STATEMENT

OF

PETER T. GAYNOR
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

BEFORE
THE

UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

"The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Budget Submission for Fiscal Year 2020"

Submitted
By
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, D.C.  20472

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**Introduction**

Good morning, Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Tester, and Members of the Committee. My name is Peter Gaynor, and I am the Acting Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is an honor to appear before you today to discuss FEMA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Budget and how it represents the strategic vision I intend to continue executing for this Agency and emergency management.

The last time FEMA had the opportunity to testify before the Senate on the budget was in April of 2015. FEMA was a different agency then; at that time our greatest challenge was the 2005 Disaster Season, which included Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. In the years since, we have matured as a professional organization. The past two years included six major hurricanes and five historic wildfires, and we continue to refine our business processes as we learn from each new disaster.

As a result of the 2017 and 2018 disaster seasons, FEMA has experienced an unprecedented pace of operations. Between January 2017 and December 2018, the President approved 143 major disaster and emergency declarations. Additionally, FEMA supported 191 Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAGs). These two disaster seasons were significant in their devastation of life and property, as well as the costs to affected communities and taxpayers.

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria caused a combined $265 billion in damage and were each among the top five costliest hurricanes on record. In response, FEMA coordinated large deployments of federal personnel and commodities, both before and after the hurricanes' landfalls, to support response and initial recovery efforts across 270,000 square miles. These deployments included more than 17,000 FEMA and federal Surge Capacity Force personnel, and nearly 17,000 personnel from various offices of the Department of Defense. FEMA facilitated logistics missions that moved more than $2 billion worth of commodities and supplies across several states and territories, using multiple modes of transportation. FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces, comprised of state and local emergency responders, saved or assisted nearly 9,500 lives across the three hurricanes. In total, the hurricanes and California wildfires affected more than 47 million people—nearly 15 percent of the nation's population. FEMA registered nearly 4.8 million households for assistance.

Today, FEMA remains steadfast in its commitment to support the needs of disaster survivors. We continue to work tirelessly to support state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) partners in responding to and recovering from disasters and mitigating against future risk. We overcame many challenges, and we have gained invaluable knowledge which we have incorporated into our strategy going forward. We continue to adapt and expand our understanding of emergency management to ensure that we can best deliver our services to support our partners' ability to build more resilient communities, lessen the impacts of disasters, and ultimately help individuals get back on their feet quickly.

**FY 2020 President's Budget**

Today, I would like to discuss FEMA's FY 2020 Budget in terms of the goals and objectives of the Agency's 2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan. FEMA developed this plan for supporting the Nation before, during, and after disasters and improving the Agency's execution of its fundamental mission of helping people during their greatest time of need. This plan seeks to unify and further professionalize emergency management across the Nation, and we encourage the whole community to join us in embracing these priorities. To do this and to drive both short and long-term funding decisions, the plan establishes three strategic goals for FEMA:
- Build a culture of preparedness;
- Ready the Nation for catastrophic disasters; and
- Reduce the complexity of FEMA.

Build a Culture of Preparedness

The Nation's ability to weather storms and disasters without experiencing loss significantly reduces our risk. The most successful way to achieve disaster resilience is through preparedness, including mitigation.

Building a Culture of Preparedness within our communities and our governments will support a National effort to be ready for the worst disasters. Everyone should be prepared when disaster strikes, and we must all understand our local and community risks, reflect the diversity of those we serve, and foster partnerships that allow us to connect with a diverse Nation. People who are prepared will be able to act quickly and decisively in the face of disasters, thereby preventing death and injuries, minimizing loss of property, and allowing for a more rapid and efficient recovery. When communities are impacted, they should ensure that they rebuild infrastructure better, tougher, and stronger to protect taxpayer investment and promote economic stability. The FY 2020 Budget requests $2.3 billion in preparedness and mitigation grants to help achieve this goal.

Also critical to these efforts is the *Disaster Recovery Reform Act* (DRRA), which the President signed into law on October 5, 2018. Key provisions in this law enable greater investment in pre-disaster mitigation; support efforts to reduce risks from future disasters after fires; increase state capacity to manage disaster recovery; and provide greater flexibility to survivors with disabilities. The FY 2020 Budget request includes funding to begin implementing key elements of DRRA to include earthquake related hazard planning and wildfire mitigation. Further, FEMA is working to implement the National Public Infrastructure Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program, which was authorized by DRRA and will provide a larger and more reliable source of funding for States to invest in pre-disaster mitigation projects. FEMA looks forward to continuing to work with our Federal, SLTT, and private sector partners as we continue work on implementing this legislation.

While we will never be able to eliminate all risk, we must mitigate the known risks as much as possible. FEMA will work with communities and insurers to close the insurance gap across the nation and is working to double insurance coverage. Managing risk through insurance, including the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), helps communities to recover faster following

disasters and reduces overall costs for taxpayers. The FY 2020 Budget includes a request for $5.1 billion to support operating the NFIP.

<u>Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters</u>
Catastrophic disasters, including low- and no-notice incidents, can overwhelm the government at all levels and threaten National security.  They are life-altering incidents for those impacted, causing a high number of fatalities and widespread destruction.  Catastrophic disasters disrupt lives and hurt our communities – economically and socially.  Readiness is critical for FEMA and our partners to ensure that the response and recovery missions are appropriately executed and successful.

The Nation's readiness depends on emergency management professionals who execute the mission on behalf of Federal and SLTT governments.  This requires a scalable and capable National incident workforce that can adapt and deploy to a changing risk landscape, greater integration with our partners at all levels, and the ability to communicate and coordinate effectively in every situation.

In 2017, FEMA announced our intent to embed FEMA staff within SLTT partner offices to help provide a more coordinated FEMA presence to improve customer service and provide targeted technical assistance to help build capacity and address capability gaps.  The first FEMA Integration Team (FIT) was placed in the North Carolina State Emergency Management Office in 2018.  Prior to Hurricane Florence, the North Carolina FIT developed an understanding of the state's capabilities, gaps, and processes, and helped to develop and share potential needs. Because of the team's proximity and co-location, the FIT began incident preparations for Hurricane Florence much sooner and with a better understanding of issues, prior to landfall.  Currently, FEMA has FITs embedded in 16 states with more to follow.  The FY 2020 Budget request includes $1.7 million and 25 positions to support the FIT initiative.

To overcome communications challenges in Puerto Rico during and after Hurricane Maria, FEMA deployed its Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) resources with mobile satellite, mobile radio, and logistics support services to provide command and control communications, situational awareness, and program delivery.  Building on lessons learned from FEMA's response to Hurricane Maria and other disasters, the FY 2020 Budget request includes $6.0 million for the acquisition of six Mobile Emergency Office Vehicles (MEOV).  MEOVs provide critical command and control capability in the field.  MEOVs are the primary command and control platforms utilized to support all-hazards response.

FEMA added more than 200 agencies to the list of state, local, territorial, and tribal authorities with access and ability to use the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) to send emergency alerts and warnings to the public.  We also provided technical alert and warning assistance and support to multiple state and local agencies including for wildfires in California and for hurricanes and volcanoes in Hawaii, and live public alert tests for the Navaho Nation. FEMA's FY 2020 Budget request includes $9.6 million to modernize five IPAWS Primary Entry Point (PEP) Stations.

The FY 2020 Budget also includes a request for $3.0 million to expand the distribution center in Hawaii to gain an additional 54,000 square feet to increase stock levels of pre-positioned life-saving and life-sustaining commodities maintained in areas of operation outside the continental United States. FEMA's stock target for food in the State of Hawaii is being increased from 558,000 meals to 3.81 million meals. Water stock targets are increasing from 372,000 liters to a capacity of 5.71 million liters.

In addition to building core capabilities in states and other jurisdictions, FEMA is improving response efforts through the stabilization of lifelines across critical infrastructure sectors. Lifelines provide indispensable services that enable the continuous operation of critical business and government functions during a response effort, and without prompt restoration would risk health, safety or national economic security. Solutions to stabilize lifelines, such as food, water, and sheltering, do not fit within a single construct (i.e. an Emergency Support Function [ESF] or Recovery Support Function), so we must provide cross-sector coordination to effectively stabilize critical lifelines. Focusing on these lifelines and related impacts will allow decision-makers to move rapidly and will better utilize limited resources to target towards the restoration of critical functions during response efforts.

Reduce the Complexity of FEMA
FEMA must be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of individuals and communities, and it must deliver assistance and support in as simple a manner as possible. We must innovate and leverage new technology to reduce complexity, increase efficiency, and improve outcomes.

Promoting simpler, less complex processes to streamline FEMA and the support FEMA provides to individuals and communities makes it easier for employees to do their work, and the Agency can better care for those supported. A simplified FEMA – one that streamlines survivor and grantee experiences and provides straightforward process and policies for staff – will decrease administrative burdens, improve the stewardship of Federal taxpayer dollars, and allow for a more efficient and effective execution of our mission. For example, FEMA is consolidating and updating all FEMA Individual Assistance (IA) policies and program guidance to simplify and streamline information about IA programs.

FEMA also is reducing the complexity by modernizing its legacy Information Technology systems. The FY 2020 Budget includes:
- $42.1 million to modernize FEMA's grants management system.
- $18.3 million for IT infrastructure to increase the security of core IT business areas, improve resilient communications, remediate cybersecurity vulnerabilities and replace critical end-of-life infrastructure.
- $9.1 million to modernize FEMAs enterprise data analytics capability to enable FEMA to work smarter through data analytics and ultimately deliver better outcomes for survivors and communities.
- $8.1 million to modernize FEMA's financial management system.

**Conclusion**
The FY 2020 President's Budget provides FEMA with the resources to help people before, during and after disasters while allowing us to strive for our vision of a prepared and more

resilient Nation.  Every disaster is unique with its own set of challenges, yet in the spirit of constant improvement, FEMA is exploring how to incentivize investments that reduce risk, including pre-disaster mitigation, and reduce disaster costs at all levels.

FEMA's work continues to increase at a faster rate and our goals and initiatives were developed to match the demands placed on this agency.  That said, the unprecedented pace of operations FEMA has experienced, and the improvements needed to respond to implement these goals and lessons learned has placed increased strains on FEMA's non-disaster funding, and I look forward to working with Congress to ensure the men and women of FEMA are funded at the appropriate levels.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you and your continued support of FEMA and its vital mission.  I look forward to answering your questions at this time.