



# 117th U.S. Congress Policy Priorities: Emergency Management

## **PLANNING:**

Provide for training & planning for disaster response

## **MITIGATION:**

Enable measures to minimize or eliminate the impact of disasters

## **COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION:**

Support communication across sectors & platforms for effective mitigation & response

## **STREAMLINING:**

Streamline funding, management & response mechanisms

## **CYBER THREATS & TELECOMMUNICATIONS:**

Defend public infrastructure against cyber threats

### **PRIORITY: PLANNING**

Public works plays a key role in emergency planning, responding to, and recovering from natural and man-made disasters.

#### **Recommendations:**

**Continue review of the Public Assistance (PA) deductible issued under a Supplemental Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.** APWA strongly encourages the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to work with local, state, and tribal governments to ensure a PA deductible can be properly drafted and meet unique population needs.

#### **Continue federal government study of drone usage and include recommendations from first responders.**

Public works utilizes drones in various capacities, such as for inspecting infrastructure, aerial surveys, flooding and height of water, traffic monitoring, weather impact on infrastructure, and to have photos to educate the public.

**Fund professional development training initiatives to support a diverse, high-quality workforce, and continued career opportunities in emergency management.**

#### **Reform the Stafford Act. Public works professionals play integral roles in drafting disaster plans.**

APWA notes the lack of flexibility in the Stafford Act which can inhibit communities in fully restoring their needs and services following a disaster.



### **PRIORITY: MITIGATION**

Pre- and post-disaster mitigation are essential for protecting against physical and financial harm. Since 2015, more than 500 Presidential Disaster Declarations have been issued. APWA values and supports federal emphasis on mitigation through federal grants and training opportunities.

#### **Recommendations:**

**Continue and fully fund the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG).** EMPG assists state, local, tribal and territorial governments in coordination and guidance to ensure an all-hazards emergency preparedness system exists.

**Support the intent of the Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities (BRIC) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)**

**grant programs.** Both programs support mitigation projects by states, local communities, tribes, and territories. Since 2018, FEMA has reported that for each dollar spent on mitigation, six dollars is saved on future disaster costs.

**Continue and fully fund the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)** which provides grants to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures. Public works utilizes HMGP to retrofit infrastructure and facilities minimizing damage caused by natural hazards, helps with post-disaster building code related activities during reconstruction; and implementing flood control project costs.



## PRIORITY: COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION

Efficient and effective communication amongst first responders, including public works, is critical for preparedness, response and recovery operations. APWA's members, along with law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical professionals, are on the front lines responding to disasters and protecting critical infrastructure.

### Recommendations:

**Continue support of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) being developed by FirstNet** and is intended to provide communications interoperability to emergency responders who are providing mutual aid.

**The Federal government must share threat information and provide technical support to state and local governments** in order to protect computer networks and other related critical infrastructure.

**Maintain the use of cross-sector task forces and study groups.**



## PRIORITY: STREAMLINING

Permanently enact now expired post-Katrina Management Reform Act pilot programs and include as part of the Stafford Act.

### Recommendations:

**Award grants based on estimates** and allow FEMA to make grants based on estimates for large projects up to \$500,000.

**Enact an increased Federal Share Incentive to allow FEMA to provide an additional five percent federal cost share for debris removal projects under Sections 403(a) (3)(A) and 407 of the Stafford Act** and for applicants with a FEMA-approved debris management plan and pre-qualified two or more debris and wreckage removal contractors.

Additional flexibility is needed to allow small agencies and financially burdened entities without FEMA-approved plans to receive this incentive via adoption of debris-management best practices or other means.

## PRIORITY: CYBER THREATS & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ensure the inclusion of public works professionals when developing, implementing, and executing cybersecurity and telecommunication policies.

### Recommendations:

**Establish Voluntary National Cybersecurity Guidelines/Best Practices and include public works in crafting these recommendations.**

**APWA advocates for comprehensive cybersecurity training for public works professionals through congressional or federal regulatory action.** Thereby providing increased opportunities for public works professionals who have responsibility or direct oversight over highly advanced cyber and technological operations, including Supervisory Control and

Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems. State and local governments should be consulted regarding any proposed telecommunication modifications that may impact public right-of-way. **APWA opposes unfunded mandates.**

**The Public Works sector** is included with law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, and emergency management in the Emergency Service Sector of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. It is critical to the safety of all citizens and to the sustainability of our communities that the public, government agencies, and other professional and technical organizations recognize and support the contributions of public works professionals in all-hazards emergency management.

**The American Public Works Association** represents over 30,000 public works professionals across North America, dedicated to providing essential and high-quality services to millions of people in rural and urban communities, both small and large. APWA members are among the first to arrive and the last to leave during natural disasters and other harmful events. APWA members are always there.

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