

**Testimony of  
Trey Glenn, Regional Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4  
Before the  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Environment  
  
November 14, 2017**

Good morning Mr. Chairman, and esteemed members of the Committee. I am Trey Glenn, Regional Administrator for EPA Region 4, which comprises eight southeastern states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee) and six federally recognized tribes (Catawba Indian Nation, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Poarch Band of Creek Indians and the Seminole Tribe of Indians).

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the impacts of Hurricane Irma and EPA's response and recovery efforts, and to continue the productive discussions we had last month with the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment.

I have been on the job a little over two months and I can honestly say that I am in awe of the caliber of expertise and dedication of the regional staff. These environmental professionals work each day to meet EPA's mission of protecting human health and the environment, and this commitment was demonstrated consistently throughout EPA's response to the devastating hurricanes we experienced this past season.

The 2017 hurricane season was indeed unprecedented in the number and intensity of major storms that impacted the United States and U.S. Territories. The damage from hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria is still being assessed, and the recovery from these storms will continue for the foreseeable future. EPA Region 4 is fully engaged in a number of response and recovery activities and we are working in close coordination with our federal, state, local and tribal partners, as well as the business and local communities.

Responding to emergencies for the prevention, limitation, mitigation or containment of chemical, oil, radiological, biological, and/or hazardous materials or agents during and in the aftermath of an accident, natural or man-made, is a primary mission essential function of the EPA. The core of the Emergency Response program in Region 4 consists of 28 On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) with support staff who respond to releases of hazardous substances and discharges of oil throughout the eight states of Region 4. Our preparedness and operational capabilities are extended through contracts we have in place for technical assistance and spill response, as well as mutual aid agreements with EPA Regions 3 and 5. Our emergency response program also has reach back ability to all EPA regions and EPA Special Teams, such as the EPA Environmental Response Team and the U.S. Coast Guard National Strike Force.

Region 4 has 57 additional personnel within a Response Support Corp (RSC) which is a body consisting of non-OSC staff trained to deploy to or support disaster response and includes 35 non-OSC staff with Key Leadership Position training under the Incident Command System. Response Support Corp members volunteer to provide this response support in addition to their normal work responsibilities.

Having a robust Superfund program is critical to being prepared and ready to mobilize for any emergency response. In preparation for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, we worked in a

proactive manner to ensure that we had awareness of potential vulnerabilities and, in particular due to the trajectory of Hurricane Irma, were able to attend to any concerns in Florida prior to the storm's landfall.

In anticipation of Hurricane Harvey, we conducted Incident Management Training for staff the week prior to landfall to ensure that regional Response Support Corps personnel were refreshed in the Incident Command System (ICS). In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, Region 4 deployed four Response Support Corps members of the National Incident Management Assistance Team (N-IMAT) to support EPA Region 6 in Texas. The N-IMAT is a standing body of EPA personnel available to respond anywhere in the United States or U.S. Territories to assist regions in establishing an ICS structure to manage incidents that exceed regional capabilities and/or are of national significance.

With our assistance to the Hurricane Harvey response ongoing, and in anticipation that Hurricane Irma would impact the coastal states of the southeast region. I personally reached out to the Environmental Directors of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina to inform them of Region 4's ability to assist, if needed. We also reached out to our tribal partners that might be impacted by the storm. Other than Florida, no other Region 4 state or tribe requested EPA assistance relative to Hurricane Irma.

In anticipation of a weekend landfall of Hurricane Irma, we increased staffing in our Regional Emergency Operations Center to provide continuity of operations and coordination across the response activities. At the request of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), we also deployed our Region 4 OSC stationed in Florida to the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Tallahassee. The purpose of this deployment was to provide direct coordination and planning support to the State under Emergency Support Function

10 (ESF-10), which is Oil and Hazardous Substance Response under the National Response Framework. Prior to Irma's landfall, we also provided a Region 4 liaison to the FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) in Atlanta, Georgia, and deployed EPA regional, senior leaders to Miami-Dade, Palm Beach County, Broward County and Tallahassee to coordinate with local officials on Hurricane Irma preparations and immediate response needs.

As a proactive measure, Region 4 Superfund staff assessed vulnerabilities at all Superfund remedial sites, including National Priority List (NPL) sites, in the state of Florida prior to Irma's landfall. Before and after landfall, we worked closely with EPA Headquarters to issue a combination of 12 fuel waivers across multiple states whose fuel supply was impacted by the hurricanes and no action assurances to help stabilize prices at the pump and ensure that emergency vehicles had access to fuel. The fuel waivers and no action assurances were critical to assure the movement of people and goods, such as food and medical supplies.

On September 10, 2017, Hurricane Irma made landfall, and, on September 11<sup>th</sup>, while Irma was still moving across northern Florida, we positioned 12 Field Hazard Assessment Teams consisting of EPA OSCs, technical assistance team contractors and FDEP personnel for deployment when needed. In addition, the team included a number of OSCs that were mobilized from the EPA Region 5 office in Chicago to support our efforts. These teams were deployed to Orlando, Florida on September 12<sup>th</sup>, tasked by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, at Florida's request, under an ESF-10 Mission Assignment to provide oil and hazardous substance response support by first conducting targeted facility assessment support at chemical and oil storage facilities as prioritized by the State of Florida. The Mission Assignment further directed EPA to provide support to the State, for orphan container assessment and recovery, vessel pollution response and mitigation, and debris management technical support.

Region 4 personnel were also deployed to the Florida SEOC to assist the State and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers with water and wastewater systems technical support at the SEOC and in the field. The region coordinated with FDEP to monitor the status of more than 1,600 Community Drinking Water Systems and over 2,000 wastewater systems in the State. Beginning on September 18<sup>th</sup>, Regional Water Division personnel began contacting wastewater facilities with an unknown status while FDEP contacted public drinking water systems. By September 21<sup>st</sup>, 934 call-down assessments had been completed and the Water Sector mission completed on September 27<sup>th</sup> and the team members demobilized from Florida on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Concurrently, FDEP also made a direct request to EPA's Regional Office in Atlanta for assistance in contacting small non-community drinking water systems, such as schools and restaurants, and the Water Division completed 1,255 call-down assessments during the week of September 25<sup>th</sup>.

Our Hazard Assessment Teams began field operations in Florida on September 13<sup>th</sup>, and completed this first phase of their mission on September 16<sup>th</sup> having performed field assessments at more than 200 chemical and oil storage facilities identified as priorities by the State. On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the EPA Incident Commander of our Hazard Assessment Group established a command post in St. Petersburg, Florida, and prepared to direct area-wide reconnaissance for pollution incidents and orphan containers in the counties of central and southern Florida. By September 20<sup>th</sup>, our teams had cleared 134 assessment grids, covering five Florida counties, and identified no significant storm-related hazardous substance or oil pollution incidents.

On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, we joined the U.S. Coast Guard and the State of Florida in a Unified Command to assist with orphan container and vessel recovery in the Florida Keys. We also

deployed technical specialists to the Keys under a separate FEMA mission to provide support to the state in assessment of Disaster Debris Management Sites.

Our operations in the Florida Keys continue as we speak. To date, we have collected more than 704 orphan containers, consisting primarily of 55-gallon drums and propane tanks, that are stored in a secure staging area for waste characterization and recycling or disposal. With a focus on private canals in the Keys, our EPA teams have recovered oil and hazardous materials from more than 65 sunken or grounded vessels and moved these craft to land-based staging areas where they are transferred to the custody of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. Our current orphan container and vessel recovery Mission Assignment ends on November 30<sup>th</sup>, and talks are ongoing as to whether the State wishes to extend the mission beyond this date.

As I mentioned earlier, prior to Irma's landfall, we assessed vulnerabilities at all Superfund remedial sites in Florida. On September 12<sup>th</sup>, at the same time that our Hazard Assessment Teams were deploying to Orlando, Region 4 deployed six Teams to conduct boots-on-the-ground assessments of all National Priority List sites within the State. As a further measure, we also deployed teams to assess NPL sites in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. These teams were directed to complete on-site assessment of the sites, document current operating conditions, verify that there were no releases from the sites and—where necessary—take any further actions to protect health and the environment. In all, we found that our remedial sites experienced very little impact from Hurricane Irma. For example, some minor erosion was observed at the Fairfax Wood site in Florida. As a precaution, samples were collected from an on-site retention pond at Fairfax Wood. Analytical results from these samples indicate that no storm-related contamination issues were present at the site.

Post landfall, we also reached out directly to ascertain the status of all 310 oil storage facilities required to maintain Facility Response Plans (FRP facilities) within Florida, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina and all 274 chemical facilities within Florida required to maintain Risk Management Plans (RMP facilities). We worked through our state partners to determine the status of RMP facilities within Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. FRP facilities are oil storage facilities that store large volumes of oil, typically greater than one million gallons. RMP facilities are facilities that store greater than a threshold volume of hazardous chemicals.

Overall, there were very minimal reports of oil and hazardous substance spills that could be attributed to the Storm and only one of the 274 RMP facilities contacted, reported a hazardous substance release, the source of which was mitigated quickly.

Moving forward, we continue to meet mission assignments under the response phase and have initiated our recovery activities with FEMA and other federal partners under the National Disaster Recovery Framework. Under the Framework, EPA supports federal partners primarily on community planning and capacity building, infrastructure systems and recovery, and natural and cultural resources which translate into smart growth practices, mitigation, community resilience, and disaster planning.

We are excited to have the opportunity to work with our federal, state, tribal and local partners on this innovative initiative.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to be here and share with you what I consider to be a great example of cooperative federalism to assure and restore public safety and recovery from disaster. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.