

IAEM Candidate Statement

Candidate for IAEM-USA Region 1 Maine State Representative

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Senior Planner

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Hello to everyone!

My name is Wes Sumner. I seek the role of IAEM-USA Region 1 Maine State Representative. I am the Senior Planner at the Maine Emergency Management Agency. I began this role after retiring from a 32-year career in the United States Army.

I have worked in emergency management for many years, most recently as the U.S. Northern Command Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Enterprise Program Manager, where I led VISTA FORGE to strengthen emergency response partnerships with State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial governments. My experience also includes managing responses for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, Florence, and Michael as USNORTHCOM Crisis Action Center Deputy Director and Crisis Action Team Lead. Additionally, I served as Program Manager for the U.S. European Command's Cooperative Defense Initiative, enhancing and implementing multinational disaster management programs and conducting capacity assessments in several countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Israel.

I hold a Ph.D. in Biodefense from George Mason University. I also have several Project Management certifications and certifications related to business continuity, including the Certified Business Continuity Professional (CBCP) from the Disaster Recovery Institute. My previous IAEM leadership experience includes serving as the Deputy President for Region 8 from 2019 to 2021.

What does all this mean for Region 1, specifically Maine? I want to use my business continuity and program management background to build a community continuity program that supports Maine's rural areas. Rural communities, here in Maine and in our neighboring states, face a unique set of challenges and vulnerabilities due to their geography and infrastructure. An aging population with social isolation compounds this. Our current emergency management structure often has a small staff, and capabilities can improve. Combine these challenges with uncertainty facing the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and we must strengthen our resilience wherever possible.

In my term of office, I want to work within our region to develop a rural continuity framework. I will use lessons learned, existing programs, and many different perspectives to determine how to best design and implement this program. Following that, I want to

begin developing pilot projects to implement the program with our counties and metropolitan areas. The project, as it grows, will serve as case studies for implementation in other states. This is part of a long, multi-year effort that will lead to our most vulnerable areas being better prepared for future emergencies.

I am looking forward to working with you, our communities, our region, and IAEM USA if I am elected as the Maine State Representative. We can build on the important work already happening in our field.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or if you'd like to discuss anything.