



FEMA

MAR 3 2009

Dr. G. Kemble Bennett, P.E.  
Chairman, National Advisory Council  
Texas A& M University  
College Station, TX 77843

Dear: Dr. Bennett:

Thank you for your letter of January 1, 2009 regarding the National Response Framework (NRF). I appreciate the NAC's interest in the NRF and your willingness to help us continue to institutionalize and improve this document.

I also appreciate your positive comments regarding the NRF Resource Center and the NRF support materials that it contains. We agree with your assessment and have adopted the NRF Resource Center look and feel as a model for other FEMA web portals such as the National Incident Management System Resource Center.

As you suggest, the materials from the NRF Resource Center are regularly incorporated into FEMA training and outreach efforts. Also, as you suggest, the "Contact Us" link on the NRF Resource Center provides a simple and effective way for users to reach the FEMA staff responsible not only for the NRF, but also for NIMS and other national emergency management guidance. Through this mailbox, we receive and respond to not only questions regarding the NRF but also suggestions for enhancements and questions on a broad range of other FEMA matters.

The process that led to development of the NRF was a collaborative effort that included a broad range of stakeholders from local, tribal, State, and Federal governments as well as private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and the general public. (The NAC was just being formed at that time; however, members of the NAC contributed to the process.) We found the process to be not only productive, but essential in getting the broad cross-section of input that ultimately produced such a useful document. We are committed to involving the broadest possible range of Federal and non-Federal stakeholders in future projects to revise the NRF and will, of course, rely on the NAC as our principal advisory body in all phases of the process.

Now, let me address your specific recommendations and requests:

**Recommendations:**

- 1) *Integrate the National Response Framework into existing training for key leaders, elected officials, emergency managers and responders.*
  - a. *Ensure that all FEMA approved training and exercises are designed or updated to incorporate the relevant changes associated with the adoption of the NRF.*

FEMA Response: Agree. The NRF has already been fully integrated into all pertinent training offered by FEMA training activities (the Emergency Management Institute, the Center for Domestic Preparedness, and the National Fire Academy) and we are working with our other NPD training and education partners (i.e., National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, Naval Postgraduate School, etc.) to incorporate the NRF into their curriculum. EMI, for example, offers an exercise-based course entitled *Integrated Emergency Management Course--National Response Framework* that provides State-level emergency management professionals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need to conduct effective all-hazards emergency response. In the area of formal exercises, the NRF (and NIMS) have been integrated into FEMA's Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) to ensure that NRF/NIMS competencies are addressed in all HSEEP exercises.

- 2) *Integrate private sector support more fully into the NRF.*
  - a. *Private Sector considerations should be clearly incorporated into the various partner guides.*

FEMA Response: Agree. The key roles that the private sector plays in national response are addressed throughout the NRF. An "NRF Partner Guide" specifically designed for the private sector has been developed and will be revised and finalized in collaboration with the DHS and FEMA Private Sector Offices and a number of private sector constituency groups.

**Specific Requests:**

*The NRF subcommittee requests that FEMA provide quarterly updates (scheduled to coincide with the quarterly NAC meetings) regarding any changes in content or status of the NRF, the NRF Resource Center, or relevant coordinated efforts, including but not limited to the following:*

FEMA Response: Agree. We will be happy to provide regular updates regarding NRF-related activities at quarterly NAC meeting.

- 1) *The NAC NRF subcommittee is requesting updates on the NRF Partner Guides.*

- a. *NRF Subcommittee is requesting current drafts of the partner guides for review and to provide advice and stakeholder input. The NRF Subcommittee will serve as a focal point for this review effort.*

FEMA Response: Agree. Officials from FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate (NPD) met on January 15, 2009, with the chair of the NAC Subcommittee and agreed to provide draft copies of the Partner Guides to her through the Designated Federal Official for the NAC. We look forward to working with NAC NRF Subcommittee to finalize these guides.

- b. *FEMA should also provide the NRF subcommittee and NAC with the policy and processes for review and updates of the partner guides (prior to release).*

FEMA Response: Agree. NPD staff will work with the NAC NRF Subcommittee on policies and processes for review and updates of the Partner Guides before any of them are published.

2) *The NAC NRF subcommittee is requesting updates regarding the following issues addressed in the GAO report:*

- a. *Status on the development of the policies and procedures:*
  - i. *For future revision processes for the NRF and the NRF Resource Center.*
  - ii. *For collaboration with non-federal stakeholders*
    1. *Define timelines for how FEMA incorporates stakeholder input.*
- b. *Methodology regarding communication of policies and procedures relevant to the NRF.*

FEMA Response: Agree. The NRF is a high-level document that describes broad principles and roles and responsibilities on how the nation responds to all types of major disasters and emergencies. It does not provide operational guidance and, therefore, is not expected to change as quickly as concept of operations plans and other operational guidance.

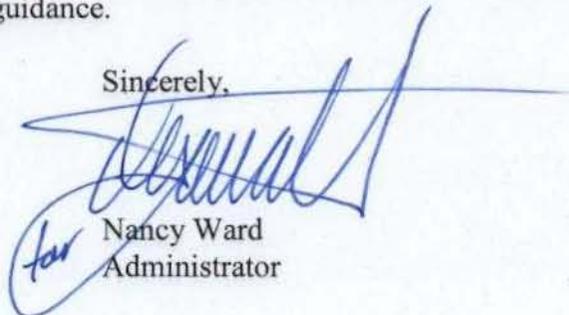
Policy decisions regarding future revisions to the NRF (and other national guidance) will be examined by the new FEMA leadership team in the coming months in consultation with the NAC. This will include processes to ensure the participation of non-Federal stakeholders in the process.

*The NAC should be informed regarding any changes in content or status of the NRF, the NRF Resource Center, or relevant coordinated efforts. The NRF subcommittee is requesting that FEMA provide drafts of the policies and procedures related to the NRF revision and status reports on the recommendations outlined in this document.*

FEMA Response: Agree. The NAC will be advised regarding changes to the NRF, the NRF Resource Center, and associated activities. As indicated above, the NAC will also be consulted, to include providing drafts, with regard to policies and procedures related to revisions to the NRF.

Thank you again for your commitment to the NRF and to supporting our efforts to increase recognition and understanding of the document among all stakeholders. We look forward to working with you on this important guidance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Ward', with a large flourish extending to the right.

Nancy Ward  
Administrator