

Written testimony of FEMA Region V Regional Administrator Andrew Velazquez for an House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications field hearing titled “Is Central Indiana Prepared for a Mass Casualty Event?”

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Introduction

Good Morning Chairman Brooks, Ranking Member Payne and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Andrew Velasquez, Region V Administrator for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss what FEMA’s Region V is doing to support the six states in its Region: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin, in addition to assisting 34 tribal governments in their efforts to prepare for all-hazards.

FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. We accomplish this through grants, training, exercises and other support, and work with our state, tribal, territorial, and local partners to lessen the impact of future disasters through mitigation efforts.

FEMA is committed to getting resources into the hands of state, local, tribal, and territorial governments and their first responders, who are often best positioned to prepare for and respond to acts of terrorism, natural disasters, and other threats. Here, in Region V, it is my job to coordinate preparedness activities among our state and tribal partners.

FEMA operates on the principle that all disasters, regardless of scale, are inherently local. Local fire, police, and emergency management agencies will always be the first to respond and the first

to begin the process of recovery. As such, local and county first responders play a vital role during the initial response to any emergency. If a local jurisdiction becomes overwhelmed, the community can request the assistance of their county, which can provide immediate assistance and if necessary request additional assistance from the state.

If the response is beyond the state's or tribe's capability, then the governor or tribal official is able to request assistance from the Federal government through FEMA to the President. This tiered response philosophy is how the emergency management system operates to support an impacted community for most incidents. If the President determines that Federal support is necessary, FEMA will help coordinate response activities, including leveraging support from its volunteer, faith-based, and private sector partners.

This does not mean that the Federal government is passive in its support to states and tribes. FEMA, through its ten regional offices and headquarters, is actively monitoring open source media and reports from Federal partners, such as the National Weather Service and the U.S. Geological Survey. FEMA is also in regular contact with its partners so that when severe weather threatens, or there are reports of any unusual activity, the Region can begin preparations, such as the prepositioning of commodities, activation of response personnel (e.g., Incident Management Assistance Teams, collocation of FEMA staff with state Emergency Operations Centers, Urban Search and Rescue teams), and activation of the Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) for any potential response that may be warranted.

Doctrine

The emergency management field has evolved significantly since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The attacks that day exposed a reality that we must now not only consider, but also plan for. One of the outgrowths of those attacks was Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8. This Directive was updated to reflect the evolution of our understanding of these types of events and of lessons learned.

In March 2011, the President signed Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8), which focused on preparing for the threats that pose the greatest risk to the security of the nation, including: acts of terrorism, cyber incidents, pandemics and catastrophic natural disasters. PPD-8 establishes, among other things:

- A National Preparedness Goal, which contains our collective focus for success and provides a basic definition of the core capabilities;
- A National Preparedness Report, which enables us to report on our progress toward building capacity;
- A series of National Planning Frameworks, which set the strategy and doctrine for building, sustaining, and delivering the core capabilities across the five mission areas – prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

FEMA has worked with representatives from across the whole emergency management community to develop these products. PPD-8 emphasizes creating a robust capability based on cross-jurisdictional and readily-deployable state and local assets. This would mean that Federally

funded capabilities, such as equipment and teams, can be deployed across the nation in response to a catastrophic event. Secondly, planning focuses on those events that severely stress the nation's resources and lead to major impacts on our communities. This does not mean that we will abandon our planning related to reoccurring hazards and those events that are most likely to happen. However, it does mean that we need to step outside of our comfort zone and think about those threats and hazards that could overwhelm us and stress the nation's emergency management system.

PPD-8 focuses on a shared responsibility approach to all phases of emergency management, not just response. In this approach, the whole community is engaged before, during and after a disaster.

Frameworks

Four of the five frameworks have been published. The National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) which was released in September 2011 and recently rolled out across the country, focuses on how to restore, redevelop and revitalize the health, social, economic, natural, and environmental fabric of the community and build a more resilient nation. The updated National Response Framework (NRF), as well as the new National Prevention and National Mitigation Frameworks, were rolled out on May 6, 2013. Each of these frameworks addresses the unique expectations and challenges for each mission area.

The NRF aligns roles and responsibilities across government and the private sector in a unified approach in responding to any threat or hazard.

Prevention-related activities are covered in the first edition of the National Prevention Framework. This framework focuses on addressing the challenges stemming from an imminent terrorist threat.

Fostering a culture of preparedness—centered on risk and resilience to natural, technological, and human-caused events—is what the first edition of the National Mitigation Framework is all about. The document provides context for how the whole community works together and how mitigation efforts relate to all other parts of national preparedness.

The Protection Framework is under development. We are working closely with our partners in DHS and across the emergency management community to ensure that the development of the Protection Framework is closely aligned with the implementation of Presidential Policy Directive 21 and Executive Order (EO) 13636, which address infrastructure protection and cybersecurity respectively. This alignment will ensure that the efforts undertaken under PPD-21 and EO13636 will be linked to the larger protection mission space.

Funding

In addition to doctrinal changes, FEMA works to increase state and local preparedness by supporting a variety of grant programs and working to ensure that they are managed effectively.

These grants are grouped into three broad categories, including:

- Overarching homeland security grant programs in support of state, local, and tribal governments;
- Targeted infrastructure protection grants which support specific critical infrastructure protection initiatives within identified jurisdictions; and
- Firefighter grants programs, which provides funding for staffing and equipment directly to fire service agencies based on a competitive process.

As a nation, we have made significant investments in national preparedness during the past decade. Due to reductions in overall preparedness grants, grantees are currently required to focus their funding on the maintenance and sustainment of current capabilities along with closing gaps in core capabilities as identified in the THIRAs and State Preparedness Reports.

Given the topic of today's hearing, I would also like to note the increased emphasis on mass casualty events represented in the grant guidance for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Homeland Security Grant Program. The guidance specifically prioritizes on improving immediate emergency victim care at mass casualty events. Within this priority there are two key objectives: improving emergency care to victims of mass casualty events, including mass shootings; and improving community first aid training.

The DHS/FEMA Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP), which started in 2008, identified ten High Threat Urban Areas to receive funding to develop regional catastrophic incident plans. One of the ten, the Illinois-Indiana-Wisconsin Combined Statistical Area (II-In-Wi CSA) encompasses 16 counties and the City of Chicago. Since the program began, the area has received more than \$14 million. The RCPGP focuses on three primary goals: 1) fixing shortcomings in existing plans; 2) building regional planning processes and relationships; and 3) linking operational and capabilities based planning to resource allocation. The four primary core capability areas are Transportation/Evacuation; Mass Care and Sheltering; Public Information and Warning; and Logistics and Resource Management. With this funding, the Regional Catastrophic Planning Team, consisting of representatives from the 16 counties, has coordinated planning efforts with county and local representatives to develop and integrate the county and local emergency management plans, as well as evacuation plans for the combined statistical area. In addition, they have developed the Gear Up Get Ready campaign, which focuses on preparing citizens to become more resilient during emergencies and disasters.

FEMA has provided more than \$547 million to the State of Indiana through 23 different preparedness grant programs since FY 2002. In 2012, the total amount of grant funding was just over \$24 million. These dollars have come from a wide variety of programs to support initiatives in the State of Indiana. They have supported building capacity at the state level through planning grants, the safety of key infrastructure sectors like ports, chemical facilities and transit, promoted preparedness of individuals through the Citizen Corps program, and increased capacity of local first responders through the Fire Grant and Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant programs.

We also work to increase resilience by reducing the impact of future disasters, whether they are floods, tornadoes, severe storms, or terrorist attacks. The Agency's mitigation grant programs are available to state, tribal, territorial, and local governments. These programs support cost-effective projects that will lessen the impact of future disasters by encouraging the development of local mitigation plans; acquisition and removal of flood-prone properties; and construction of storm water detention basins.

FEMA has provided Indiana approximately \$46 million in mitigation funding since FY 2008. This funding has improved resilience through the removal of flood prone properties, which is a priority for the State of Indiana. When all of the existing projects are completed, nearly 950 flood-prone homes will have been permanently removed from danger and their owners compensated to move. Indiana has also undertaken projects to promote the development and adoption of local hazard mitigation plans, public awareness campaigns, and tornado alert sirens.

As we look to further strengthen our ability to prepare for events, the President's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget proposes to reform the grant programs and establish a National Preparedness Grant Program. Creating this program would create a robust national network of capabilities, eliminate redundancies and make the most of our limited resources, while strengthening our ability to respond to evolving threats across America.

Risk Assessment

As a condition of grant funding, DHS/FEMA requires a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) for states and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) cities and recommends county and municipal emergency management programs also conduct a THIRA.

The THIRA process helps communities identify capability targets and resource requirements necessary to address its anticipated and unanticipated risks.

THIRAs also help the Federal government understand regional trends and gaps where Federal resources may be needed to support state and local governments. FEMA Region V has actively engaged its states to cooperatively undertake this assignment. Working together to identify capability requirements, FEMA is able to more quickly ensure that should Federal support be needed, it will be in the best position to deliver what states and tribes need, when they need it.

Planning

Region V, in coordination with its Federal, state and tribal partners, collaborates on catastrophic planning initiatives for events that stretch the capabilities of local and state governments beyond their typical response efforts. For example, our planning includes projects, such as All-Hazards Response Planning, Catastrophic Earthquake Planning, and planning for an Improvised Nuclear Device. Our plans are built around both the Response Core Capabilities found in the National Preparedness Goal and on the Administrator's intent to include whole community concepts in planning efforts.

One way that we are ensuring we incorporate the views of our key operational partners is through quarterly Regional Interagency Steering Committee meetings, held at our Regional offices in Chicago and around the region. These meetings give us the opportunity to discuss various emergency management planning and preparedness issues with our partners.

Having a wide-variety of stakeholders involved in the development of our plans helps ensure that responders at all levels know what their respective roles are and how they interrelate, which leads to a more coordinated response.

Region V All-Hazards Plan

The notion of all-hazards planning has been a driving force in emergency management for many years. Region V developed its All-Hazards plan utilizing a combination of planning factors such as, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) information, potential infrastructure vulnerabilities, state capabilities, historical disaster information, modeling and the unique characteristics of Region V.

While Region V faces a wide range of hazards, we have identified nine National Planning Scenarios that guide our planning efforts. These include an Improvised Nuclear Device, Pandemic, Catastrophic Dam or Levee Failure, Nuclear Release, Major Winter Storm, New Madrid/Wabash Valley Seismic Zone Earthquake, Chemical/Biological Incident, Major Summer Storm and Multi-state Flooding.

Using MSA information based on demographic data pulled from the 2010 Census provides us with an immediate snapshot of potential resource needs that may arise in the event of an overwhelming disaster in any of our states. We analyze the population of an area, the number of households, the number of children, as well as percentages of households that are below the poverty line, in assisted living, have persons with disabilities or other people with access and functional needs, have transportation needs, and those with Limited English Proficiency.

Using the expertise of other Federal agencies and our own resources within DHS, we are also looking at potential infrastructure vulnerabilities that could negatively affect survivor outcomes and response capabilities. Each state also has identified critical infrastructure that they believe to be vulnerable in the event of a catastrophic incident.

As I mentioned earlier, information pulled from State Preparedness Reports and THIRAs is a critical element of our Regional All-hazards planning. This information allows the Region to survey each state and determine potential resources the Federal government may need to provide in the event of a catastrophic incident.

As you know, Region V, which is centered in the middle of the United States, has a number of characteristics that make our All-Hazards planning unique. We are home to 17 percent of the national population, including Chicago, the third largest U.S. city; ten cities within Region V are designated under the Urban Area Securities Initiative; we are a major transportation shipping point with 15 percent of all U.S. freight shipments (by weight) originating within Region V and 25 percent of all U.S. rail traffic traveling through Chicago to reach other points within the

United States. In addition, Chicago is a major hub for telecommunications, natural gas and air travel.

Region V Earthquake Plan

The FEMA Region V earthquake plan provides guidance on how the Region will coordinate and execute its responsibilities and mission to effectively respond to and provide immediate Federal resource support following a catastrophic earthquake, aftershock or cascading impacts from such events. Region V has two notable potential earthquake threats, the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone and the New Madrid Seismic Zone. Region V states, including Indiana, have established a history of successful planning efforts in preparation for a catastrophic earthquake, particularly within the New Madrid Seismic Zone, though the lessons learned and processes used also have value for a Wabash Valley incident. The earthquake plan was developed around a 7.7 magnitude New Madrid Seismic Zone scenario, which was based on seismic modeling conducted by the Mid-American Earthquake Center.

This planning effort included workshops, exercises and ongoing planning with Federal, state, and local partners. These workshops, held in each of the potentially impacted New Madrid states between 2006 and 2010, focused on the Response Core Capabilities outlined in PPD-8, as well as on resource allocation. These workshops culminated in National Level Exercise 2011, which focused on a catastrophic earthquake event in the zone.

Following this large scale exercise, we are continuing to work with our partners to expand our planning efforts, focusing on logistics, operations and planning. These workshops placed a heavy emphasis on commodities, staging and logistical needs in disaster response. The next milestone for this plan will be a CAPSTONE exercise, driven by the Central United States Earthquake Consortium and its member States, to examine the private sector resources in a New Madrid event.

Improvised Nuclear Device Planning

The third planning effort that has helped us tremendously to expand our preparedness for all hazards, and in particular for large scale disasters, is our planning for an Improvised Nuclear Device (IND). Our IND planning effort focuses on identifying effective response tasks that could save and sustain lives. While such an incident would have specific impacts, the process that we used to develop the plan is one that we could use to expand our preparedness for other catastrophic events.

With this in mind, Region V is developing a contingency plan for a ten kiloton explosion. The plan is being developed collaboratively with more than 300 partners at the Federal, state and local levels, as well as from private sector and voluntary agency representatives.

The resulting document is a blueprint for common understanding that outlines how partners need to respond to an event from hour one to hour 96.

New Innovations/Lessons Learned

As we move forward, it is important to note that we are constantly working to improve our operations. We are learning lessons not just from past disasters, but also from disasters to which we are currently responding. We are implementing new force structures to improve the way we deliver services, new technologies to improve our situational awareness and coordination, new logistical models to improve the way we deliver commodities, and new partnerships to expand the notion of whole community in preparedness and response.

New Force Structures

To ensure that we are consistently delivering a high-level of service to disaster survivors and to our state, local, and tribal partners, while at the same time ensuring we continue to complete our non-disaster response functions, FEMA is moving toward a new force structure that maximizes our staff and capabilities. To this end, the Agency recently stood up new, full-time Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs), and is hiring disaster response staff that can deploy for longer periods of time.

FEMA has also established members of the DHS Surge Capacity Force, made up of employees from other DHS components and Federal agencies. During Hurricane Sandy, we deployed more than 1,100 of our co-workers from the various DHS component agencies in support of the response operations. We have also adopted a new model for serving disaster survivors by standing up Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams (DSATs) to replace the former Community Relations function. These new DSATs are deploying to the field fully trained and equipped not only to share information about the help available after a disaster, but also to go into neighborhoods and register survivors, answer case-specific questions, and facilitate survivor access to our full range of post-disaster services.

Any incident that would generate mass casualties would involve the deployment of large numbers of FEMA and DHS staff. These new force structures and programs ensure a more nimble and robust response and a higher level of service to disaster survivors. Region V was the first region to utilize the DSAT model in response to severe flooding in Illinois, allowing it to be more survivor-centric by bringing services to survivors, rather than asking them to come to FEMA.

New Technologies

FEMA is implementing new technologies to improve our preparedness and response capabilities, using satellite imaging and flood modeling to improve disaster response, engaging with the public through social media and adopting new technologies to improve interactions with our response partners.

We have adopted, and actively use WebEOC, which is an emergency management information sharing tool that allows us to work toward a common operating picture among multiple partners in real time. FEMA recently joined states in using this technology, allowing for greater collaboration between these partners. We are also using EMNET, a satellite-based information sharing system, to ensure productive collaboration.

Commodity Warehousing

FEMA Region V is piloting a new model for the storage and delivery of emergency supplies in the event they are needed for disaster response. We are working with regional food bank distribution centers to shave valuable time off FEMA commodity delivery. We will store FEMA commodities at no cost at six food bank centers located across Region V, in addition to utilizing commodities stored at FEMA's existing Distribution Centers that are located in coastal states. With this new initiative, an initial supply of commodities, such as water and Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), will reach disaster survivors more quickly and establish the supply chain from more remote centers.

FEMA worked with Feeding America—the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief non-profit organization—to develop the plan. Feeding America's mission is to provide nutrition support through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage the country in the fight to end hunger. The Region estimates that we will be able to store five to seven truck loads at the distribution centers, which is enough to respond to a mid-size disaster. Commodities in storage include water, shelf-stable meals, and infant/toddler supplies.

As we all know, all commodities have a shelf life. In the event that the food we put in storage is not used, our plan outlines a process that would allow the food-banks storing the commodities to request, through FEMA's established surplus process, donation to that food-bank before they expire.

The new storage plan will deliver a number of other benefits to regional operations. For example, deliveries coming from distribution centers on the East Coast or in the South may be delayed by weather conditions or other disaster disruptions, making speedy delivery a concern. Region V will have initial supplies pre-staged locally which will increase the speed of delivery and decrease the potential for weather or travel-related delays.

The six food banks in Region V currently under consideration for this initiative are:

- Second Harvest Heartland, St. Paul, MN
- Greater Chicago Food Depository, Chicago, IL
- Northern Illinois Food Bank, Geneva, IL
- Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana, Inc., Indianapolis, IN
- Cleveland Food Bank INC., Cleveland, OH
- Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan, Detroit, MI

Private Sector Partnerships

FEMA continues to expand its outreach to and engagement with the private sector. Region V has a full-time staff member who works to conduct outreach to a wide range of non-governmental partners, including small, medium and large business, as well as academia, trade associations, and other organizations. Throughout the year, FEMA's Private Sector staff works with the private sector to provide information on tools and resources to support preparedness, and integrate the private sector into the emergency management effort. FEMA's national Private

Sector team is comprised of headquarters staff, ten regional liaisons, and a disaster workforce cadre of approximately 40 reservists.

During steady-state, non-disaster operations, this FEMA office focuses its efforts on ways to engage the private sector in activities ranging from education campaigns, to opportunities for providing feedback on national policies, to participation in joint exercises.

FEMA established a special Private Sector Representative (PSR) position in 2010 to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate between public and private sector stakeholders before, during and after disasters. Unlike the full-time federal positions established starting in 2008, a PSR is a member of the private sector who serves as a special government employee (SGE) during their 90-day tenure with FEMA, effectively representing the entire private sector while they are a PSR.

When the NRCC is activated, these special government employees serve as critical liaisons between FEMA and private industry by leveraging private sector coordination and collaboration capabilities and sharing situational awareness information.

The PSR in Region V is currently filled by a representative from Walgreens. At FEMA Headquarters, representatives from eight companies, including Target, Big Lots, Brookfield Properties, Systems Planning Corporation (a small business), Verizon, Citi, Wal-Mart, and Dominion Power Company serve a similar role.

FEMA has also been instrumental in helping to establish the National Business Emergency Operation Center (NBEOC). The NBEOC is a virtual network of national corporations, Federal, state, local, tribal, territorial governments, and trade associations that have roles in disasters. Illinois is the only state in the Region that has a dedicated Business Emergency Operation Center (BEOC). The BEOC activates whenever the state Emergency Operations Center activates and provides situational awareness to the Regional Response Coordination Center and to the Regional Private Sector Liaison.

In Indiana, we are actively engaged with the Northwest Indiana Information Sharing Workgroup. This group is comprised of the private sector, state and local emergency managers, academia, faith-based groups, and other Federal agencies. This workgroup is part of the Homeland Security Information Network – Critical Sectors (HSIN-CS). HSIN-CS is a secure, unclassified, web-based system that serves as the primary, nationwide DHS information-sharing and collaboration system. Members of this group meet regularly and were active in planning for the recent NATO meetings in Chicago.

Faith-Based, Community and Volunteer Partnerships

Ultimately, FEMA is only one part of our nation's emergency management enterprise. This effort is a shared responsibility and our partners at all levels help communities prepare for, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from all hazards.

The Agency relies on our voluntary agency partners to help us support state and local governments by providing services that we may not be in the best position to provide. Our collective response is greatly enhanced by the on-going efforts of faith-based, community, and volunteer organizations. We depend on them as true partners to help on the front lines as well as behind the scenes, to receive and distribute commodities, manage and staff shelters and mass feeding facilities, provide counseling services and much more.

During my emergency management career, beginning as the Executive Director of Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communications, then as the Director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, and now as a Regional Administrator for FEMA, I have been a strong supporter of working closely with faith-based and community partners, and believe that their engagement is vital to our nation's resilience.

Whether it is through providing shelter, food, or clothing to those in need, removing debris to help communities begin the road to recovery, or helping families rebuild their homes, faith-based and community organizations have always played a vital role in meeting the needs of Americans. In an incident that generates mass casualties, the effective execution of these support functions will be essential to the region's preparedness and response.

As Regional Administrator, I have charged our Region V team to work collaboratively with local, state, tribal, and national partners to support faith-based and community leaders to determine how best to provide assistance to disaster survivors. With the support of the DHS Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, we have been able to make strong progress over the past four years, hosting several events to strengthen those relationships. It is my belief that as we strengthen these partnerships today, we will be better positioned to deliver essential services during our disaster response.

Closing

In Region V, we are continuously working to evolve our approach to preparing America's citizens to respond to the events that threaten their lives, homes and livelihoods, and to better fulfill FEMA's mission.

To that end, we are actively working with our governmental partners at the state, tribal and local level, as well as with our non-governmental partners to prepare for whatever may impact the Region and look forward to continuing that good work.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and look forward to answering any questions you may have.