



IAEM-USA Government Affairs Update

Jan. 28, 2025

As you are no doubt aware, a lot of things are happening in Washington that directly impact emergency managers. Between the start of the new Congress and Executive Orders being rolled out every day by the Trump Administration, things are changing constantly. This update will touch on some of the highlights, with additional updates to be provided as more details are received.

Trump Administration

As expected, President Trump and his Administration are rolling out [Executive Orders](#) daily, some of which could significantly impact emergency management. For now, however, I want to focus your attention on two of them:

1. Federal Emergency Management Agency Review Council

The first relates to his [executive order to establish the Federal Emergency Management Agency Review Council](#), issued after President Trump visited North Carolina and California. At this stage, all we have is what is written in the Executive Order, which lacks many details. However, it specifically directs the Secretary of DHS and the Secretary of Defense to join the Council, with an additional 18 seats available for “relevant agency heads, distinguished individuals, and representatives from sectors outside the Federal Government appointed by the President.” Under the Executive Order, the Council is tasked with conducting a “full-scale review” and “recommending to the President improvements or structural changes to promote the national interest and enable national resilience.”

IAEM-USA President Carrie Speranza sent [this letter to President Trump](#) expressing IAEM’s opposition to “any decision to eliminate FEMA and shift the full responsibility for disaster and emergency

management to the states” as President Trump suggested he was inclined to do. The letter also requests a seat on the Review Council so that the voice of local emergency managers is taken into account.

2. Temporary Pause of Agency Grants, Loans, and Other Financial Assistance Programs

The second directive from the President that I want to draw to your attention could impact any jurisdiction or organization that receives federal grant money. Please take a moment to read [this memo](#) that was released by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Please note the footnote. It points to 2 CFR 200.1 to define what their definition of federal assistance means:

1. Assistance that recipients or subrecipients receive or administer in the form of:
 - Grants;
 - Cooperative agreements;
 - Non-cash contributions or donations of property (including donated surplus property);
 - Direct appropriations;
 - Food commodities; and
 - Other financial assistance (except assistance listed in paragraph (2) of this definition).
2. For [§ 200.203](#) and [subpart F of this part](#), Federal financial assistance also includes assistance that recipients or sub-recipients receive or administer in the form of:
 - Loans;
 - Loan Guarantees;
 - Interest subsidies; and
 - Insurance.
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According to a source, this memo applies to “Everything. Fire grants. Homeland. EMPG. Everything,” but there are also rumors of some exemptions.

And, in late breaking news, a coalition of organizations has filed a Motion for Temporary Restraining Order in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to block the White House Office of Management and Budget from pausing all agency grants and loans. You can read the motion [here](#) and the press release [here](#).

More information on this as it becomes available.

Secretary of DHS and FEMA Administrator

The Senate has confirmed Kristi Noem’s nomination as the next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. IAEM sent [this letter](#) in support of her nomination.

President Trump has not yet submitted a nomination to the Senate for the position of FEMA Administrator. Instead, [Cameron Hamilton](#) will serve as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator. IAEM leadership will meet with Cameron Hamilton on January 31 to begin getting acquainted.

Start of 119th Congress

Turning to 2025, the 119th Congress officially convened on January 2 and began the process of getting organized with lots of new names and faces to get acquainted with and lots of reshuffling of committee assignments and leadership. Please take a moment to review the committee rosters listed below. These are the committees and the elected officials who will be most directly involved in shaping emergency management policy and funding decisions. If any of these committee members are your Senator or your Representative, please make an effort to connect with them by inviting them to an exercise or to visit your EOC.

- [House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee](#)
- [House Homeland Security Committee](#)
- [Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee](#)
- [Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee](#)
- [House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee](#)
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End of 118th Congress

Finally, I want to wrap up what turned out to be a disappointing conclusion to the 118th Congress. As you may recall, the [Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act](#) and the [Disaster Assistance Simplification Act](#) were in the mix for a final vote in the House and Senate before Congress adjourned. For reasons that remain somewhat unclear, the Ranking Member of the Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) refused to allow either bill to move to the Senate floor for a vote, despite multiple emergency managers in his state expressing their support for the bills. Therefore, Plan B was to attach the bills to the Continuing Resolution (CR) that Congress was negotiating to finalize the 118th Congress. We succeeded in including the Disaster Management Cost Modernization Act in the negotiated bill, but that plan collapsed when House Republicans refused to support the deal reached by House Speaker Mike Johnson and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. Our bill, along with much of the rest, was removed from the CR agreement, and the pared-down CR passed both the House and Senate before the 118th Congress adjourned. Being so close to the finish line, it was incredibly disappointing that neither of these bills was signed into law.

In closing, many changes are coming our way, so it is critically important to engage in the public policy process to ensure the interests of emergency managers and the people you serve are considered. Please stay informed and make your voices heard.

The urgency and volume of activity during the first week of the new U.S. Presidential Administration has many implications for emergency management. Therefore, we are sharing this issue of our IAEM-USA Government Affairs Update with you.

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