

## **Opening Statement of Ranking Member Laura Richardson (D-CA)**

### **“THE PRESIDENT’S FY 2013 BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY”**

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

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The FY 2013 budget request for the Federal Emergency Management Agency appears to reflect efforts to streamline business and procurement procedures and eliminate redundant programs to reduce costs. Although I have some questions about some cost-cutting proposals, I appreciate FEMA’s efforts at belt-tightening.

That said, I have serious reservations about other proposals included in FEMA’s FY 2013 budget request.

I have serious reservations about the National Preparedness Grant Program proposal - which would consolidate 16 targeted homeland security grant programs.

I know that this Congress – under Republican leadership – has sent FEMA some mixed messages regarding how it views State and local preparedness grants.

Last year, despite strong opposition by House Democrats, Congress approved an appropriations law that gutted funding for State and local programs. Adding insult to injury, the bill, for the first time, punted its responsibility for allocating funding among State and local grant programs to the Secretary.

As an authorizer, I am particularly troubled that this Committee failed to take action and send a clear message of support for these programs.

It is important to remember that Congress, pursuant to legislation within this Committee’s jurisdiction, created discrete grant programs to direct grant investments to address specific gaps in national and local preparedness capabilities.

I opposed the cuts to State and local programs enacted last year, and I am disappointed that this Committee has not taken a strong stand in support of restoring this funding. Some of these programs, such as the Urban Area Security Initiative and the Port Security Grant Program, have provided support where significant gaps in security capabilities exist.

Other grant programs, such as the Metropolitan Medical Response System and the Citizen Corps Program, despite being highly effective with small funding amounts, did not receive any dedicated funding.

Moreover, I am concerned about the effect of grant consolidation on the predictability of grant funding. Few state and local authorities will be able to replace the federal funding that will be lost when these grants are reduced.

What will happen to on-going projects that cannot be completed without this funding? The work will stop but the security gap will remain. And by bringing about these circumstances, Congress will have been penny-wise and pound foolish.