FEMA

National Advisory Council

August 11, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: W. Craig Fugate
Administrator

FROM: Dr. G. Kemble Bennett
Chairman, National Advisory Council

SUBJECT: Recommendations related to Special Needs

At FEMA's National Advisory Council (NAC) meeting on July 29, 2009 in Grand Forks, North Dakota, the Council discussed and passed the following recommendations related to Special Needs.

Recommendations:

1. The Council proposes that FEMA have the funding in place for the Regional Disability Coordinator positions in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

The Council believes that FEMA's approval on December 5, 2008 of the creation of a Regional Disability Coordinator for each of FEMA's ten regions is of vital importance to support the work of the National Disability Coordinator. The Special Needs Subcommittee of the NAC has received several updates from FEMA staff on the work going into the development of these positions and would like to see the commitment continued by having the funding in place for these positions within the FY 2010 budget.

2. The Council recommends FEMA review and revise the Mitigation Interim Policy, MRR-2-09-1: Hazard Mitigation Assistance for Safe Rooms to address concerns related to
    - Not allowing dual use of facilities
    - Hazard Mitigation Time of Protection

The Council discussed the unique needs and nature of special needs populations in the event of a disaster and felt that MRR-2-09-1 needed to be re-examined in order to take these needs in to consideration. A particular paragraph within the Interim Policy that highlights the Council's interest reads as follows:

"PDM and HMGP funds are not available for general population shelters, including evacuation or recovery shelters intended to provide longer-term services and housing for people leaving the anticipated impact area of an extreme wind event, or because their homes have been damaged or destroyed by extreme wind events, fire, disasters, or other catastrophes. Such general population shelters are not intended to sustain the extreme wind event and are not required to satisfy the higher design criteria of near-absolute protection consistent with hazard mitigation residential, nonresidential, and community safe rooms as established in FEMA Publications 320 and 361. In addition, the hazard mitigation time of protection for safe rooms is 2 hours for tornado events and 24 hours for hurricane events. These time periods also differentiate hazard mitigation event-only safe rooms from longer-term evacuation and recovery shelters."