

**Written Statement of**  
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**FEMA**

**“Improving the Nation’s Response to Catastrophic  
Disasters: How to Minimize Costs and Streamline  
our Emergency Management Programs**

**Before the  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee**

**Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings  
and Emergency Management**

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## **I. Introduction**

Good morning Chairman Denham, Ranking Member Norton, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Craig Fugate, and I am the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is an honor to appear before you today on behalf of FEMA to discuss our preparedness for catastrophic disasters. Planning and preparing for catastrophic disasters is a top priority at FEMA, and we appreciate the Subcommittee's attention to this important matter.

As I sit before you today, our nation's hearts weigh heavy on the recent tragedy of the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami in Japan. The U.S. government is supporting the Government of Japan in this response. FEMA is currently supporting the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which is the lead U.S. agency, by providing Urban Search and Rescue Teams from California and Virginia. FEMA teams are also working with U.S. states impacted by the tsunami to assess damages. While the world watches the response to what may be one of the largest disasters in history, our thoughts and prayers go out to those affected by this tragedy.

In my testimony today, I will discuss how FEMA is working to improve our preparedness through the "Whole Community" framework. This approach recognizes that FEMA is not the nation's emergency management team – FEMA is only a part of the team. In order to successfully prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards, we must work with the entire emergency management community. This "Whole Community" includes FEMA and our partners at the federal level; our state, local, tribal and territorial governmental partners; non-governmental organizations like faith-based and non-profit groups and private sector industry; and most importantly, individuals, families, and communities, who continue to be our greatest assets and the key to our success.

In order to fulfill our mission, we must recognize that these parties are all important participants in the emergency management community, and that we work together as one team. In my testimony today, I will address all of the different participants in the "Whole Community" and discuss how we work together in order to ensure the greatest level of preparedness for a catastrophic disaster.

## **II. The Role of FEMA and the Federal Government**

While our efforts must involve the entire emergency management community, FEMA and its partners at the federal level have an important role to play. FEMA coordinates closely with our federal partners in many endeavors, including catastrophic planning, mission assignments, interagency agreements and advanced contracts for commodities. These partnerships are essential to FEMA's ability to carry out its mission by leveraging the full capacity of the federal government to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate a catastrophic incident.

I would like to discuss some of our efforts at the federal level that help to facilitate preparedness for a catastrophic disaster.

### *FEMA Organizational Realignment*

The unpredictable and exigent nature of emergency management requires us to provide fast and effective service to communities who need it, often on extremely short notice. Because efficiency is always key to operational effectiveness, we must ensure that our organizational alignment allows us to maximize efficiency. I would like to share just a few ways that we at FEMA have done this over the past several years.

On October 1, 2009, the Response, Recovery, Federal Coordinating Officer Program, and Logistics Management Directorates were combined under a new Office of Response and Recovery to more closely align the organizational structure with FEMA's operational mission. This reorganization has enhanced FEMA's ability to perform its mission of coordinating an immediate federal disaster response and recovery capability with state, local and tribal partners in anticipation of, or immediately following, a major disaster.

Under the new Office of Response and Recovery, we have also established a new Planning Division that is focused on national, regional and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive catastrophic planning efforts. The Planning Division is responsible for developing and coordinating joint state/federal catastrophic incident plans, leading the development and alignment of national-level interagency efforts, and coordinating with FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate on regional grant planning initiatives to align all catastrophic planning efforts. The Office of Response and Recovery is also producing needed operational doctrine and response readiness standards.

In February 2010, as part of a broader headquarters realignment, the Disaster Reserve Workforce and Human Capital Divisions of FEMA were integrated into the new Office of the Chief Component Human Capital Officer (OCCHCO). As a result, the Disaster Workforce Division now oversees the readiness and deployment functions for the entire disaster workforce of full-time and reserve employees. Additionally, a critical mass of staffing in the budget, policy and system areas are able to provide more effective services to both the institutional and deployable workforces.

### *Federal Catastrophic Planning*

National efforts to ensure resilience in the U.S. are focusing on improving existing catastrophic event preparedness capabilities, but with a renewed conviction to plan for the most extreme disasters. FEMA has expanded its coordination with other federal agencies to smooth and adapt coordination of federal support when it is needed. A key component of the National Response Framework (NRF) is the Catastrophic Incident Annex (NRF-CIA), which establishes the context and overarching strategy for implementing and coordinating an accelerated, proactive national response to a catastrophic incident. Recognizing that federal resources may be required to augment state, tribal, and local response efforts, the NRF-CIA establishes protocols to pre-

identify and rapidly deploy key essential resources (e.g., medical teams, search and rescue teams, transportable shelters, medical and equipment caches, etc.).

Under the NRF, federal agencies are grouped by capability and type of expertise into 15 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) to provide the planning, support, resources, program implementation, and emergency services needed during a disaster. The ESFs serve as the primary operational-level mechanisms supporting state, local and tribal efforts--coordinated by FEMA--in providing disaster assistance in functional areas such as transportation, communications, public works and engineering, firefighting, mass care, housing, human services, public health and medical services, search and rescue, agriculture, and energy. The signatories to the NRF provide substantial disaster response assistance in their areas of expertise, as well as operational support when assigned missions to support the disaster response.

### *Regional Catastrophic Planning*

Regional catastrophic planning, and the development of operational plans, is underway for several different geographic areas on catastrophic planning efforts. These include plans addressing catastrophic earthquakes, hurricanes (separate efforts are looking at such events in New England, Louisiana, and Florida), dam failures, improvised nuclear device detonation, evacuation and sheltering of populations during catastrophic events, and preparing for other special events. FEMA is also working with state partners to develop “all-hazard” plans based on hazard surveys and risk assessments occurring in each region and state. All of these plans are being developed by our regions – with support from FEMA headquarters – in partnership with federal, state, and local agencies through the six phases of the planning process, as outlined in our recently published Regional Planning Guide.

The plans will address the unique considerations that exist in the event of a catastrophic incident and identify the tasks and activities that federal, state and other partners will carry out to meet response objectives. They will also specifically identify how resources, personnel, and assets will be allocated in order to execute the mission objectives and priorities, and include a concept of operations with supporting annexes. Scenario and damage information to inform the planning efforts is provided by the U.S. Geological Survey and the academic community. A staff estimate is conducted by the state-federal planning team to refine requirements and develop courses of action to address identified needs. To drive decisions as the plans are developed, a senior steering committee is established with membership from the governors’ offices, our regional administrators, adjutants general, the defense coordinating officers, and other state and federal officials.

### *Mission Assignments*

FEMA uses mission assignments to request disaster response support from other federal agencies. Mission assignments are work orders issued by FEMA to other federal agencies that direct the completion of a specific task and are intended to meet urgent, immediate and short term needs. They allow FEMA to quickly request federal partners to provide critical resources, services or expertise. To date, FEMA has developed 263 pre-scripted mission assignments with 29 federal agencies.

This support ranges from heavy-lift helicopters from the Department of Defense, to generators from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to disaster medical assistance teams from the Department of Health and Human Services, and emergency road clearing teams from the U.S. Forest Service. These pre-scripted mission assignments drive a more rapid and responsive delivery of federal support to states, communities and tribes.

### *Logistics*

Our logistics capability is also dependent upon strong and sustained federal partnerships. FEMA serves as co-lead with the General Services Administration (GSA) for ESF #7, Logistics Management and Resources Support. FEMA also serves as the national logistics coordinator, helping to foster a unique interagency supply chain partnership with GSA, the Department of Defense, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and other ESF #7 partners. We leverage the expertise and capability of our federal partners to improve and sustain our supply chain operations. This level of interagency coordination enables us to quickly organize and integrate national level logistics resources through our Regions to the states for meeting the life-saving and sustaining needs of disaster survivors. This partnership also enables us to be good stewards of federal dollars by reducing readiness costs and ensuring that we pay for services only at the time of request. In addition, FEMA uses contracts, which can be activated to provide both pre- and post-event evacuation support to the states, such as ambulance and bus services, as well as emergency generators and temporary housing support.

In addition to partnerships with other federal agencies, FEMA Logistics also partners with non-governmental organizations and private sector entities to ensure support for our Regions in meeting state and local requirements for life-saving and sustaining resources.

### **III. How FEMA Works with State, Local, Tribal and Territorial Governmental Partners**

Coordination with state, local, tribal and territorial governments is another essential part of our effort to integrate the entire emergency management community. FEMA's leadership comes from diverse backgrounds, but we share something vital: direct, on-the-ground experience in state and local emergency management. Our experiences have helped us realize and appreciate the important role that state, local, tribal and territorial governments play in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. FEMA's success is heavily dependent upon our ability to communicate, coordinate and work closely with these groups.

### *Emergency Communication*

Emergency communications issues presented an impediment to operations in the immediate aftermath of both the September 11, 2001 attacks and Hurricane Katrina. The ability to effectively communicate during and immediately after a disaster is essential to fulfilling our mission. When working on a tight timeframe with partners at the federal, regional, state, local and tribal levels, making sure that everyone is on the same page is absolutely essential. As a result, we have worked hard and put systems in place to ensure that we can coordinate and

communicate in ways accessible to diverse communities that allow us to accomplish our objectives during disasters.

The Disaster Emergency Communications (DEC) Division has significantly enhanced state and local governments' communications capabilities through supporting the development of communications plans. To date, DEC has provided support in the establishment of 37 state-specific plans to improve the nation's interoperability capabilities. We will deliver six additional state plans in FY2011.

### *Logistics Capability Assessment Tool*

The Logistics Capability Assessment Tool (LCAT) enables states to automatically self-assess their logistics maturity in five key areas: logistics planning, operations, organization, property management and distribution management. All 10 Regions and 42 states and territories have been briefed on the LCAT, and 21 facilitated assessments have been completed.

### *Grant Programs*

FEMA helps state and local governments prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from incidents of terrorism and other catastrophic events through grants, training, exercises and other support. FEMA is fiercely committed to getting resources into the hands of state and local first responders who are often best positioned to prepare for and respond to terrorism, natural disasters, and other threats. Even in this difficult budget environment, FEMA and this Administration recognize the importance of maintaining funding for state and local governments as they prepare for major disasters and emergencies of all kinds.

Over the past five years, FEMA and DHS have provided more than \$23.8 billion for state and local projects through our homeland security and preparedness grant programs and an additional \$2.5 billion in firefighter grants. This financial support to our state and local partners has been coupled with intensive stakeholder outreach.

FEMA also supports its state and local partners through its Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP) initiative. The RCPGP has provided over \$30 million annually to enhance catastrophic incident preparedness in 10 high-risk, high-consequence urban areas and their surrounding regions. RCPGP is intended to support coordination of regional all-hazard planning for catastrophic events, including the development of integrated plans, protocols and procedures to manage a catastrophic event. The deliverables from the RCPGP will be made available throughout the country to enhance national resilience.

### *Tribal Outreach*

To continue our collaborative nation-to-nation relationships with tribal governments, FEMA has tribal liaisons in all FEMA regions with federally recognized tribes. American Indians and Alaska Natives have a unique and direct relationship with the federal government, and therefore require specific outreach to ensure a successful collaboration.

At the direction of President Obama, FEMA established a Tribal Policy on June 29, 2010, to articulate the Agency's commitment to respect and honor tribes as sovereign partners. We are currently in the final stages of developing the implementation plan for this Tribal Policy. FEMA remains committed to recognizing the sovereign rights, authority, and unique status of tribal governments and is committed to working in close partnership with American Indians and Alaska Natives.

#### *Evacuations*

Emergency evacuations are the primary responsibility of state and local governments. However, if state and local emergency management systems become overwhelmed in the event of a disaster, FEMA may implement and support a federalized evacuation to augment the state, tribal and local government plans and operations.

Evacuations during the 2008 hurricane season demonstrate that FEMA's efforts are having an impact. Over 2 million people were successfully evacuated, including during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Moreover, FEMA is finalizing a national system for states to track evacuees. One example of the tools being developed is the Evacuee Support Planning Guide – FEMA P-760 – a planning resource for states that may receive a substantial number of evacuees from another state and for states that may experience a large evacuation from one area of the state to another. FEMA has also developed reimbursement policies for states to host evacuees and tools such as the National Mass Evacuation Tracking Systems (NMETS).

#### **IV. Engaging Non-Governmental Organizations**

Government can and will continue to serve disaster survivors. However, we fully recognize that a government-centric- approach to disaster management will not be enough to meet the challenges posed by a catastrophic incident. That is why we must fully engage our entire societal capacity, leveraging trade associations, non-governmental organizations – including those that represent different linguistic and ethnic minority groups, faith-based organizations, private industry, and social and fraternal organizations. These are the organizations that provide the bulk of services to communities every day, and to the extent that they are able, they should continue to be the primary provider of such services in a disaster. The quicker these entities are able to get back on their feet, the faster communities as a whole will be able to recover.

#### *Private Sector Preparedness and Collaboration*

The private sector, encompassing trade associations, corporations, academia, and other non-governmental organizations, is a key partner in our planning and preparedness efforts. These entities provide key capabilities and resources, and also have the ability to reach the broader public through individual employees, customers, students and members.

In October 2007, FEMA established a Private Sector Division within the Office of External Affairs in order to provide a single point of contact to facilitate meaningful integration of the private sector across the spectrum of emergency management activity. Since then, FEMA has been able to bring the private sector to the table in new and more meaningful ways. As an

example, during the severe winter storms that occurred earlier this year, our private sector communication was put to great use, providing businesses with personal preparedness information and gathering store operation updates.

FEMA has also expanded the use of technology and communication platforms to share best practices across the nation's private sector through a new online library of more than 40 model public-private emergency management partnerships at the state, local and regional levels. FEMA's Private Sector Division created several hazard-specific tabletop exercises that anyone can access for free, which were downloaded over 8,000 times in the first few weeks after they were posted online. I also participated in a Business Roundtable podcast series that garnered more than 9,000 listeners, and was featured on several news and disaster management sites, reaching over 90,000 Business Roundtable Facebook and Twitter followers. Additionally, the FEMA Private Sector Division sends out weekly preparedness tips to its growing subscriber list of about 25,000 individuals.

Another way we are working to promote more resilient communities is through the Private Sector Preparedness Accreditation and Certification Program, or PS Prep, which was created at the direction of Congress.

PS Prep encourages the private sector to take voluntary steps to be better prepared to stay in business in the event of a disaster. It does this by setting forth clear guidelines for preparedness, based on industry-recognized standards adopted by DHS. Third-party accrediting bodies that comply with these standards can then certify private sector entities that wish to be recognized as having met the standard.

### *Non-Profit Community*

Working with the non-profit community is an essential part of our integrated emergency response and recovery efforts. In May 2010, FEMA entered into a new MOU with National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), a coalition of 50 national non-profit disaster relief organizations. The MOU serves as the basis for greater communication with NVOAD members, fostering more inclusive planning and ultimately enhancing services to disaster survivors. This past July, FEMA entered into a new MOA with the National Council on Independent Living to grant access to FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers and assist people with disabilities. In October 2010, FEMA and the American Red Cross signed a MOA that sets the framework for the Red Cross and FEMA to jointly lead the planning and coordination of mass care services, which will strengthen and expand the resources available to help shelter, feed, provide emergency first aid and deliver supplies to survivors of a disaster. This co-led partnership between FEMA and the Red Cross will leverage the resourcing strengths of the federal government and the sheltering, feeding and bulk distribution expertise of the Red Cross.

### *Engaging the Faith-Based Community*

When a disaster strikes, the initial services provided may not come from government, but rather from churches, synagogues, mosques and other faith-based and community organizations. The DHS Center for Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships, a Center of the White House Office

of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, connects representatives from faith traditions and community leaders interested in emergency planning, preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation with government emergency management personnel, other federal agencies that employ volunteers in disasters, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Citizen Corps Councils, and voluntary organizations active in disasters. For example, at the request of the Missouri Governor's Faith-based Organization Disaster Initiative, the DHS Center worked with the Midland Islamic Council (Greater Kansas City), leading to Kansas City's largest mosque becoming a certified Red Cross shelter.

The DHS Center also participated with federal, state, local and tribal emergency recovery teams – and faith-based voluntary disaster recovery organizations – to rebuild and repair homes that were devastated by the Yukon Ice Flow disaster in the Alaskan interior in May 2009. The faith-based groups provided the volunteer labor, and FEMA and the state of Alaska provided the materials and travel expenses. Overcoming extreme logistical challenges and a short summer season, 50 homes were built and repaired in four remote communities. By including the faith-based groups, taxpayers were saved millions of dollars, and the project has become a best-practice model of partnership between the government and faith-based organizations.

The DHS Center also sponsors and leads regional preparedness conferences where faith-based and neighborhood organizations network, share information and develop partnerships with government emergency management officials. Since 2009, Faithful Readiness conferences have been held in San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and, most recently, in Southeast Wisconsin, after the devastating floods of July 2010. As a result of this conference, the Wisconsin chapter of the Churches of God in Christ, International partnered with the American Red Cross to help promote congregational disaster preparedness and assist in outreach efforts to elderly potential flood victims.

## **V. The Importance of Individuals, Families and Communities**

FEMA's Individual Assistance Division in the Recovery Directorate of the Office of Response and Recovery helps disaster survivors with housing, crisis counseling, low interest loans, legal services, disaster case management, and unemployment assistance, among other services. Our state and local emergency management experience has taught us that, in the event of a disaster, individuals and communities are not liabilities; rather, they are our greatest resources and the key to our success. We are fortunate to have leadership at the Department of Homeland Security and at the White House who share our belief that individuals are integral aspects of our emergency management capability. As Secretary Napolitano said before the Council on Foreign Relations in July 2009, "for too long, we've treated the public as a liability to be protected rather than an asset in our nation's collective security... We need a culture of collective responsibility, a culture where every individual understands his or her role."

### *Citizen Corps*

In the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, President Bush launched Citizen Corps, a community-based entity coordinated by FEMA. Citizen Corps recognizes that effective

emergency management and emergency response require community leaders to participate in developing emergency plans for their own communities. These leaders conduct localized outreach and education to the public, promote training, participate in exercises, encourage volunteerism, and form an integral part of the response effort when disaster strikes. The mission of Citizen Corps is to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds.

The Citizen Corps mission is accomplished through a network of state, local, and tribal Citizen Corps Councils located all over the country. These councils build on community strengths to implement Citizen Corps preparedness programs and carry out local strategies to involve government, community leaders, and citizens in all-hazards preparedness and resilience. Citizen Corps is in the process of updating the registration of more than 2,400 Councils and 3,000 CERT programs in order to provide detailed information on their local strategies and activities.

In 95 percent of all emergencies, a survivor or bystander provides the first immediate assistance on the scene. Because family members, neighbors or fellow employees are often the first to provide assistance, it is important that all members of the community have access to the training they need to make a difference during an emergency situation.

### *Ready Campaign*

*Ready* is FEMA's national public service campaign, which partners with the Advertising Council to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to all emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. The goal of the campaign is to get the public involved and to increase the level of basic preparedness across the nation.

*Ready* and its Spanish language version, *Listo*, ask individuals to take simple steps such as making a family emergency plan, getting an emergency supply kit, obtaining information about the different types of emergencies that could occur and the appropriate responses to each one, and getting involved in community efforts that promote neighbor-to-neighbor preparedness. To further increase its reach, this Campaign has now been translated into 11 additional languages.

The Ad Council has declared *Ready* one of the most successful campaigns in its more than 60-year history. Since its launch, the campaign has generated close to \$900 million in donated media support and over 12 billion media impressions. As of March 4, 2011, the website has received 2.7 billion hits and 52 million unique visitors; the toll-free numbers have received approximately 425,000 calls; and more than 63 million *Ready* materials have been requested or downloaded from the website.

In the wake of the tragic events in Japan, people across the U.S. are taking stock in their own personal level of preparedness and educating themselves on the steps they can take by visiting [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov). Visits to the site were up 225 percent compared to an average week with individual page views up 2000 percent.

## *Incorporating People with Disabilities into Disaster Planning*

Planning for disaster means that our efforts must be inclusive of people of different ages and abilities. We need greater inclusion built into our participatory planning and preparedness activities, which includes meeting the access and functional needs of people with disabilities in preparing for and responding to disasters.

Historically, our nation's emergency management team has not planned well for meeting the access and functional needs of people with disabilities during disasters. Most of our planning has been supplemental, contained in annexes, and treated as special needs. However, we are now taking critical steps in the right direction to ensure that we plan for the whole community, integrating people with disabilities into all of our disaster planning, response and recovery scenarios.

In February 2010, FEMA established the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, and in July 2010, established the first-ever Disability Working Group within FEMA. The Disability Working Group is responsible for ensuring that access and functional needs of children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into all aspects of FEMA's disaster planning, preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation efforts initiated and coordinated at the federal level.

In October of last year, FEMA published Guidance on Planning for the Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters. This guidance for states provides comprehensive information and tools for meeting integrated sheltering requirements.

FEMA is also committed to placing Regional Disability Integration Specialists in each of FEMA's ten regions. Eight are already on board on a permanent full-time basis, and an additional one is in place on an acting basis.

Also, earlier this month, FEMA and the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) signed a memorandum of agreement to ensure that the access and functional needs of people with disabilities are incorporated into all aspects of planning for, responding to and recovering from disasters. Specifically, the agreement will ensure that advocates for the NDRN's 57 state and territory affiliates have access to FEMA disaster response offices, including workspace and logistical support, before, during and after a disaster, to be involved in policy decisions and coordinate directly with the entire emergency management team. This partnership will help FEMA leverage the resources of the entire community, including the resources the NDRN or other organizations can offer, to better meet the needs of the entire population impacted by a disaster.

When communities integrate the needs of children and adults with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into their community-wide planning initiatives, they maximize resources and strengthen their ability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards. FEMA is committed to initiatives that increase the participation of people with disabilities in emergency planning.

## *Children in Disasters*

Similarly, we must all work together to meet the unique needs of children during a disaster, and ensure that their needs are considered at the outset of our planning and preparedness discussions. Emergency management officials at all levels need to plan and prepare for everyone in a community, including children, who comprise approximately 25 percent of the U.S. population. For that reason, FEMA established a Children’s Working Group (CWG) responsible for coordinating the Agency’s efforts – in partnership with other federal agencies and non-governmental stakeholders – to ensure that the needs of children are considered and integrated into all disaster planning, preparedness, response and recovery efforts initiated at the federal level.

As an example, in preparation for Hurricane Earl last year, we pre-positioned commodities in preparation for the hurricane to make landfall, including water, meals and generators. However, military-style Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) and other provisions are not necessarily suitable for young children. As a result, we also pre-positioned commodities for children, including infant formula, baby food, electrolytes and diapers. We need to anticipate, understand and specifically plan for the needs of children. Similarly, we pre-positioned infant and toddler supplies in anticipation of the upper Midwest flooding earlier this month.

We will continue to incorporate everyone into our disaster planning, recognizing that all populations help to make up the emergency management community.

## **VI. Whole Community**

At the heart of our planning and preparedness efforts is our strong belief that our ability to succeed is tied to whether or not we are able to work together as a team. We must view all of the work FEMA does in concert with the rest of the emergency management community as part of a broad plan for addressing the demands and challenges of a catastrophic disaster.

To ensure that our efforts become part of an interconnected plan of action, we are focused on our “Whole Community” initiative. This initiative will continue to leverage the capabilities that both governmental and non-governmental entities play in preparing for a catastrophic disaster.

We cannot effectively respond to a catastrophic disaster alone. Our planning and preparedness scenarios require all parties to pitch in, including FEMA and its partners at the federal level; state, local and tribal governments; non-governmental organizations in the non-profit, faith-based and private sector communities; and most importantly, diverse individuals, families, and communities, who continue to be our most important assets and allies in our ability to respond to and recover from a major disaster.

As the name of the initiative indicates, it is truly the *whole* community that must be prepared to respond in ways that extend beyond the normal paradigms in which we have traditionally operated. As a result, when we at FEMA address our own preparedness and response

capabilities, we now do it through the “Whole Community” framework. And it is through that lens that we will work to improve our preparedness for the next catastrophic disaster.

## **VII. Conclusion**

FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure we work together as a nation to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Too often we have overlooked our role as supporting citizens and first responders. The “Whole Community” initiative recognizes that FEMA is not the nation’s emergency management team – FEMA is just part of the team.

FEMA continues to play an integral role as part of the emergency management community. However, we know that we cannot and should not do it alone. We know of the capabilities of federal agencies, which can be leveraged in the event of a disaster to provide a robust federal response. We know of the importance of effective coordination with state, local and tribal governments, who provide direct, on the ground experience, and who usually have initial and primary responsibility for disaster response. We know that non-governmental organizations, like faith-based and non-profit groups, and private sector entities, possess knowledge, assets and services that government may not be able to provide. An effective disaster response involves tapping into all of these resources.

Finally, and most importantly, we know of the great capacity of individuals to care for their families, friends, neighbors and fellow community members, making our citizens force multipliers rather than liabilities. Together, we make up the whole community, and we all have an important role to play. We must engage all of our societal capacity, both within and beyond FEMA, to work together as a team. I hope that as Japan moves ahead to recover from the recent tragedy, that FEMA and our nation can learn from Japan and become more prepared and resilient against all of the threats that we face.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the importance of engaging the whole community in FEMA’s preparedness for the next catastrophic disaster. I look forward to working with you as we continue ensure a stronger and more agile preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation capability.

I am prepared to answer any questions the Committee may have.