can better articulate what we are prepared for and where our capabilities reside. To cite just a few examples:

- In the four years between 2006 and 2010, the proportion of states and urban areas that were confident in the effectiveness of their emergency operations plans increased from 40 percent to more than 75 percent;
- Commercial radio broadcasters, in partnership with FEMA, today can deliver public warning messages to more than 84 percent of the U.S. population, up from 67 percent in 2009. By the end of 2013, coverage is expected to expand to more than 90 percent of the population;
- Since 2001, federal, state and local governments have built a network of specialized teams capable of interdicting and disrupting a variety of imminent threats. That network includes 1,100 Hazardous Materials Response Teams, 5,400 SWAT teams, and 469 FBI-trained and accredited bomb squads;
- Prior to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, major population centers in many parts of the country lacked structural collapse and urban search and rescue capabilities. Today, 97 percent of the nation is within a 4-hour drive of an urban search and rescue team; and

- Government agencies at all levels have improved their strategic and tactical communications planning and coordination. In 2006, only 42 percent of the nation's urban areas had a strategic plan in place to guide interoperable communications. Today, 100 percent of the nation's highest-risk urban areas are capable of establishing response-level interoperable communications within one hour of an event involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.

But preparedness is not an end-state; it is a process. As the threats and hazards we face as a nation emerge and evolve, so too must the capabilities and resources we need to address those threats and hazards. Similarly, we must sustain those capabilities that prepare us for the enduring threats and hazards we face. We increasingly understand where we have additional work to do—and we now have a system in place to help us focus on those areas.

In March 2011, President Obama signed *Presidential Policy Directive 8: National Preparedness* (PPD-8), which describes the Nation's approach to preparing for the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the security of the United States. This Directive required the establishment of a *National Preparedness Goal*—an overall target that the entire nation will strive to achieve; the development of a *National Preparedness System* to provide the processes for achieving the Goal and for measuring our collective progress along the way; and an annual *National Preparedness Report* to summarize progress.

The National Preparedness Goal delivered to the President in October 2011 describes 31 core capabilities—identified and defined through a collaborative process involving federal departments and agencies, state and local government officials, and individuals from across the entire community—that we as a nation must build and sustain in order to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the Nation. Those capabilities include activities such as intelligence and information sharing; screening, search and detection; vulnerability reduction; mass care services; housing; and economic recovery, to name just a few.

The National Preparedness System, described in a report submitted to the President in November 2011, is a process for achieving the National Preparedness Goal. It is best described as an ongoing cycle which begins with identifying and assessing the risks a jurisdiction faces and then proceeds to include an estimating the capabilities needed to address those risks, building or sustaining the required levels of capability, developing and implementing plans to deliver those capabilities, validating and monitoring progress, and reviewing and updating efforts to promote continuous improvement.

The National Preparedness Report

The product of that validation and monitoring process is the National Preparedness Report, which we recently submitted to the President and provided to Congress. In preparing the report, FEMA worked with a range of community partners—including all levels of government, private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, communities, and individuals to identify quantitative and qualitative performance and assessment data for each of the 31 core capabilities

described in the National Preparedness Goal. In addition, FEMA integrated data from the 2011 State Preparedness Reports (SPRs), statewide self-assessments of core capability levels submitted by all 56 U.S. states and territories through a standardized survey. Finally, FEMA staff conducted their own research to identify recent, independent evaluations, surveys, and other supporting data related to those core capabilities.

Our synthesis, review, and analysis of those data sources resulted in several key findings and insights on critical preparedness issues, including areas where the Nation has made progress and where areas for improvement remain. During our analysis of the data on the core capabilities, a number of broad trends in national preparedness emerged:

First, the Nation has developed areas of national strength in several core capabilities, particularly in cross-cutting, common capabilities and those that support responses to disasters. Preparedness capabilities have improved significantly since 2001, as a result of concerted effort through planning, organization, equipment, training, exercises and dedicated funding provided by Congress, states, tribes, territories and localities. Some areas of strength pre-date the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks, while others have developed in the years since. Areas of overall national strength as identified in the National Preparedness Report include:

- Planning
- Operational Coordination
- Intelligence and Information Sharing
- Environmental Response/Health and Safety
- Mass Search and Rescue Operations
- Operational Communications, and
- Public Health and Medical Services

These strengths involve contributions from across the whole community. State, local, tribal, and territorial partners have built a network of multi-disciplinary capabilities that they use to manage the vast majority of emergencies. When disasters strike, federal partners, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and the public stand ready to augment existing state, local, tribal, and territorial response capabilities and to help provide many of the essential services outlined in the core capabilities.

Second, federal preparedness assistance programs have helped build and enhance state, local, tribal, and territorial capabilities through multi-year grant investments across mission areas. Federal preparedness assistance has clearly contributed to the capability gains achieved since 9/11, and partner organizations from across the whole community rely on federal preparedness grants from a number of federal Departments and Agencies to build core capabilities. DHS' Homeland Security Grant Program includes a suite of programs designed to support the building and maintaining of core capabilities, and Health and Human Services' preparedness grant programs administered by the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) support state, local, and territorial jurisdictions in improving public health and healthcare preparedness.

Third, areas of national strength align with the investments made using federal assistance programs, and the most progress has been made in capabilities identified as high priorities.

Since 2006, federal grantees have used more than \$7.3 billion in preparedness assistance from DHS to support the core capabilities identified in the National Preparedness Report as areas of national strength, specifically Public Health and Medical Services, Operational Communications, and Planning.

Conversely, some core capabilities identified as needing improvement have not historically received significant investments by grantees via preparedness grants. For example, while federal grant programs have increasingly sought to emphasize the importance of cyber preparedness in recent years, state and local grant-funded investments aligned with the cyber-security core capability have been minimal. Similarly, states and local jurisdictions have invested less than one percent of DHS non-disaster preparedness assistance from FY 2006 to FY 2010 in recovery-focused capabilities.

The link between investment and improved capability also reflects the priority placed on each capability by state and local governments. In the 2011 State Preparedness Report, states were asked to rate each of the core capabilities as being a high, medium, or low priority. Operational Communications, Operational Coordination, Public Health and Medical Services and Planning were four of the top five-listed high-priority capabilities and each aligns to national strengths and is an area in which states reported relatively more progress toward achieving preparedness goals. Similarly, two of the lowest priority capabilities identified in the State Preparedness Report, Health and Social Services and Natural and Cultural Resources, fall within the Recovery mission area and are identified as areas in which states reported less progress toward achieving preparedness goals. One interesting finding in the State Preparedness Report data is that while approximately two-thirds of states identified housing, economic recovery, and cyber-security as high-priority capabilities, they also reported being the least prepared in those areas. These results further underscore that cyber-security and the recovery-focused core capabilities should be areas for future emphasis and investment.

Fourth, the Nation has made demonstrable progress in addressing areas for improvement identified after 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. Both the 9/11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina highlighted gaps in preparedness activities nationwide and served as catalysts for change. The 9/11 Commission and the White House after-action review of the federal response to Hurricane Katrina identified dozens of recommendations. For example, the 9/11 attacks identified challenges in conducting multi-disciplinary operational coordination on-site at incidents and among operations centers. As a result, the National Incident Management System (NIMS) was adopted as the common doctrine for incident management, and more than four million whole community partners have received some form of NIMS training. All states, tribes and territories now report compliance with NIMS.

Hurricane Katrina also revealed significant weaknesses in catastrophic emergency planning. As a result, national planning-related guidance was developed and funding was directed to this capability. Subsequent Nationwide Plan Reviews have demonstrated significant improvements in state and urban area confidence in their catastrophic plans.

The 9/11 attacks also revealed limited information sharing of actionable intelligence across the government and with the private sector. Development of a national network of fusion centers,

Joint Terrorism Task Forces, and standardized policies and processes for sharing suspicious activity reports have greatly improved this preparedness activity.

Similarly, both the 9/11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina identified difficulties in communications interoperability within and across jurisdictions. In ensuing years and with significant support from Congress through the Public Safety Interoperable Communications and other grant programs, high-risk urban areas throughout the Nation have demonstrated the capability to achieve full response-level interoperable communications within one hour of an emergency.

Finally, decision-makers in the public and private sectors increasingly are using risk analysis to shape and prioritize preparedness activities across mission areas. PPD-8 and the Goal emphasize the important role that risk—defined simply as the potential for an unwanted outcome—plays in informing preparedness activities. Faced with a range of threats and hazards and constrained by available resources, whole community partners are increasingly using risk analyses to inform policy and programmatic decisions across all five preparedness mission areas.

For example:

- Federal interagency partners conducted a Strategic National Risk Assessment to help identify potential incidents that pose the greatest threat to the Nation and to inform the development of core capabilities and targets in the Goal;
- DHS developed an annual National Risk Profile for the Nation’s critical infrastructure, describing risks facing the Nation’s infrastructure sectors and supporting public and private sector risk management decisions;
- Traditional mitigation planning has broadened to include both natural hazards and terrorist threats in order to identify a comprehensive suite of potential mitigation actions;
- State and local public health departments are required to use jurisdictional risk assessments to prioritize capability enhancements through preparedness assistance from HHS ASPR and CDC;
- Risk analysis informs eligibility criteria for preparedness assistance, including the State Homeland Security Program, Urban Areas Security Initiative, Port Security Grant Program, Transit Security Grant Program, and the CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness cooperative agreement program;
- Ongoing efforts to implement the National Preparedness System, as called for in PPD-8, further emphasize the importance of risk analyses in driving preparedness activities. The National Preparedness System emphasizes the need to identify and assess risks in order to guide efforts to develop, maintain, and assess core capabilities; and
- States are required to conduct Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments (THIRA) as a condition of receiving most preparedness grant funding and set hazard-based targets as the context for their State Preparedness Report capability assessments;

The requirement that states conduct a THIRA as a condition of receiving preparedness grant funding, has become the source of much discussion over the past few months. I would like to take a few moments to clarify what THIRAs will—and will not—be used for.

Moving forward, states and territories will be required to conduct Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments (THIRA) as a condition for receiving homeland security grants. The THIRA process provides a comprehensive approach for identifying and assessing risks and associated impacts. It expands on existing local, tribal, territorial, and state Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments (HIRAs) and other risk methodologies currently used by broadening the factors considered in the process, incorporating the whole community throughout the process, and accounting for important community-specific characteristics.

The use of risk analysis is a long-standing and important first step in the emergency management community. State and local governments are very familiar with the use of Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments to help them drive investments in mitigation activities. The THIRA process is very similar, but adds a terrorism component to account for the possibility of deliberate threats.

The THIRA process is a step-by-step analysis that can be used by emergency management offices in small towns and by large urban areas with access to advanced analytical capabilities. While the level of detail may be greater for an urban area than for a rural community, the methodology for both will be similar and both will have, as a result, a comparable foundation for informed decision making. Critical to the security and resilience of our communities is knowledge of the level of capabilities needed to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond and recover from our greatest risks. Using THIRA results, communities will gain a greater understanding of their risk landscape and can therefore evaluate current capabilities against known threats and hazards and identify resources available to meet the identified needs. By estimating their resource requirements, jurisdictions can make decisions about how they will effectively use their resources to deliver core capabilities toward their community's greatest risk. The THIRAs and assessments such as State Preparedness Reports will identify gaps in preparedness at the state and local levels and drive investment towards building and sustaining core capabilities to address those gaps.

Based on the assessments of what we've achieved and what we have yet to accomplish, and in light of the National Preparedness Goal and System, we proposed a new National Preparedness Grant Program to re-align existing grant programs to focus on sustaining capabilities developed, building new capabilities to fill the identified gaps, preventing terrorism, protecting critical transportation and port infrastructure and other key resources. We propose to do this by consolidating programs, streamlining the application process and better focusing our efforts.

Conclusion

With the October 2011 release of the National Preparedness Goal, the Nation is transitioning to a refined set of core capabilities. As a result, whole community partners are updating their efforts to collect, analyze, and report preparedness progress according to the core capabilities identified in the Goal. The 2012 National Preparedness Report therefore relies on a range of existing assessment approaches and associated quantitative and qualitative data to present the Nation's preparedness progress and to report key findings. Assessment processes, methodologies, and data will evolve in future years to align more directly with the Goal and its capabilities. Efforts are already underway to refine the Goal's capabilities and preliminary targets; future efforts will

focus on developing agreed-upon measures and assessment methodologies that will guide the annual development of the National Preparedness Report.

Since the release of the 2012 National Preparedness Report, we have begun to embark on an outreach campaign to engage whole community stakeholders in a discussion of the current findings and solicit input for future reports. We expect to receive substantial feedback from state, local, tribal, and territorial stakeholders, as well as the private and non-profit sectors on the findings from the National Preparedness Report and areas for improvement. To broaden this outreach effort, we are using social media including online collaboration forums to solicit ideas on areas for improvement identified in the NPR. These areas include cyber-security, recovery-focused core capabilities, access and functional needs, and supply chain interdependencies.

The National Preparedness Report represents a step forward in efforts to assess overall national preparedness. Informed by inputs from across the whole community, the 2012 National Preparedness Report serves as a baseline evaluation of the progress made toward building, sustaining, and delivering the core capabilities described in the Goal. Building on these efforts, the vision for future Reports is to establish a routine, repeatable process that engages whole community partners.

To achieve the National Preparedness Goal, the Nation must continue to build on the significant progress we have made to date and to address areas identified for improvement. To do so, we will continue to engage whole community partners as we revise and develop the National Preparedness Frameworks and federal Interagency Operations Plans called for in PPD8. The components of the National Preparedness System will provide a consistent and reliable approach to support decision-making, resource allocation, and ongoing performance assessment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.