



FEMA

April 2, 2009

Dr. G. Kemble Bennett
Chairman
FEMA National Advisory Council
Texas A&M University
301 Wisenbaker Engineering Research Center
College Station, TX 77843

Dear Dr. Bennett:

Thank you for your letter, dated January 9, 2009, regarding the National Advisory Council (NAC) recommendations for public/private partnerships. The letter makes three recommendations, summarized here, along with my response.

1. FEMA should strongly urge state Emergency Management Agencies to establish a private sector liaison position in the State EOC based on best practices.

FEMA recognizes that many states have successfully partnered with one or more organizations representing the private sector to resolve problems and share information quickly during disasters. An important first step in building this capability at the state level was working with the NAC Private Sector Subcommittee and the National Emergency Management Association to start identifying different approaches that the states are taking to private sector engagement. The Private Sector Division of the Office of External Affairs will share the various models identified as efficient and effective ways to connect the private sector and state/local levels. Moreover, the Division speaks of this as a good practice in all of their presentations and/or discussions with the private sector, state and local emergency managers, academia, and others.

2. Each FEMA region should provide detailed (unclassified) Situation Reports to approved private sector representatives....The FEMA Region 1 Situation Report is an example of the minimum level of information that should be provided to the approved private sector representatives.

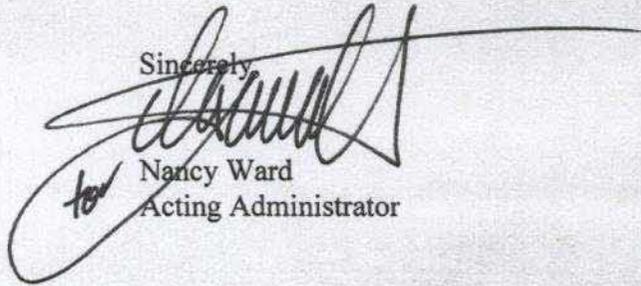
I support adopting a standard approach to information sharing across the regions. Therefore, I am directing our FEMA Private Sector Division to review the FEMA Region 1 example, and develop a recommendation as to how this can be adopted in the other FEMA regions within our current resources and capabilities.

3. FEMA's Private Sector Division should take the lead in helping existing efforts become better coordinated, including identifying best practices.

FEMA's Private Sector Division is very much engaged in helping existing efforts become better coordinated, both at the federal level as well as with our tribal, state and local partners. The Division was established to improve information sharing and coordination between FEMA and the private sector, and part of this effort in 2009 includes closer collaboration with DHS components – including the DHS Private Sector Office and the DHS Office of Infrastructure Protection – as well as with other federal agencies that also have private sector partnerships, such as the Centers for Disease Control and the Department of Defense's U.S. Northern Command.

Warmest appreciation for all of the hard work you and the entire National Advisory Council Private Sector Sub-committee gave over the course of last year in serving on this vital sub-committee. Trust that the work you accomplished will go far toward building stronger partnerships between FEMA and the private sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Ward', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'. The signature is stylized and extends across the width of the text.

Nancy Ward
Acting Administrator