

FEMA Review Council Meeting

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Committee Management Officer Myron

Right, good morning, everyone. My name is Committee Management Officer Myron, and I'm the Committee Management Officer Myron for the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the FEMA review Council, a presidentially Federal Advisory Committee administered by the Department. I would like to thank the council members who have joined us, both in person and virtually, well as members of the public who are watching today. Your participation is greatly appreciated and highlights the importance of the council's critical work. The Council is led by Secretary of Homeland Security, Mark Wayne Mullen and the Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, who are the council's co chairs. The council shall advise the president through the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I'd also like to thank Mr. Bill Wolf, Associate Director for Homeland programs, Office of Budget and Management for being here today with us. Today's council meeting is convened pursuant to the federal notice register notice that was published in the Federal Register on April 29 2026 as a reminder, we are recording meeting minutes for today's meeting for the public record. These minutes will be available on the public website, the FEMA review Council's website. Today's council meeting will include opening remarks from the council's co chair, remarks and updates from the council leadership, a presentation of the draft final report. Members of the public can review the presentation on the famous Council website, presentations of the summary of the public comments made to the council and the council's deliberation, and finally, a public vote. I would like to acknowledge the council members who are here today. Governor Phil Bryant, former governor of Mississippi and the council's Vice Chair. Governor Greg Abbott, state of Texas. Mayor Jane Castor, city of Tampa, Florida. Mark Cooper, former chief of staff for Governor John Bill Edwards, Sheriff, Sheriff Rosie Kristen Stutz, Miami, Dade County, region nine FEMA Administrator, Robert J Fenton JR and two time Acting Administrator of FEMA. Executive director Executive Director Guthrie, Florida Division Emergency Management chief Nim Kidd, Texas division emergency management. Michael Watley, former chairman Republican National Committee and Glenn Youngkin, former governor of Commonwealth of Virginia, it is my great pleasure to introduce Secretary Homeland Security Secretary Mark Wayne Mullen, the floor is yours, sir.

Secretary Mullin

Thank you. Thank you so much, Michael. And thank you for everybody attending here. I want to give a big thank you to our president too, for standing up this council. This has been a task that you guys have really thrown yourself into. So thank you. I was talking to Governor Bryant this while ago on the floor before we walked out here, and he says, I am ready to deliver this baby. Been a year that has been on my desk, and I'm ready to, I'm ready to get it to get it pushed and get that in action too. We were privileged enough to have a meeting a few weeks ago, a couple weeks ago, and went over the council's recommendation, and I'm excited to get to work, but it wouldn't happen without President Trump's leadership, understanding that we need to refocus FEMA and get it back on his what his mission originally was, and it wouldn't have happened without without his vision and your guys's ability

to really dedicate so much of your time. I also have to Governor youngkin, I have to say kind of on a sidebar has nothing to do with this, but I feel like somebody needs to start putting signs all over Virginia saying missing me yet that happens after some of these elections, and I think it would be very appropriate for your billboards. Anyways, sorry, I chased a squirrel. The President calls that a weave. I call that a squirrel once again. Thank you so much for your for your time. I look forward to hearing the remarks, for the public, to hear the recommendations, and then I know you guys think you're just delivering it and walking away, but you're not. And and then we're going to be constantly going back and forth, getting your all's recommendations on, on, on when we hit any type of a roadblock. So thank you so much. With that, I'll turn it back to Michael.

Committee Management Officer Myron

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Now we will hear from the council's Final Report subcommittee and their presentation of the council's final draft report. The council's Final Report subcommittee is led by co chairs former Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant and former chairman the Republican National Committee, Michael Whatley, Governor Bryant, the floor is yours.

Governor Bryant

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. Thank you for your leadership on this and your team. What a remarkable job you've been doing during your relatively short tenure here, but hopefully long lasting and Secretary Hegseth and his team, FEMA lives at the intersection of Homeland Security and disaster response. It's a unique place for us, so both the Department of War and Department of Homeland Security is intricately involved in what happens across this great nation. I want all of you to have Mississippi on your mind this morning, unfortunately, last night, tornadoes ripped through my beloved state, beginning somewhere just south of Brookhaven and thank goodness stopping before the city of Hattiesburg and the University of Southern Mississippi, where the many college students. At this time, about 800 homes have been affected, some damaged, some totally destroyed. And so though there are those that are without homes today, their lives have been destroyed and upturned by this disaster, and they are looking for us to help them on their worst days. So Mr. Secretary, we have a real, live, real time disaster before us in Mississippi. I began today by thanking the council: What a remarkable job they have done, and I will do so again throughout this presentation, 10 representatives, Mr. Secretary, appointed by the President of the United States to undertake this task, 10 volunteers, a remarkable team of federal designated officers that have served us well, some that have gone on to other responsibilities. So as you see our program, as we begin today with our first slide, recognizing the President's Council to assess the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We were looking at so much of the why, and perhaps not the how, the discussion points that we all adopted as we began to move forward. What was the council's task? We'll talk a little bit about that as we look at the President's executive order. He gave us a clear roadmap in which to follow some guiding principles, most importantly, listening to the nation. What does the nation think about FEMA and its response? And we did find out, as the President knew and as President, I think, is verbalized sometimes, many in America did not believe FEMA was doing the job that it was intended to complete, and so they were challenges ahead for us. We listened to the nation. We had key recommendations, and then we thought about how we might be looking forward. So if we look at the council's task, there's Executive Order of the President of the United States, 14180, some of the recommendations were difficult for us to undertake as a council to assess FEMA, so we looked at those that we thought were important. For example, shall

the council shall advise the President on all recommended changes related to FEMA to best serve the national interest? We believe that was our our home that we needed to live in. What were we recommending to the President? And then finally, a report to us to be an evaluation of whether FEMA can serve its function as a support agency providing supplemental federal assistance to this was our task. These were the executive orders that we began as we listened to the nation interesting that we had nearly 12,000 public comments. Anyone that wanted to make a comment about how FEMA ought to be managed, or what the future of it looked like. We listened to we took those comments and not only heard them, but we involved them in our path towards a recommendation for the President of the United States. We'll talk about more of these. Mark Cooper will later on in the report. But again, 13 187 nationwide surveys, 16 in person and person, virtual and virtual. Listening sessions, engaging all 50 states. We traveled to states all across America, including California, North Carolina, Vermont, Texas. To be able to listen to the voices of Americans, we had to develop a North Star. I'm pretty good about following a plan, but I need to know where that plan is going to lead me our North Star was simple. How do we respond to a disaster at a federal level? First, we recognize that it's locally executed today in Mississippi, sheriff's department, police departments, fire departments, are executing our recovery plan. Search and rescue victims continue in the state of Mississippi today, but it's locally executed. It's state managed. It may be tribally managed, territorially managed, but the state of Mississippi has to do their job in managing these disasters. Florida and Texas come to mind as outstanding examples of states that manage their disasters before leaning upon the federal government. So locally executed, state managed and federally supported. Those were our that was our North Star, that was our standard of that we divided. We devised some guiding principles, and, number one, return leadership of emergency response and recovery to the States and to the tribes and to the territories. I've said that several times, but nothing can be more important than empowering the states to take on this responsibility. Reaffirm that individual American preparedness is the foundation for disaster readiness. Individual preparedness. Have your storm plan. We need to get back to those ideas. I remember as a child when people had their own fallout shelters in their backyards. If they didn't, they knew where the closest fallout shelter was. We took responsibility for food and water and to be able to respond to those disasters. Accelerate federal assistance dollars to help Americans recover from their worst day. We can do a better job of getting relief to the people of America on their worst day than we have been doing. I know that new administrator, the recognized administrator, Tim Alexander, is here this morning, and what a job he has ahead of him, and we hope he will be able to implement some of the recommendations we're making under the leadership of the secretary maximize the transparency and efficiency of federal, state, local and tribal dollars spent in emergency management. I'm a former State Auditor. I was State Auditor during Katrina. I can tell you you have to manage those federal dollars as best you can from an audit standpoint, but state auditors have that responsibility, and they can lean into making sure that all of those dollars are spent legally effectively in the time of disasters. And we need to draw that to their attention, and then finally, boldly transform FEMA into a lean organization that puts America's Americans first, from those we began to present. The most important part of the report is the key recommendations. Before this, I will turn to two members of the team that have been able to lead this effort, that know FEMA as they are leading nations and leading states in FEMA disaster recovery, and they've done an excellent job. Executive Director Guthrie is executive director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. We will turn to Kevin to begin the presentation of the key recommendations. And Bob Fenton, of course, as we all know, FEMA Regional Director and Former

Acting Administrator, will also direct us to the key recommendations of this report. I turn to Mr. Guthrie and recognize him for presentation. Kevin,

Executive Director Guthrie

Thank you, Governor. Brian. Secretary, I'm pleased to present a handful of recommendations. The first two that I'm going to present today are actually with my co chair, Nim Kidd, who is halfway around the world right now, but joining us remotely. So I've touched base with him and heard what he's had to say. So these are a combination of his words and my words, if you will. So I think one of the things I want to start with coming out of the 10 recommendations that a lot of people are probably not going to take away from it is my team that's clear to do so on this particular evolution. Actually went and looked into the report. Not only do we have 10 recommendations, there's over 150 recommended actions in this report. So to the emergency management community, I encourage them read the report. Don't read the executive brief, get into it and read the report. So there's over 150 recommendations. Or I shouldn't say, recommendations, but actions. The first one is to equip state, local, tribal territories to lead disaster response with the federal government and a supporting role, not a supplanting role. Again, the Governor Bryant said federal support, state managed, locally executed, not federally supplanted. So simplified. What do we mean here? FEMA should focus on setting the standard. We want FEMA to set the standard and then encourage creation of standards, and then adoption of standards at the state, local, tribal, territorial level. We should incentivize building scalable, trainable resources. Our college and university systems are eager to get involved and help this process. We should professionalize emergency management via professional certificate, and development of that certificate, we should set a standard to catastrophic planning and exercise. Currently, there is a limited ability to share and coordinate resources. We really get focused on response resources, our urban search and rescue team. I know if he was here, he wanted to highlight that urban search and rescue is a methodology of where we have done a really, really great job of getting resources out the door. FEMA doesn't own any of those 28 Urban Search Rescue teams. All 28 of those are owned at the local level, locally executed through a state support or state management, federally supported program. So we call on the implementation group that's going to do this. Let's enhance that. Let's see how we can take that model and take it forward. Can we do that for recovery? Can we do that for mitigation? The people who are doing this were at the state and local level. Let's figure out how to take that model and move it over and enhance that EMAC or emergency management assistance, compact resource, revitalize, expand, promote the Unified Resource catalog that is a part of FEMA already. Let's refocus grant investment on mission, ready, teams, capacities and infrastructure, not on sustainment, far too many people Florida included, I'll raise my hand, we've gotten into a position where we are sustaining our programs on federal dollars. That was never the intent, never the intent. And I know that's going to rustle some feathers, but that was never the intent. For example, the safer grant. The safer grant is a classic model. You can hire a firefighter for three or four years, but at the end of that three or four year period, you must maintain the ongoing budget for that firefighter. You can't keep coming back to the federal government asking us to sustain that. We need to look at a model very, very similar, that goes back up to the mitigation and recovery piece of that, promote the promote the integration of additional partners, involving our volunteer and faith based networks. We talk about them, but we don't really, I believe, proactively before the disaster ever happens. How can we take and make them a part of that? Let me give you a very, very classic example, private property debris removal, not covered by the federal government, but in Florida, what we do, and I know Texas does the same thing, is, we work with our

nonprofits to let them go on that private property, get that get that debris to the edge of the roadway, where now we have the legal jurisdiction, go in and take care of that. How can we do more of that before the disaster ever happens, and then incentivize investments in interoperable systems for comms and data sharing. So that is the first slide, sir. In a nutshell. Try to simplify it is to equip way, I'm sorry, equip state, local, tribal, territorial leaders to lead the disaster response with federal government in a supporting versus a supplanting role. And I will turn it over to Bob for recommendation. Number two,

Secretary Mullin

can i Yes, sir, clarify something on this? First of all, good to

Executive Director Guthrie

see you

Secretary Mullin

again, twice in one week,

Executive Director Guthrie

twice meeting.

Secretary Mullin

Yes. We were in a meeting of Florida together in Miami. And wealth of knowledge. Kevin, I was it's all different side of you, just by your knowledge of every situation, but also someone a great action. I'm going to hold you to one of our conversation we had, which we're going to follow up after this by saying you're You can get anything built faster than anybody know. So that's what you said. That's exactly what I said. I'm gonna hold you to it. I mean it. So just follow up. And I probably should have known this, but you have, we have to use volunteer groups, face based, faith based, or volunteer groups, to actually pick the debris up to move it to the street, so then we can have someone else come by and pick it up and move it again.

Executive Director Guthrie

Yes, sir. So for example, one of the problems emergency managers at local level. And again, I know NIMS was a local emergency manager. I've been a local emergency manager. One of the problems that we face is FEMA will not cover the expense of moving private property debris. They're going to

Secretary Mullin

move it anyways. We're just having to touch it twice. It takes twice as long. So that's why you see all the debris piled up on the edge of the street. That's

Executive Director Guthrie

correct.

Secretary Mullin

We would change it like as we get older, is put in a truck once haul it off service. It's still getting hauled off. That is

Executive Director Guthrie

correct. But today, the way, the way the system is designed today, again, local emergency managers need to partner with that nonprofit, faith based community to go in and get that debris off the private property for that 85 year old, widowed woman who's by herself, get it to the edge of the roadway. Then now the local government, state governments, have the legal, jurisdictional authority to go in there and take that, which is one of the things that is required in the public assistance

Secretary Mullin

fires we got to break down. It is

Executive Director Guthrie

bureaucracy at the end of the day.

Secretary Mullin

Thank you. I was just clarifying

Executive Director Guthrie

that, yes, sir,

Secretary Mullin

thank you.

Regional Administrator Fenton

Thank you. Let me just start off before I go into recommendation two by one, honored to be with this Council and its members. What a distinguished group. Just wanted to thank them for the work we've done over the last year. And also want to thank you, Secretary Mullin and President Trump for allowing someone from FEMA to be on this group, I think it was a great addition. I have over 30 years of experience of responding to disasters and then to some of our nation's worst disasters, whether it be the World Trade Center or Katrina in Mississippi, where I first met Governor Bryant and a number of others I worked in it. Within this room, I represent 1000s of other FEMA employees that believe in service and show up every day to help Americans on their worst day and support our states, and I'm glad to be part of this group to do that, as Kevin laid out, as Governor Bryant laid out in his opening, the focus of our report is to really ensure that we make the changes to FEMA so that we're supporting state and local government and that we build focus on building their capacity through our non disaster grant programs, and help them through our disaster grant programs. There will be, there will be disasters that require federal support through federal resources, and why that's the small number of disasters a year. We need to make sure we continue to build that capability and those resources, as was said by Governor Bryant fema's mission exists at the intersection of emergency management, Homeland Security, and we have some critical authorities. What we need to continue to have as we move forward with the changes in FEMA, one of those is to coordinate the overall federal government's response. FEMA coordinates across the federal agencies to ensure that those unique teams and resources are there to support state and local government. Kevin talked about our urban search and rescue team. I think Urban Search and Rescue is a great model where we provide funding to local first responders to

build capacity across the country so those teams are able to respond to disasters across the country. There's many other federal agencies, whether it be health and human services, Disaster Medical Assistance Teams, some of the teams specialized teams for Department of War that we're using right now in the far western Pacific and Commonwealth and Northern Mariana Islands to respond to that disaster are critical for those events that where the states need that additional capability that may only exist at the federal government, we have a number of recommendations that are focused on not only preserving but modernizing the federal government's capacity to support state and local partners in life saving life sustained events, and those are to sustain those core standards and support effective and interoperable teams and build those relationships and leverage that capability at local and state government. In doing that, we need to improve the federal coordination so that it's much more efficient and effective in disasters. We need to focus on how do we build capacity during emerging threats? How do we make sure those resources are ready to go and the state knows what they are, and they can depend on them in that response, especially as we have events, as we go into hurricanes disease in this year, and we have a hurricane that's five days out, four days out. What can Puerto Rico depend on? What can Kevin in Florida depend on that's going to be there to support him from the federal government? We need to integrate technology. I think that's critical in today's whether it's data and sharing data across, whether that's AI and where and how do we leverage that, but we need to integrate emergency technology into an emergency management and how we respond. We need to leverage our nation's supply chains. So much of this is going to depend on private sector in those critical supply chains, and we need to make sure that we are able to leverage them and integrate them. And then finally, continuity of government is a critical role FEMA plays, not only for the executive branch, but support state and locals for building that capability so that we have that through our nation, and we have continuity of government that survives not only disasters, but all hazards with that, I'm going to turn the next recommendation back over my partner, Kevin.

Secretary Mullin

Thank you, sir, and I want to reiterate this. People sing your praises. I haven't got to really get to know you. I've seen you, but this is the first time we've actually shaken hands. Didn't realize you was that big of a guy, which is a good thing. We need, we need four sometimes out there. But Cameron actually sings your praises, and everybody I've met has said the same thing. So really look forward to your expertise helping lead these this change moving forward, there's certain caps that I'm

Executive Director Guthrie

so recommendation number three, sir on slide number nine is to realign the criteria for federal disaster assistance. Federal assistance should only be reserved for truly significant events that exceed state, local, tribal, territorial capacity capability, therefore, common criteria should be established on how to evaluate it when it occurs. This includes a reset of the per capita indicator threshold using the consumer price index to account for historical inflation. Just on a side note, there was a period of time, for quite some time, that we waived that, and now we are artificially low across the board. And I'll talk more about that in a second. The current disaster declarations process for federal assistance does not adequately account for the state, local, tribal, territorial capacity, and therefore is inconsistent with the legislative intent and distance disincentivizes sltt investment and disaster preparedness. So it's boils down to three things that's to reassess, simplify and be more transparent. The way we do business today, you meet a threshold. You can request a declaration. And many, many states are going to say, I

hit a million dollars, I can request that threshold, regardless if it's actually broken the back of that local or state government. They're going to do it because they can. And again, that's what we're talking about. We need to realign that. We need to shift from more of a threshold base to more of a methodology that is based on an evaluation of all of the circumstances of the of the situation, and I'll talk more about that. One of my follow on slides, that methodology should needs to be immediately reassessed, in the opinion of the council. The last thing that I would say here, that goes with simplification, but last thing I would say is it transparent right now, there's a lot of things that happen at FEMA, again, regardless of the individuals. Just the mere bureaucracy of it all is that it is not transparent. For example, I know in Florida, I had to hit a threshold of \$41 million I have fires going on right now, inside of inside the state. I'll have to request an fbag Today that'll be coming up to the staff, and they're already aware of that, but I don't know what the algorithm is to qualify. Is it 100 homes? Is it 300 homes? Is it two homes? None of that is publicly noticed anywhere. So I could save a whole lot of time if I knew what the actual transparency was, and say we don't even meet the criteria. Don't bother wasting anybody's time with us. Let's go back to what we need to do so again, and we'll talk a little bit more about this in the individual assistance vein as well. But right now, there is zero transparency on how we get to some of these things to request federal disaster assistance. Sir, take any questions that you have on that, if not, I'll turn it back over to Bob.

Regional Administrator Fenton

Thank you, sir. I have recommendation number four, and it's focused on our hazard mitigation grant program. So Hazard Mitigation we both have within FEMA, we have a pre Disaster Mitigation Program, and then we have a post disaster mitigation and this is really focused on the post disaster mitigation program. We currently have a currently in order to provide those grants, it takes about, on average, probably about 27 months until those grants are available and ready to use toward projects, which is long after the rebuilding process begins. We opportunities are missed to integrate mitigation during the initial recovery phase. So if we want to improve, harden, make more resilient critical infrastructure, we lose those opportunities because the length of time, the complexity of the program, the administrative, burdensome work that it takes for states to go through, and local partners to go through. There's clearly, there's currently, right now, \$4.6 billion of unspent mitigation funds across the nation that could be used right now to mitigate and working through the processes in all 10 regions with our states, local and territory partners to do that, but it's a long, burdensome process. It's important to harden infrastructure and ensure mitigation efforts are aligned with national security and resiliency goals. An example that I'll just give you is I came back from Commonwealth of Northern may on islands that was hit with a category four typhoon just a couple weeks ago. Eight years ago, we had a similar storm and destroyed 2600 power poles in their power system because we put concrete poles and invested from wood to concrete and then extra funding. We had none of those concrete poles break this time, and the only ones that were damaged, wood pulls about 800 and now we're going to do the same thing there. We'll continue to make their power system more resilient hardened, so that as those events occur, they will be able to recover quicker from those events and sustained across those events. So our recommendation here in the Council is to really turn this program over to the state and let the state manage this program, but by providing them the resources and an architecture that will ensure that priorities are naturally aligned and that some of the complexities of environmental review and some of the other reviews are done locally, what we recommend is that there's a rapid mitigation advance of up to 5% of the overall estimate of a disaster that could be provided within 30 days, and that could

immediately be factored into the immediate reconstruction as it occurs by state or local government, based on their priorities, based on what their capital improvement plans are, based on how they want to improve that infrastructure. And then what we thought is that there should also be some type of strategic mitigation allowance that would make the remaining 10% available within six months. They're aligned to much more natural priorities. How do we reduce repetitive loss? If we don't reduce repetitive loss, it impacts our Flood Insurance Program, so we have to align the priorities of this federal funding and areas that not only work on critical infrastructure that our nation is dependent on, that cuts across state lines, cuts across local communities, but things that ensure the resilience of our national infrastructure. So those are our recommendations from the mitigation from the mitigation grant program. I'm going to turn over the next recommendation to Kevin.

Executive Director Guthrie

Right so Secretary, I actually have the next three slides, and I'm going to use this slide to talk high level about the next two slides, and then Adam, I'll let you know when I want to go to the next slide, please. So specifically, we're going to talk about accelerating individual and public assistance. But at a high level, this slide summarize, summarizes the problems on the left and then the solutions on the right. So, for example, overload on the left, we see an overly complex and difficult, centralized decision making and a lack of transparency. Already talked about the lack of transparency from slide number three, or I'm sorry, recommendation number three, but these are all things I think, regardless if you're blue, red, purple. In the emergency management industry, an overwhelming majority of emergency managers will tell you, Yes, those are the current issues that we have, regardless of political affiliation. On the right hand side, I think again, 95 to 100% of emergency managers will walk the following, and that is on the individual assistance side, a consolidated, disparate program that is less complex, a direct payment package that is much faster to individuals and then reduce the administrative costs, which would be a savings. And I'm going to give you an astronomical number here in a minute on the individual assistance costs. Then we want, as I mentioned slide number three, I'm sorry, recommendation number three, upfront index based direct funding. A less complex you've heard this referred to as maybe a block grant. How do we get that done? We need to leverage the state, local, travel, territorial review process and expedite recovery. I'm going to talk specifically about that on the following slide, and then reduce that bureaucracy and increase fiscal discipline. So Adam, if you'll go to the next slide for me, specifically an individual assistance. What we're looking for two high level buckets, a single payment and more of a focus on emergency housing, one of the problems, and I sat with the former administration after Hurricane Helena Milton, there is no program as it relates to housing that intentionally at the federal family looks to couple housing programs together. They are their own individual buckets. They're non congregate sheltering, followed by short term housing, followed by direct housing from FEMA, followed by CDBG, dr, maybe, followed by mitigation elevations. All of those programs at their common core are FEMA programs, but they're not a single one of them that are intentionally linked together for the benefit of the Disaster Survivor. You know, this industry often says we do everything that we do based on the needs of the survivor. We focus on the needs of Survivor, sir, I'm going to just be honest with you and have a very transparent conversation. No, we're not, because if we were focused on the needs and the outcomes of survivors, we would figure out how to couple those programs together and get people back home, period. So again, how can we get a single program we today, individual assistance has a lot of disparate programs. Depends on if you've got a second home,

it's your primary home, you're a renter, you're a homeowner, and so on. So this payment would be a direct single payment for homes that have been determined to be uninhabitable, uninhabitable. So we're not looking you had a minor flood on your property which did not inundate your home. We're not talking about you, right? That water will run off. You'll need to rake up your yard. You'll be fine. We're talking about people that really need assistance, that have uninhabitable homes. It'll focus on emergency housing. I've already spoke about that, and it'll and what we are recommending is let the state's local, tribal territorials Decide the solution. Again, FEMA set a standard, but the solution that works best at the community level. We heard this, especially with our tribal nations that said, you know, FEMA and the federal government was trying to push them in a direction that was not culturally right for their tribal nation. Well, let the states, locals, tribal, territorial make those decisions that are best for their communities at the very, very granular level, and do what they determine is best for them. Also, most cities, states and counties, tribes and territories have building goods and building standards. Why are we duplicating, effort to comply with some environmental historical preservation Indian tribal burial grounds over here. When at the state again, for the state of Florida, I know the state of Texas is the same way. I believe state of Virginia was the same way. There's somebody at the state level that does that, that already liaisons with the tribe. We don't need to triplicate that at the federal level. So again, let's get back to some common sense, state managed solutions. Set. The next side, we'll go into public assistance. And on this one here again, we get this into two buckets, the council proposes a modern and agile framework that converts the existing public assistance program into a direct funding model that leverages predefined objectives, objective event criteria and cost estimates to accelerate and streamline recovery. We talk about using a parametric threshold here in the first 30 days. I'm going to do this very loosely. I'm going to use my hands here for just a second, Secretary, if you just bear with me, what we mean by parametric, and this has been very, very confused in some of our public hearings. We're not talking necessarily about a parametric insurance policy. Now, there might be city states, tribes and territories that want to go down that path. Maybe that works for them. But what we're talking more about is, you know, an algorithm, or, again, we call it parametric. Let's say on your on your vertical axis, you have the population that's been impacted. On your horizontal axis, you got the size of the peril, if it's an EF four tornado that just hit Mississippi, if it's a category four typhoon that just hit the islands, whatever that is, there should be predefined set parametrics that say, if you have impacted 2 million people with a cat four storm or an EF four storm that then qualifies for x, and then we get X Out the door within 30 days and upfront that at the very beginning, we did recommend that at some point in time there is a one year true up, or maybe a one time true up, to get back to what the actual closer costs were in case where our methodology is way off. So and then the last thing there is accountability. You're going to hear Governor Bryant talk about this, probably in his closing slide. But I will say this, the amount of money that we spend at the federal, state, local, tribal, territorial level on duplicative and triplicative audit is asinine. If I in Florida, I use a private contractor method, but if I've got a private contractor that's a fortune 100 firm that's putting their CPA license on the line that says, I say that this is a true and accurate audit of this of the state of Florida's financials, then why in the world is the federal government going back and doing the audit on the audit that the local auditors have already done? Because anything over a billion dollars required? Dollars requires a single audit on that. So we're we're really talking about here, and I'll talk about in my next slide, about reducing the complexity of the duplicative and triplicative work that goes on within this community. But yet, we're still holding ourselves at the state, local, tribal, territorial level, accountable, sir. That completes me on this slide. And I think I'm going to turn it back over to

Secretary Mullin

Bob one, one question on this, on emergency housing. When you say emergency housing, what I'm thinking of is Katrina with all these, you know, trailers that were parked in parking lots and they rotted away for the most part. And after we pre ordered them, most of them didn't get used, and we sold them at fractions on \$1

Executive Director Guthrie

Yes, sir.

Speaker 6

But is that what

Secretary Mullin

we're talking about, emergency

Executive Director Guthrie

housing? Yes, sir. So for the emergency housing piece, and I help phone a friend, because, you know, he runs a lot of this emergency housing, especially in California and region nine. But in the very beginning, emergency housing. And when we talk about emergency housing in the report, we're talking specifically about what has traditionally been non congregate sheltering, congregate sheltering, that short term housing rental assistance, things of that nature, up to this direct housing that FEMA takes care of for depending on the program, about 18 months. But what we're talking about doing, and yes, the short answer to your question, I don't mean to make this a long, a long answer, but yes, we're talking about the FEMA trailers. But wouldn't it be a situation, maybe a better situation, that we get that down to the state level, and we actually if, for example, you can build a tiny home, or you can build a container home for less than half of the fraction of what it's going to cost to put in a RV because, sir, the amount of money that the federal government is spending on RV trailers, I've heard numbers that are six figures for a five figure travel Trailer. It is insane, the amount of money that the federal government is spending on housing. When, again, if we could get that down to, hey, again, here's the standard. It's got to do this, this, this, and this, whatever that standard is at the federal level, states figure it out, do what's best for you, down to the tribal level. And I come back to the tribal nations, because they were very, very additive about we need to get to like, Adobe housing and things like that that are culturally centric to what they do. Let the tribe figure that out what works best, but as long as it meets the following standards, whatever those standards are going to be, that they can implement that solution with those phones that come up. So yes, we believe that there could be potentially,

Secretary Mullin

but we're looking for if we're going to be paying for this, and it's going to be FEMA dollars, federal dollars, then we're wanting to see housing that's going to be reusable, something where we can take them from one disaster to the next.

Executive Director Guthrie

So, and I'm glad you clarified that. So we want sustaining, resilient housing. That's what we want. At the end of the day, we want, we want residents and Americans in this country to be more resilient. Well, I

Secretary Mullin

agree with that, but if we're doing emergency housing, emergency housing isn't sustainable housing. It's emergency housing. You're going to be in it for a short period of time, and then I don't want to tear it down. Yes sir,

Executive Director Guthrie

I want

Secretary Mullin

to be able to pick it up and move it simply. So

Executive Director Guthrie

let me give you an example in Florida. I'll speak very specifically about a Florida situation, hurricanes Helene Milton, Ian, we've got, I had 13,000 homes requested to be a part of our elevate Florida program, which elevates people up out of the water. Individuals were given money to muck and gut their homes, rehab their homes. Wouldn't it have been better for us to be intentional about how we do that from the very beginning, and say, Look, if you're going to take this money as a homeowner, and we start to intentionally couple some of these programs together, and you're going to be eligible for mitigation funding down the road, maybe up to \$200,000 of mitigation like we have in Florida right now. Let's link those things together. The activities I'm doing in the emergency phase will follow on to the permanent phase. I

Secretary Mullin

I'm looking at two different directions, but we just have to clarify that. Because I'm looking you're looking at sustainable, long term, building it up out of the flood zone, I totally agree. Why would we build a house that's going to flood again? I'm thinking of the first 18 months. Like you said that what happens in the first actually, I'm thinking of the first 15 days, first 30 days, and that's what I'm when I'm seeing emergency housing or hearing emergency housing. That's what I'm thinking about.

Executive Director Guthrie

So I'll give you an example again, Florida, we run our own state program for this, and something that was used back in the Oh, eight days was the step model, and it was designed to do construction, muck and gut of houses, get people back into their home. Maybe it was open studs on the walls. There was no Shedd rock. But again, we got people out of these temporary solutions, but back into their home while they then worked with their insurance companies, worked with other federal and state dollars to then fix their part, their home permanently. That's the type of thing we're talking about. Let the states decide what's going to be best for them, because I can guarantee this. Let me run a step like program, which was from, I think it was after superstorm Stan, Sandy, that and hurricane Maria. That step was born and then died a very, very quick death. We can do that, especially in Florida. I can, I can depopulate shelters, and I will not have individuals staying inside of RV trailers at 100,000 plus for a long period of time. I can fix that for a fraction of the car. Thank you, sir.

Governor Bryant

I think what we see is how complex the housing issue is, but what the council is recommending, let's help fund that again, support it and let the States know. As Governor, I knew where the rental property is, where we could find, perhaps manufactured housing to move in, or modular housing. I know that FEMA might not know that. Now Bob Fenton knew it, because he's that good, but the rest of FEMA may not understand. In dilo, Mississippi, where can they find rental houses? I I once had so many famous say, well, can they live with relatives? And I said their relatives are living with them. That's what's happened,

Regional Administrator Fenton

Bob. Thank you, sir. I have recommendation number seven, and it's focused on our National Flood Insurance Program, which maybe just coming off of Kevin's discussion about housing. You know, insurance is really the only thing that's available that will make you whole. And I think a lot of Americans look at us and our program as making them whole when they lose everything, and it's really to your point to provide temporary assistance to as an interim measure to get them back to to a permanent solution. And our funding isn't going to capture the whole cost of rebuilding what they lost from that storm, but it will temporarily get them rental. It will maybe temporarily help them quickly rebuild, make minimal repairs. It will provide temporary housing if needed. One of the key things that I want to talk about is the National Flood Insurance Program, and this recommendation, and it's really at a crossroads. The program is financially unstable. It's currently burdened by over \$20 billion in debt, and that's after in Trump 45 administration, they forgave \$17 billion so the program has significant issues. The program also relies on outdated risk information, which means that this leads to a disconnect, disconnect between the price of insurance and the public's perception of risk, and what are the actions taken to mitigate that risk or transfer that risk, as this is becoming a significant problem, it continues to grow, and that budget deficit will continue to grow over time as we have more events, and we're one big event from that really spiking up, up and being a significant impact to the liquidity of the program. We in this effort. We met with number of groups. We met with private insurance companies. We met with the state insurance commissioners. Multiple times. I got to meet with them and talk to them about how they manage insurance and other perils. And I think, you know, I think the program was built in the 50s or 60s. Originally started in HUD and then moved to FEMA. If this program was never built, there'd probably be another parallel right now on your normal homeowners insurance policy, but because it's a federal specific program, it exists, and it's a program now managed by FEMA as part of the National Flood Insurance Program. We met with reinsurance entities, we met with Treasury and a number of others, and from that, we came away with a number of recommendations that we want to put forward, primarily that focuses on a shift from a federally managed Flood Insurance Program back to the private sector and allowing the private sector to take on a bigger role within the market, and I think that's going to help, because it puts the states who are statutorily responsible for regulating insurance back into a critical role. We recommend launching a takeout program where we transfer those federal policies to private sector? There's a number of ways we could do that, one through engaging state insurance commissioners, but also through pricing and sharing information. One of those ways to price is our current what we call risk rating 2.0 which starts to modernize the risk data and build initiatives that charge rates for those policies based on your level of risk. So before this, the way flood insurance policies were established by FEMA if you lived in this area, and even though this person over here was

in a higher risk area than this person over here, they averaged it, and so you were paying over here for this person's higher risk. And so risk range 2.0 starts to now identify those in higher risk and less risk, and starts to charge those rates fairly. So we need to look at that and leverage programs like that we need to address repetitive loss. I talked about that a little bit earlier. 5% of our policies are repetitive loss policies that we will never get to private sector because they're responsible for 30 to 40% of the payouts that we do through our Flood Insurance Program. So leveraging our other programs, like our mitigation program, how do we buy out those homes and move them out of those risk areas? Or how do we build the infrastructure around them to better protect them and have those not be areas that have repetitive damage? Those are things that we can do with our programs. Just by linking them up together and working with state and local government. We need to incentivize states and communities to adopt better land use policies. Where they build and how they build can't be in risk areas, and we need to reduce the flood risk. And finally, we need to consider some programs, if we truly are going to move to the private sector on creating some tools to help that happen. And one of the ones that we recommend, and we talked to a number of entities about this, was a centralized flood insurance marketplace that we would help create. It offers consumers National Flood Insurance policies that would be offered by private sector, not federally managed policies and work with qualified private insurers on options for them to through that marketplace. The public to that required to get those to seek those in an easier way to do that, I'm working with not only state insurance commissioners, but private sector how to help and it has to be a priority to do that as it impacts many Americans across the country and as a requirement for many to have flood insurance as part of their mortgage. And so these recommendations, we think, will start to make that shift and improve it as we move forward in the future.

Executive Director Guthrie

I will speed it up, sir, I got your hint, so I'll make this 45 seconds or less. Could very well be the most important slide in here, and I don't want to lose sight of that. The next recommendation is to maximize every dollar spent by reducing the administrative costs to Americans across the board, I'll go high level, very high level, sir. Page 37 of the document that we're going to be entering today shows that 30% of individual assistance over the last five years, or let me rephrase, \$3.6 billion was spent on overhead and administrative costs just in the last five years. On page 52 of the document, 25% of all public assistance dollars are being used on overhead and management costs. If we implement recommendations one through seven, starting with the standard effectively using EMAC building, sharing, capacity, capacity capability streamlining, we will naturally reduce the amount of money that we spent for response and recovery across the board. It's happening even today. Governor colon in Puerto Rico is looking at doing an agreement with the state of Florida for us to send our people at a fraction of the cost to do those overhead duties, versus paying contract staff to do it, that is a best practice, and we can certainly bring the administrative cost of doing business down.

Regional Administrator Fenton

Thank you, sir. I have number nine, and we've discussed this already, but it looks at revitalizing a unified national network for partnerships. When we talk about responding to these disasters, it's really a whole community approach. And there's another of critical members beyond government that need to be integrated into this, and that is private sector, faith based groups, nonprofit organizations across the country. Our recommendations are returned to an integrated network that leverages the strengths from

all these sectors. As I said, I was just in CNI, where Samaritan's Purse was doing great work, American Red Cross, team, Rubicon. How do we integrate those and Americans that want to help into these disasters? We need to build that capacity at all levels of government so that they have a way to help, we need to enhance public private coordination, National Business Emergency Operations Centers at the federal level, the state level, the local level, so we can integrate private sector. Private sector is responsible for so much in disasters, and they own so much of the infrastructure or key key capabilities that we depend on. And so we need to be able to leverage those retailers, those small businesses, and we need to give them a way to integrate into these events. And then finally, we need to leverage technology. I talked about it earlier, but we need to do that so we have a shared situational awareness. I'll turn the next one over to Kevin.

Governor Bryant

Sir, real quickly I know last got talked about administrative costs. A cost of spending on federal disasters increased \$14 billion 14 billion in the last decade. Some would say that 20% maybe 30% of that is administrative costs. If you can reduce that to 15 from 20 to 15, you could save \$2 billion alone, just in administrative costs that we can easily crack up several \$2 billion is fairly soon gets to be real money, even in Washington. So there are real cost savings. I'm going to go through slide 17 real quickly the review requirements. So there's been a lot of talk about how many personnel FEMA needs. Do we need to let some go? Is their attrition going to work, or the retirements are happening? We decided and the council that that you should be your recommendation and administrators recommendation, after thorough review, appropriate staffing levels against mission requirements. I will say that I've been told that the headquarters here in Washington, DC has grown by 300% personnel over the last five years. So that's quite an increase. There we talk about a phased approach. Any of these recommendations are more of a rolling takeoff and not a vertical start. So we think two to three years would be an appropriate time to to bring these in again, back to empowering the states. We've said that enough, and to include shifting the training to the state and local level. Training is so important. Number 18, implementation of requirements. We looked at how this could be done. Can it be done through an administrative order. Do you have that authority in consultation with the White House and the administrators? So there is a a chart there that shows you what is policy in these recommendations, what legislation is needed, and regulations and executive order. And we know clearly we want to work with leaders in Congress, in the House and in the Senate, to get there, but this should be some help in looking at that. I'm going to turn now to Michael Watson, our former chairman and resident of North Carolina, who's been invaluable in keeping us up to date in real time in North Carolina. What that looks like? Chairman Whatley,

Fmr Chairman Whatley

forces as we're moving forward. And Governor Bryant, thank you for your leadership over the course of the last year in helping to make sure that this is moving forward. I also want to thank President Trump, you know for his continued focus on federal disaster management what we need to do to make it better and for setting up this review Council, as well as his unwavering leadership and support for my home state of North Carolina as we recover and rebuild from the catastrophic impacts of hurricane alley, as you've heard from our Experts here, there was significant structural weaknesses in our nation's ability to respond to national disasters. When the President was sworn in on January 20 of 2025 we had an

agency that had clearly lost its mission focus inefficient use of federal funds because of bureaucratic stasis and redundancies, centralized and bloated headquarters and states which were unprepared to respond to a significant disaster. These issues all came into play when Hurricane Helene slammed into the southeast on September 24 2024 within three days, more than 30 inches of rain hammered North Carolina. 73,000 homes were damaged, displacing 200,000 people. 1000s of roads were closed, with an estimate of \$2.5 billion in damages. 45,000 small businesses and farms sustained billions of dollars in losses. Were closed. 22 wastewater treatment plants, 25 wastewater facilities sustained damages, and prior to the storm, FEMA was more focused on politics. They were distributing covid funding and housing for illegal immigrants. After the storm, FEMA staff was instructed not to help homes with Trump campaign signs in their yards. North Carolina was completely unprepared to respond to an event of this magnitude, our governor actually spent the night of that the storm landed in New York at a climate change ball, and the state was completely overwhelmed by the extent of the damage and calls for assistance from local governments. President Trump's first trip after he was sworn in on January 20 of 2025 was to North Carolina and California, which was dealing with the fires, right, he made it very clear that the response by the federal and state governments in these cases was completely inadequate and promised to help these regions rebuild. Since that trip, he has overseen a whole of government response, which is obligated more than \$9.2 billion in relief, United States, Department of Agriculture, EPA, Department of Transportation, Small Business Administration, HUD, the Corps of Engineers, and of course, FEMA, have all been responsive into the State, and we've seen them there. Your first trip, would note was, was to North Carolina, and we're grateful for your leadership there, the members of this committee, we're honored that the President has called on us to undertake this effort and to really sit down and drill down into what has happened at FEMA, and what needs to happen in terms of federal disaster management as we move forward to make sure that we have a better, more effective response, federal response to disasters as we move forward. The key recommendations, as you've heard from this committee are to transform the agency right to transfer training responsibilities and empower states to prepare for storms, to provide direct aid to the states quickly and efficiently, and to rebalance fema's workforce and focus them on mission clarity. Together, these reforms will create a more resilient and prepared nation by ensuring that disaster response and recovery efforts are efficient, cost effective and locally executed, these reforms also will ensure that federal support will be available when significant events occur that overwhelm local systems. Simply put, we believe that we need to refocus the federal disaster management programs to a core mission to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards. These steps, which will be undertaken by the administration and Congress are very important, and we think that that when you have a chance to go through these materials and have the conversations that you will with, with your co chair, Secretary, Hegseth and President Trump, that they will accelerate disaster response and Recovery, modernize the systems and technology for greater efficiencies, empower local and state governments with better resources and tools, reduce administrative costs and federal burden, improve coordination across government private sector and nonprofits cultivate public trust through transparency and accountability and amplify resilience for rural communities and critical infrastructure. Thank you.

Secretary Mullin

I just want to note, Chairman Watley, this is quite impressive that you would take so much time out of something that you're fighting for pretty, pretty important right now for the for the state of North Carolina, and that you stayed focused on this, on this committee, and doing your job. Why? When you

joined this committee, he wasn't really in this thing called a Senate race, and how you were still here. Most people wouldn't have, you know, they wouldn't have blamed you if you would have had to step off the committee and refocus on your on your race. The fact that you stayed here, you stayed committed, been very involved, speaks volume of your character and your commitment to being more efficient and bringing FEMA back into focus, not just for North Carolina, but for the entire country. Because you've seen the worst of the worst North Carolina that was heartbreaking, but impressive. I mean, heartbreaking what North Carolina went through, impressive on what type of recovery has happened in 18 months?

Fmr Chairman Whatley

Well, thank you very much. You know it is worth noting that in North Carolina, the response that we've seen from the Trump administration has been transformative, as I mentioned, \$9.2 billion that have been obligated into North Carolina for everything from road construction, from debris removal, right from from grant programs, from USDA, from, you know, HUD, from small business administration. You know, at this point, within a year and a half of that storm, 99% of the roads and bridges have been rebuilt. 100% of the water systems and wastewater systems have been rebuilt. The Blue Ridge Parkway has been rebuilt. The i 40 has been reopened. It still has major, major work to be done. And just a couple of weeks ago, Lake Lure, which you frankly, could have walked across in the following aftermath of that storm because of the debris as well as Jimmy rock, have been reopened the President's focus and making sure that every department and agency, including your own, has has been unbelievable, and we as a state are completely grateful.

Secretary Mullin

Just to note too, when people when he talks about being rebuilt, we're not talking about like relaying asphalt. We're talking about rebuilding the hillside. It's gone. Nothing's there no bridges, no infrastructure to relay it on. It wasn't like a bridge washed out. There was no foundation for it to be rebuilt on, having to recut roads, rebuilding complete base, reshore up the flow of the water where it moved. In some cases, I mean, 200 yards. And when you're talking about the lake, this lake had entire and washed down into it, and to see that it's going to be open for late season is just really impressive. That's what happens when you do a public, private partnership and you allow the locals, meaning the states and the communities around to take charge, because no one's going to care more about their backyard than people that live there. So thank you, governor, Mr. Secretary, we've got

Governor Bryant

about 10 more minutes. I want to recognize, if you will, some members of the committee. I had two governors. One was both were governors at that time. We missed one, and the other one, I think, will continue to his great work the state of Texas, Governor Abbott, are you with us?

Governor Abbott

Sure am Governor

Governor Bryant

There he is. I recognize Governor Abbott's comments. Brief comments. Governor,

Governor Abbott

very briefly. Listen. I want to thank President Trump for his leadership on this. We all know that this is something that's been desperately needed in the United States. These reforms are definitely a step in the right direction. I want to thank Secretary Mullen for his leadership and what he's doing while I have you, Secretary Mullin, separate from this, I look forward to having the chance to visit with you sometime soon about border related issues, a topic that I know you're keenly focused on. I want to thank Secretary Hegseth, Governor Bryant, thank you also for your leadership. You've been the leader to get this mission across the finish line. Also want to thank our own chief, Nim Kidd in the state of Texas, who joins us separately today. He is, as you all have already recognized many times, one of the national leaders in dealing with these disasters. Unfortunately, Texas gets more than our share of disasters, and what we believe is this is a very, very strong step in the right direction that will be well received by the people of the state of Texas, as well as by the United States. So I just want to say a big thank you to everybody here for everything that you've done to get us to this moment in time, the only thing that I would ask, and that is to as we may depart this meeting today, that we find a way to remain in communication so as this as these reforms are implemented, the states will have ongoing dialog with the administration to make sure that they are implemented in a way that is most effective for the states.

Governor Bryant

Thank you, Governor. I'm sorry we didn't have time to talk SEC football, but that was a very concise and best of luck in your election. The great former governor of Virginia and our board member, Glenn Youngkin,

Fmr Governor Youngkin

great. Thank you. I also first want to thank the Council for your incredible work, because I think it reflected the great choices that President Trump made not only stand up this council, but to ask all of us to boldly transform FEMA and so to my fellow council members, thank you all. I reiterate that appreciation to President Trump. Listen at the end of the day, we know FEMA is broken and it needs to be fundamentally transformed, and his vision and his leadership are critical to make that happen. I do want to thank Secretary Hicks, who's not here right now, because he's doing something incredibly important, which is making America's mighty military the strongest it's ever been. And so I just want to say that and thank him. And Secretary Mullin, congratulations again. On on your affirmation to be in a role that I think you are incredibly well placed to serve in. Thank you for the immediate impact that you have had and your participation in this council over the last few weeks has been critical. What we see here is a need to change, and it has to happen, and it can't be trimming around the edges. I had the great privilege of serving as co chair with Governor Abbott of our federal state coordinating subcommittee, and I will say the work that that Sheriff Rosie played on that committee and the work that Mayor Castor played on that committee was incredibly important, because we heard from over 1300s eight and local leaders from 50 states, and they were very, very clear on what needed to be done. Why? Because the group that has been brought together here, and the group we heard from, understands what it means to lead in a time of emergency. How do we prepare for, how do we respond to, and how do we recover from an emergency, and that is best led at the state and local level, and I think we cannot understate where Kevin cannot overstate where Kevin started, which is, which is state led and federally supported, and this transfer that miraculously doesn't happen, where states are

pushed out of the way and the Federal government shows up, doesn't work. And when states leave, we see the kinds of responses that we've heard of in Florida and in Texas, and I humbly say in Virginia, when we responded to hurricane Helene in a way where we literally were there when it hit. We responded and saved lives, and then we were covered immediately, and it was state LED and the federal government we forced into a supported role because we wanted to have action and have action now we heard from so many of our leaders around the country, and we heard three basic themes Over and over and over again, let the state's lead send us the money and send it quickly. Don't drip feed us because we have no idea what we're going to get, and therefore we can't respond. And what you have seen is that these recommendations are all about accelerating federal dollars, streamlining the process, making it less bureaucratic so that Americans can get the help they need on the worst day of their lives. And this is not a moment for bureaucracy. It is a moment for action. It is a moment for clarity. And the last thing that anybody wants to hear is fill out this paperwork, and we'll get back to you in months and months and months. Second thing we heard is that the federal bureaucracy and FEMA is bloated. It moves slowly. It slows us down. It doesn't put Americans first. And then you see in our recommendations that it can be administratively streamlined by, once again, shifting responsibility to the states, getting the bureaucracy out of the lead and streamlining the administrative responsibilities in such a very important way. And then finally, we heard that the individual assistance program is mired in bureaucracy, and nothing is worse for an American who has lost everything to not get help when they need it, which is not next week, next month, next year, it is today. And therefore the streamlining of the support for individual assistance is critical to clarify and get moving on. I have to say that this is all about letting people lead. Who are there, responsible for leading, supporting them, yes, with financial resources, but making it clear. And finally, I have to say, the work that has been done by this council has been extraordinary. It is deep, it is action oriented, and it is comprehensive. And again, I want to thank President Trump for putting us all in a position to all in a position to address this most important moment, to make sure that Americans do get the help they need on their very worst day.

Governor Bryant

Governor, thank you for those comments and your work. Recognize Tampa Mayor Jane Castor. Mayor Castor, are you with us?

Mayor Castor

I am. Thank you, sir. I also want to thank our start by thanking the members of this town. Council for the dedication, hard work and good faith that went into the crafting of this report. We all came together with different using. other elected officials from across the nation. I just wanted to focus on a few points, few key points and recommendations in this report that are going to dramatically impact cities and counties in a positive way when disasters strike, federal dollars for urgent recovery work, especially debris removal, will flow to our communities faster and more reliably, unless you've experienced it. It is hard to understand what Debris Removal represents for those families, setting their lives out on the curb, watching those piles disappear is the first steps to recovery. Funding to states and local communities will be accelerated with a process that includes less bottleneck, less paperwork, and streamlined audit. Thank you. Executive Director Guthrie, this includes response, recovery and mitigation. We'll also see more federal support for expanding our local capacity to to respond to disasters, including funding for workforce training opportunities and much needed equipment. National Standards for emergency management will be developed for all levels, this is so critically important, and

there will be a renewed focus on some of the programs that are working very well, like our urban search and rescue and for our residents who need help following the disaster, the many complicated assistance programs with multiple applications and requirements for documentation will be replaced with a streamlined program, one application and one direct payment to cover housing, transportation and other immediate needs. Now these recommendations in the report are at a high level, but they are just the beginning and not the end. They open the door for stronger coordination across all levels of government and a clearer path to federal support to reach communities quickly and effectively. Our residents deserve a response system that meets the moment, and I believe that the recommendations in this report are great movement in that direction. Thank you.

Governor Bryant

Thank you, Mayor. Thank you for your service on the council. Now turn to Chief Nim Kidd, a practitioner from the great state of Texas. There's no remarkable job. Can you hear us?

Chief Kidd

I can Governor. Thank you so much and thanks for the opportunity. Want to start by thanking my boss, Governor Abbott, for his constant support and leadership in our division and our agency is what makes Texas Great. Want to thank President Trump for the opportunity to weigh in not just on this agency, but this discipline that will affect all Americans. Thank my council members and Secretary Mullins and my team and I are ready to work with

Governor Bryant

you and yours. That was, that was very efficient. It was, I look forward to working with you too, sir or Texan, he did a good job on that one. Miami, Dade County, the High Sheriff, Rosie Cortez Studd is here. I'm Sheriff. I turn to you. Thank you very much.

High Sheriff Studd

Thank you very much. Good afternoon. Council members, support staff and everyone who is attending this final FEMA Public Hearing, the review Council's final documents presents formal recommendations designed to restore the primary leadership of emergency response and recovery to states, tribes and territories. The report also promotes improved intergovernmental coordination, the establishment of national qualification standards for disaster management, for first responders, professionals, and increased investments in training, advanced equipment and mitigation strategies. By strengthening state and local leadership and capacity, our nation will be better equipped to deliver resilient, equitable and effective disaster responses, both natural and human cause. Disasters present significant challenges throughout the United States. The leadership of states, tribes and territories, is crucial for delivering timely, culturally sensitive and context specific emergency interventions. Local authorities have deep knowledge of their communities, positioning them to better manage resources, engage stakeholders and oversee recovery efforts effectively. Federal support should complement, not override, local leadership, enabling a collaborative approach across all levels of government, it is vital that disaster management by states, local and tribal entities involve joint planning and integrated incident command structures for major disasters. This involves building interoperable communication systems using shared situational awareness platforms, conducting joint exercises with after action reviews and supporting mutual aid and resource sharing among the states tribes and territories. In

addition, national qualification standards ensure personnel possess the necessary skills to manage complex disasters, collaboration among state tribal and territorial representatives is necessary to establish Emergency Management core competencies, create a national certification system, integrate standards into hiring and development and regularly update them for changing threats and their communities. Needs to maintain strong disaster response leadership, ongoing federal and state funding should support continued training exercises and professional growth, establishing regional training centers and partnerships with academic institutions, offering from culturally responsive programs tailored for those tribes and territories and fostering mentorship between experience and emergent, emerging emergency management professionals are key steps forward. Restoring leadership and disaster management to states, tribes and territories is central to the effective emergency response, and by implementing these comprehensive recommendations, including prioritizing local leadership, enhancing coordination, setting national standards, investing in capacity building and advancing mitigation will help agency agencies, policy makers, professionals and the emergency management directors build a stronger, more resilient United States. Both reforms at FEMA are urgently needed to create empowered, Collaborative Emergency Management Systems that protects every American and every community. I look forward to seeing a more efficient and resilient FEMA put Americans first in the years to come. I want to take the opportunity now to thank President Donald J Trump for granting me this opportunity to serve on this FEMA review Council. I want to thank you. Secretary Mullin, Secretary Hedd Sep and Governor Bryant and all of the council members and support staff, it has been truly an honor to work alongside each of you. I also want to extend gratitude to major County Sheriffs of America, as well as the National Sheriffs Association and the Miami Dade County Association of Chiefs of Police for allowing me the opportunity to be able to share and gather their input for my participation on this council. Once again, thank you,

Governor Bryant

sheriff. Thank you so much for bringing a law enforcement perspective here, the former deputy sheriff, I appreciate more than most the time and effort that you've put into this in your service, not only here, but to the people you represent. Thank you. Finally, Mr. Secretary from the great state of Louisiana, former chief and administrator there with home security and emergency. Mark Cooper, Mark, we'll let you wrap this up. Public comments. Thanks.

Mark Cooper

Thank you, sir. And thank you Secretary Mullin for this opportunity. Thank you the president. I know we only have a small amount of time, so I spent three quarters of my speech is gone. If anybody wants to go out in the hallway, I'll be happy to give those comments there. But I just want to make the point that what I really loved about this process is that early on, I think the expectation was we would stay here in DC and meet some conference room and find closed doors and maybe use some Consultants and attorneys. But that's not what happened. And as governor, Brian indicated we've had four public meetings. One was in DC, the first one, but we went to Louisiana and New Orleans as the anniversary of Katrina, and then we went to your home state. And I want to thank Andy best for helping to organize that just just to hear from the folks and over 16 listening sessions nationwide, everywhere from Los Angeles to Puerto Rico to Vermont to Oklahoma, which I talked about, to Colorado to Minnesota. I mean, we sought input from everyone. It wasn't based on red states blue states. We felt like it was very important to hear from everyone, which is what we did, whether it be emergency

managers, Governor, citizens, private sector, nonprofit, faith based organizations, and again, thanks to the organizations like NEMA and nga that helped us put those those meetings together. The bottom line is that this was one of the most extensive, I would say, public engagement efforts to assess and strengthen FEMA and DHS in its history. And I would say for any agency to go out as much as we did, pain sacredly people around this table, very selfless. A lot of us had jobs, but they made this a priority over a year, making these meetings. So finally, I would just say I want to thank the support staff, not only the ones that supported each of us here around the table, our own staffs, but also DHS and FEMA. And as you know, a lot of them did that without pay, and that's a shame on those folks that allowed that to happen. So they continue to work on this, and I have, I've got a renewed, renewed respect for federal employees and what they were able to accomplish through this effort. And thank you to Governor Bryant for his leadership. So that was pretty quick. So thank you very much.

Governor Bryant

Excellent, excellent Mark. I'm returning to cmo Mylon now for the important opportunity I normally would enjoy making a motion to adopt this, but I am being told that Federal law prohibits me from doing that. So Mr. Myer, and I turn to you for a motion.

Committee Management Officer Myron

All right, now is the time for the council to vote on the draft final report? Is there a motion for the FEMA review Council to approve the draft final report and send to the President? So moved, all right. Is there a second? So seconded, double second at this time, all in favor of passing the report. Please say, aye, aye. All right. Hearing the motion carries. Hearing, none for the record. The motion passes by acclamation and the final report is approved. The final report will be placed on our public website later on this afternoon.

Secretary Mullin

Thank you. Thank you for doing the hard work. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come to this position with a clear direction and an oversight of a agency that is in need of reform, but still mission capable. So I get to go to work, and I hope to continue to work with you guys moving forward so seriously, I can't thank you enough.

Governor Bryant

Thank you, Mister Secretary. Obviously members. I think there are a few of us that understand what a demand this challenge, but honor was when we all began. So thank you very much. I want to thank the people around the room, those that are often unseen and perhaps unheard of. But did the writing? Did the heart took the phone calls, all the texts and emails from all across America, we are here at this point of success with this council because of you. Thank you all. Mr. Myron, do I have the authority to adjourn this council? We stand adjourned.

Speaker 16

Thank you.