

Statement of Ranking Member Donald M. Payne, Jr.

**Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, &
Communications Hearing**

**“Using Innovative Technology and Practices to Enhance the Culture of
Preparedness”**

July 25, 2018

Damage from the 2017 natural disasters broke records and made last year the costliest year for disaster-related damage in American history. I hope to hear from the witnesses today about how you are taking lessons learned from the 2017 hurricane season and investing in technologies that will be pushed out to communities.

Now, more than ever, communities are facing mounting threats from extreme weather patterns. We are seeing where climate change is having a direct impact on the strength and frequency of storms. As such, we must all take measures to ensure that life-saving preparedness technologies are being developed and pushed out to Federal, state, and local leaders.

For these reasons, I was dismayed that FEMA’s 2018-2022 Strategic Plan failed to mention climate change, given the record-breaking year we saw for natural disasters.

Additionally, I was disappointed when FEMA’s 2017 Hurricane Season After-Action Report failed to mention climate change, when we saw Hurricane Harvey produce a historic 60 inches in rainfall and back to back Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated the Caribbean.

I hope to hear from the witnesses today about how you are using climate change research to push for advances in preparedness technologies.

It is not any good to have conversations about technologies here in Washington, DC, when people on the ground do not have access to those technologies.

FEMA noted many of their shortcomings in response to Hurricane Maria in the 2017 Hurricane Season After-Action Report. One such shortcoming that needs to be addressed today is how to get these technologies to the people that need them the most.

That way, well before a category four or five storm hits a community, they will have been made aware of helpful preparedness technologies.

I am particularly interested in hearing from Inspector General Kelly about past audits in FEMA’s technologies that the Office of Inspector General has performed throughout the years.

I would like to thank the witness for participating in today’s hearing. I look forward to hearing from all of you about the progress that has been made with technologies in preparedness.