



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Investing in the Future: A Review of the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request for the Federal Emergency Management Agency

June 14, 2022

Hurricane Season began on June 1, and we have already seen one named storm, Alex, in the Atlantic. This is just the beginning of what is predicted to be another above-average hurricane season. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicted up to 21 named Atlantic storms.

Severe weather is on the rise. We saw more category 4 and 5 hurricanes from 2017 to 2021 — five years — than in the past fifty years. The threat of climate change is real and present.

In Mississippi, we have seen increasingly dangerous heat waves, and scientists project increased drought in the future. In addition to extreme heat, last June my district experienced devastating, hundred-year flooding. There is a lot we can do to mitigate the suffering caused by these natural disasters, but it depends in significant part on having a ready and able FEMA. Unfortunately, severe weather is not the only challenge facing the Agency.

FEMA continues to work on the COVID-19 response and has been called on to provide Southwest Border Coordination Support. FEMA also plays an important role in advancing public safety, which is imperative given that our Nation has already suffered over 230 mass violence events this year. Through its Homeland Security Grant Programs, FEMA administers critical funding to help protect our communities from violence and terrorism. Specifically, the Administration's budget proposes \$360 million for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, a \$110 million increase. This critical program helps nonprofits protect against terrorist threats.

My legislation, the *Nonprofit Security Grant Program Improvement Act of 2022* (H.R. 6825), authorizes the program at \$500 million annually through FY 2028. The House passed the bill in May, and I encourage my colleagues in the Senate to do the same.

Lastly, I look forward to discussing my bill, the *FEMA Equity Act*, with the Administrator. This legislation would integrate equity throughout FEMA policies and programming. The bill was drafted after the State of Mississippi failed to do its part to address devastation caused by the June floods.

Too often those most in need are left behind when disaster strikes. My bill aims to change that so every American, regardless of where they live, how much money they have, or the color of their skin, gets the assistance they need after a disaster strikes. I would also like to thank Senator Warren and Chairwoman Demings for their partnership in introducing this bill with me.

At today's hearing, I hope to hear a robust conversation on what it looks like to integrate equity into FEMA's policies. On that note, I would like to thank Administrator Criswell for coming before the Committee today. I commend you on the work FEMA is doing to advance equity throughout its programming and prepare for future disasters. I look forward to hearing from the Administrator about the FY2023 budget and how Congress can support FEMA in meeting the challenges ahead.

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