



December 22, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair  
The Honorable Patty Murray, Vice Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Chair Collins, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Vice Chair Murray:

On behalf of our three associations representing the nation's state and local emergency managers, we congratulate you on completing work on your individual marks for FY26 appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As you move toward conferencing your respective bills, we would like to highlight several issues of paramount importance to our members.

1. **Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG).** Both bills propose funding EMPG at \$355 million. In FY23, state and local emergency managers handled at least 27,229 events without federal assistance, in addition to 60 federal disaster declarations. This capability exists largely because of the success of the EMPG program and its 50/50 match requirement, which we continue to embrace as a true partnership with the federal government.
2. **State Homeland Security Grant Program, Operation Stonegarden, and Urban Area Security Initiative.** Together, these programs represent a strong federal, state, and local partnership as we continue to build national preparedness. Both bills fund these programs at \$520 million, \$90 million, and \$615 million respectively, and we appreciate and support those funding levels.
3. **Emergency Management Institute (EMI), Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS), and National Domestic Preparedness Consortium (NDPC).** These FEMA training and education programs form the foundation for standardizing doctrine, advancing the homeland security and emergency management professions, and incorporating national priorities into daily operations. We encourage you to adopt the House funding level for EMI (\$32 million), the Senate funding level for CHDS (\$18 million), and the Senate funding level for the NDPC (\$104 million).
4. **Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).** EMAC enables state-to-state support through prearranged agreements and strengthens the nation's ability to manage disasters across all hazards and disciplines. The program leverages a nationwide cadre of well-trained personnel, serving as force multipliers and reducing the burden on the federal government. Over the past two years, 49 states sent 16,006 personnel on 693 missions to assist in events such as Hurricanes Helene and Milton; the Republican and Democratic National Conventions; Storms in Alaska and Texas; Wildfires in California, Oregon, and South Carolina; and flooding in Texas, Kentucky, Colorado, and New Mexico. We strongly support the Senate's funding level of \$3 million, along with

report language supporting improvements to the deployment operating system and training for EMAC coordinators.

5. **Disaster Relief Fund (DRF).** Project approvals from the DRF continue to lag typical timelines, despite the seemingly robust funding levels you have maintained in the account. While both the House and Senate provide approximately \$26 billion for the DRF, we urge you to consider up to an additional \$10 billion to ensure the fund remains fully solvent throughout FY26 and to allow a regular cadence of project approvals to resume.
6. **Enforcement of Statutory Requirements for Deadlines.** Over the past year, we have experienced significant delays and inconsistencies in DHS and FEMA meeting statutory deadlines for releasing grant applications, reviewing submissions, and issuing awards. In addition, the required monthly DRF report is routinely late. Congress established these timelines for clear and appropriate reasons, and we encourage rigorous enforcement. Accordingly, we support House and Senate bill language and accompanying report language, including provisions such as SEC. 303 in both bills, as well as the more direct language included in SEC. 107 of the Senate bill. We also strongly support the Senate report language directing a three-year period of performance for all preparedness grants, which enables state and local governments to better budget for, plan, and implement critical projects.

We recognize the funding constraints associated with operating under your allocation and hope to remain partners in identifying solutions for these programs. Emergency managers increasingly shoulder responsibility for complex and evolving threats that require sustained resources for effective risk monitoring and management. In recent years, emergency managers have addressed challenges such as a global pandemic, the opioid crisis, and safety and humanitarian concerns at the southern border. More recently, their responsibilities have expanded further in response to emerging nation-state actor threats. Programs such as those outlined above ensure that state and local governments retain the resources and expertise necessary to meet these challenges.

Our members remain at your disposal should you require additional background or technical assistance on any of these programs, and we look forward to working with you throughout the FY26 appropriations process.

Sincerely,



A.J. Gary  
President, NEMA



Mark Sloan  
Board Chairman, BCEM



Josh Morton  
President, IAEM-USA

cc: Chairman Mark Amodei and Acting Ranking Member Lauren Underwood  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

Chairman Katie Britt and Ranking Member Chris Murphy  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security