

Testimony of
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Introduction

Good Morning, Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Rahall and other distinguished Members of the Committee. I am Craig Fugate, Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak here today.

I look forward to discussing the preparations that took place before Hurricane Sandy made landfall, the coordinated response that took place during the storm and continues today, and the recovery efforts that are before us.

Hurricane Sandy was the eighteenth named storm of the 2012 Hurricane Season, and the tenth hurricane. A high pressure pattern over northern New England coupled with a strong mid-level trough moving east from the Midwest were the two primary features that established Sandy's eventual landfall trajectory into southern New Jersey on the evening of October 29th. With tropical-force winds reaching out 580 miles, Sandy was the second-largest Atlantic storm on record. Hurricane Sandy affected the east coast, from North Carolina to Maine, particularly lashing the New Jersey and New York coasts with heavy rain, winds, snow, and a record storm surge. Additionally, Sandy affected states as far inland as West Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana.

In the days leading up to landfall of Hurricane Sandy, FEMA worked with the whole community to support our citizens and first responders as they prepared for the storm. By leaning forward, the agency was able to support a prompt, coordinated response effort while effectively understanding the needs of survivors and planning for future needs.

Preparations for Hurricane Sandy

FEMA's regional offices have worked closely with the state, local, and tribal governments across the country—including those directly in Sandy's path—to develop catastrophic, worst-case scenario plans that are flexible and scalable for incidents of all magnitudes. FEMA's ongoing partnership with states allows coordination and collaboration with the whole community to plan and prepare for a range of disaster events.

In the days immediately before Sandy reached the east coast, FEMA worked closely with the Department of Commerce's National Hurricane Center and based pre-landfall decisions on their predicted storm track and intensity, and engaged threatened communities to stage resources that would support response efforts that began as soon as conditions were safe. FEMA and the Department of Defense (DOD) established Incident Support Bases (ISBs) in Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, to pre-

position supplies, water, meals, cots, blankets, generators, and communications vehicles. In addition to the ISBs, five Federal Staging Areas were established in New York. To date, FEMA has shipped over 16 million liters of water, almost 14 million meals, and over 1.5 million blankets to affected states.

FEMA maintains commodities - including millions of liters of water, millions of meals and hundreds of thousands of blankets - strategically located at distribution centers throughout the United States and its territories, including Atlanta, Georgia and Frederick, Maryland. The maintenance of these commodities helps facilitate rapid staging and distribution of needed items to address disaster situations.

In preparation for the storm, FEMA deployed liaison officers and Incident Management Assessment Teams (IMATs) to emergency operation centers (EOCs) in Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Vermont. Federal Coordinating Officers (FCOs) and Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinators were quickly deployed as well to organize the FEMA and federal response from the field.

On Saturday, October 27, 2012, the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) activated in support of first responders and the response mission. The NRCC, located at FEMA headquarters, provides overall coordination of the federal response by bringing together federal departments and agencies to assist in the preparations for and response to disasters.

Coordinated Response & Recovery Efforts

On October 28, 2012, the President authorized emergency declarations for Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York. On October 29, 2012, the President authorized emergency declarations for Delaware, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia. Initially, these declarations authorized FEMA to provide direct federal assistance for emergency protective measures. The President later authorized major disaster declarations for Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia, and West Virginia. These declarations provide declared counties and states assistance with emergency work and debris removal as well as access to FEMA programs, most notably Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program which provide assistance to individuals, local and state governments following a disaster.

By Sunday, October 28, there were 1,032 FEMA personnel deployed in anticipation of Hurricane Sandy's impacts. Approximately one week after the storm, on November 6, there were 5,384 FEMA personnel deployed in support of Sandy. On November 6, approximately two weeks after Sandy's landfall, there were 7,770 FEMA personnel deployed to more than 11 states and the District of Columbia in support of survivors. At the peak of the response efforts, more than 17,000 federal personnel, and over 11,000 National Guardsmen were on the ground assisting with response.

FEMA and its emergency management partners facilitated the provision of shelters, Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs), Points of Distribution (PODs), and Joint Field Offices (JFOs) in the

affected areas. As of November 28, 78 Disaster Recovery Centers were operating in states affected by Sandy. Hundreds of thousands of disaster survivors have reached out to FEMA and its partners for aid during this time.

Disaster Relief Fund (DRF)

FEMA was appropriated \$7.1 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012—\$700 million for all activities authorized under the Stafford Act, and \$6.4 billion exclusively for major disasters.

As of November 26, more than \$1.93 billion has been obligated out of the DRF for FEMA's response and recovery efforts related to Sandy. There are sufficient resources in the DRF to respond to the immediate needs and impacts of the storm. The Administration is strongly committed to recovery and working with Congress to help communities recover and rebuild.

Individual Assistance

The Individuals and Households program, which provides assistance to homeowners and renters for housing and other needs, has seen a number of registrations as a result of Hurricane Sandy. Individual Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster. As December 3, New York had 241,318 registrations and FEMA has provided over \$732,942,000 in disaster aid. More than 238,353 New Jersey residents have applied for aid and FEMA has provided over \$272,000,000 in disaster aid. For all Sandy declarations, there are over 490,000 applicants, and FEMA has provided over \$1 billion in disaster aid.

Public Assistance

In addition to assistance for emergency protective measures and debris removal, Public Assistance provides funding for the repair, restoration, reconstruction, or replacement of infrastructure that is damaged or destroyed by a disaster. Eligible applicants include state, local and tribal governments. Certain private nonprofit (PNP) organizations that provide governmental services may also receive assistance. Based on the needs identified by an applicant, a Project Worksheet (PW) is prepared for each project to provide funding to repair disaster damaged infrastructure or help pay for the emergency costs of responding to the incident. FEMA reviews and approves the PWs and obligates the federal share of the costs (which is typically 75 percent federal funding) to the state. The state then disburses funds to local applicants.

As of November 27, 667 Requests for Public Assistance (RPAs) have been received. FEMA's Public Assistance Branch is working closely with New York state partners to proceed with recovery and reimbursement efforts.

In New Jersey, as of November 26, 890 Requests for Public Assistance have been submitted in New Jersey. In New Jersey, additionally, \$29 million has been obligated to reimburse the New Jersey Department of Human Services for providing temporary housing and resources for

electrical crews working to restore power. FEMA will continue to work closely with the State of New Jersey on recovery and reimbursements under the Public Assistance Program.

FEMA is working closely with its partners to proceed to project formulation and project worksheet preparation to address damages caused by Sandy. One of the ways in which FEMA is able to provide financial reimbursements to local governments more quickly in order to help the local communities recover is through Expedited Payments. These are commonly referred to as Expedited PWs. FEMA will obligate a portion of the federal share of the estimated cost of work under Category A (Debris Removal) and Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) as estimated during the preliminary damage assessment.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) assists in implementing long-term hazard mitigation measures following major disaster declarations. Funding is available to implement projects in accordance with state, tribal, and local priorities. HMGP funds may be used to fund projects that will reduce or eliminate the losses from future disasters. Eligible applicants include state, local and tribal governments as well as certain non-profit organizations. Individual homeowners and businesses may not apply directly to the program; however a community may apply on their behalf. Following a disaster declaration, the state will advertise that HMGP funding is available to fund mitigation projects in the state. Those interested in applying to the HMGP should contact their local or tribal government to begin the application process. Local governments should contact their State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO). Tribal governments can contact the SHMO or FEMA directly.

In both New York and New Jersey, FEMA mitigation staff has met and continues to work closely with the SHMOs to discuss the states' Hazard Mitigation Plans, types of projects available, and how best to proceed within that framework.

FEMA recognizes that mitigation is an essential component to national preparedness and emergency management. Working closely with the whole community, before, during and, after a disaster allows states and communities to plan and invest wisely into critical projects that save not only money, but most critically, lives.

Infrastructure

Sandy had varied effects on the infrastructure of the affected states. Following the storm's landfall, more than 8.5 million customers were without power, many roads were impassible, tunnels were flooded, and mass transit was significantly affected. FEMA's immediate focus was on the life and safety of individuals, followed by power restoration and community stabilization.

As I have stated many times, FEMA is only part of the emergency management team. Our partners include other federal agencies, local, tribal and state governments, the private sector, voluntary agencies and individuals. While we coordinate the federal response in support of state, local, and tribal efforts, we are not the entire response. Mission assignments to our federal partners, such as DOD, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the United States

Coast Guard (USCG), Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Energy (DOE), and Department of Transportation (DOT), were vital to the response and recovery efforts.

The communications infrastructure was critical before, during, and after the storm. Prior to the storm, the Disaster Emergency Communications Team (DEC) established communications support at the state EOCs along the east coast. The Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) helped establish more than 85 radio networks on FEMA's National Response Network (NRN) to enable mission-critical voice operability and interoperability for responder personnel across all levels of government in support of the Whole Community Framework. These networks spanned from Maine to West Virginia and provided radio capabilities for convoys, incident area operations (including search and rescue and other federal responder teams), and providing communications at field facilities, such as Interim Operating Facilities (IOFs) and Joint Field Offices (JFOs). Following the disaster, MERS planned, executed and supplied communications availability for two 1,000-person JFOs, more than 50 DRCs, and other critical response missions. In DRCs, the satellite capability not only supported the DRC intake mission, but provided survivors access to free wireless internet. These communications efforts supported not only FEMA and its federal government partners, but also, state and local governments, first responders, and most importantly, the survivors.

Transportation in the affected area was heavily impacted by damage to public transit and fuel shortages following Sandy. To restore public transit, FEMA mission assigned USACE an un-watering mission to assist with response efforts in areas that flooded. USACE deployed the 249th Engineer Battalion and other temporary emergency power assets to provide support to areas impacted by the storm. USACE pumped water from several critical infrastructure points in greater New York City and New Jersey. These included the Brooklyn – Battery Tunnel and the Queens – Midtown Tunnel, along with several other tunnels and tracks. And, today, to support FEMA's efforts to assess the true nature of the damage to the region's public transit systems, the DOT's Federal Transit Administration has been mission assigned to put project management oversight contractors on the ground to assess the damage and to verify the assessments presented by the States of New York and New Jersey.

As a result of the fuel shortages that occurred in New York and New Jersey, fuel distribution points for first responders were established so that response efforts could continue. Integral emergency management partners, such as the USCG and DOD, trucked and shipped gas to New York and New Jersey to help alleviate the shortage. To support fuel operations, FEMA's energy task force procured and distributed fuel to first responders and the public, assessed gas stations without power and/or fuel, and provided public information on fuel distribution. In support of this effort, DOD's Defense Logistics Agency provided approximately 9.3 million gallons of fuel to more than 300 gas stations and first responder fueling depots. Ultimately, the fuel made available was distributed at the direction and discretion of the states, based on their determined needs and priorities.

We recognize that restoring power is an essential step to response and recovery. DOE reported peak outages of 8,511,251 customers as Sandy affected the east coast. Approximately a week later, on November 6, fewer than 1,000,000 customers were without power. As mentioned

earlier, FEMA is not the only federal agency that responds to a disaster. At the direction of the President, a national power restoration working group was established on October 31 to cut through red tape; increase federal, state, tribal, local and private sector coordination; and restore power to people as quickly as possible. For example, in some 68 flights from the West Coast to the East Coast, DOD's U.S. Transportation Command airlifted approximately 225 power restoration vehicles, six generators, 15 trucks, five trailers, and more than 400 personnel to help the effort to restore power. This working group includes DOD, DOT, DOE, USACE, DHS's Office of Infrastructure Protection and the Homeland and Infrastructure Threat and Risk Analysis Center, and representatives from local law enforcement.

FEMA continues its power restoration efforts in new and innovative ways, specifically through the Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power (STEP) program. The program repairs storm-damaged electrical meters; provides essential electricity, heat, and hot water; and protects storm-damaged residences with temporary exterior repairs.

Housing Plans/Recovery

Housing in many communities was significantly impacted due to the widespread effects of Sandy. FEMA convened the Hurricane Sandy Catastrophic Disaster Housing Task Force (Task Force) on November 6, 2012, to address housing issues in support of State and field operations. The Task Force has and continues to develop guidance and options based on the Catastrophic Housing Annex (The Annex) dated August 12, 2012.

As all disasters are local, each community and state faces different challenges. The State-led Disaster Housing Task Forces in New York and New Jersey involve a collaborative approach to addressing the temporary housing and long-term needs of the disaster survivors, including the collection of available rental resources, projecting housing needs and exploring other options. Task Forces include representatives from state, local, and voluntary agencies, and federal partners including FEMA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The teams are working together to ensure they are making the greatest use of existing housing resources (such as apartments and rental units), enlisting voluntary agencies to make minor repairs so survivors can remain in their homes, and investigating other temporary housing options suitable for the area.

Through the state-led Disaster Housing Task Forces, affected states are taking the lead to identify their local needs. The Task Forces in New York and New Jersey involve a collaborative approach to addressing the temporary housing and long-term needs of the disaster survivors, including the collection of available rental resources, projecting housing needs and exploring other options.

As an example, one form of assistance requested by New York and New Jersey is a rapid repair program through STEP. Under this program, announced on November 9, 2012, the city, county and FEMA reached out to residents directly to offer: Residential Electrical Meter Repairs, Shelter Essential Measures, and Rapid Temporary Exterior Repairs. The intent of STEP is to

meet immediate life-sustaining needs so survivors can stay in or return to their homes and shelter in place until more permanent home repairs can be made.

Additionally, at the request of New York and New Jersey, FEMA activated the Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) program, which allows eligible survivors who are in shelters and cannot return to their homes due to storm-related damages to stay in participating hotels or motels until more suitable housing accommodations are available. FEMA also provides Housing Rental Assistance. If a home cannot be repaired easily to safe and sanitary conditions, then local rental resources are the preferred first choice for housing disaster survivors as they recover. FEMA authorized funds to increase the amount of rental assistance that it may provide eligible disaster survivors in New York and New Jersey to 125 percent. This increase will be implemented when a survivor is recertified for a continued need for temporary housing assistance. The approved increase is expected to make an additional 1,800 rental resources available for temporary housing of disaster-impacted families.

As we move forward in the Response and Recovery missions after Hurricane Sandy, we will continue to work with the state-led Disaster Housing Task Forces to provide the forms of temporary housing assistance that best meet the needs of the survivors.

On Thursday, November 15, the President announced that he has asked Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan to continue to work closely with governors, mayors and local officials of New Jersey and New York as they begin the process of identifying redevelopment plans for affected communities. HUD is already an integral partner in the Response and Recovery of areas affected by disasters. We work closely with HUD to identify housing resources, provide the best housing support to disaster survivors, and serve as a crucial base of knowledge and guidance in disaster housing missions. FEMA looks forward to supporting Secretary Donovan in his mission and HUD's continued support of FEMA as we respond to and recover from Sandy.

Conclusion

FEMA will continue to work closely with the whole community, including our state, local, and tribal government partners, Secretary Donovan, HUD and other federal partners as the response and recovery efforts move forward. FEMA recognizes that we must look to local, tribal, and state leaders, as well as the whole community, to ensure that FEMA is able to provide disaster survivors with the assistance they need during the road to recovery.

Thank you Chairman Mica for providing me this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss preparations that took place in advance of Hurricane Sandy, the coordination that occurred throughout the storm, and the recovery efforts that remain in-progress. I look forward to answering questions you or other members of the Committee may have.