

**STATEMENT OF
RANKING MEMBER LAURA RICHARDSON (D-CA) as prepared**

**Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Communications and Response
“Ensuring Effective Preparedness and Response - An Assessment of the
Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Request for the Federal Emergency Management Agency”**

**March 9, 2010 at 9:30 AM
311 Cannon House Office Building**

While I am very interested in hearing from Mr. Fugate regarding his plans for FY 2012, it is imperative that I discuss the complexity of the task-at-hand.

As the Subcommittee meets to discuss spending for FY 2012, the Congress is holding discussions on H.R. 1. As we sit here today, the Federal Government - including FEMA - is only funded through March 18, 2011, under the current Continuing Resolution.

This has not only affected FEMA's ability to determine funding needs, but has also delayed the publication of guidance for existing grant programs which will further delay any grants awarded this year. These delays frustrate the ability of stakeholders, including our state and local governments, to maintain adequate emergency preparedness and response levels.

Making matters worse, the \$1.4 billion reduction in funding for FEMA-administered grants serves as another setback.

These reductions include:

- An overall reduction of the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) by 12%;
- A 12% reduction for the Emergency Management Performance Grants; and
- A 66% reduction of Port Security Grants to \$200 million below current levels.

These cuts will not only influence stakeholders' preparedness abilities for the remainder of FY 2011 but also carry over into future funding cycles.

As requested in the FY 2012 budget, FEMA would receive \$6.79 billion, a decrease of \$323.23 million from the FY 2011 CR level of \$7.11 billion.

This decrease also continues the trend of reduced funding for State and local grants, training and technical assistance to \$3.84 billion for FY 2012.

The FY 2012 budget also attempts to consolidate once again four smaller grant programs as allowable expenses under SHSGP including:

- Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grants (RCPG);
- Metropolitan Medical Response System Grants (MMRS);
- Interoperable Emergency Communications Grants Program (IECGP); and
- Driver's License Security Grants Program (DLSGP).

While I respect FEMA's end goal of simplifying the grant process for stakeholders, it should be noted that these last three programs received a total of \$141 million in FY 2011.

When compared with overall funding for SHSGP and its proposed scope of activities, this would equal \$30 million below current levels.

Additionally, the \$140 million funding for Assistance to Firefighters including the SAFER program is simply unacceptable.

As you are very much aware, these two programs are crucial in ensuring that our local fire departments have the staffing and resources needed to protect their own communities.

As the representative of the 37th district of California, these proposed cuts are very alarming. On February 22, 2011 a Libyan tanker spilled approximately 710 gallons of oil when the ship's tank overflowed during a fueling operation. Thanks to the local emergency response services, this incident was handled smoothly with relatively little impact to the environment or people of the 37th district. However, the proposed cuts to this grant program threaten to undercut our first responders' ability to mitigate future disasters.

I am interested to hear why this critical grant program was chosen to receive a total cut of 17%.

While FEMA grant programs are obviously significant to all of our constituencies, we all recognize they are not the only responsibility that FEMA has.

I also look forward to receiving an update on when this Committee can expect the final version of the National Disaster Recovery Framework.

It has been over a year since the release of the Draft document for public comment, and I am hoping that the final version will provide a clearer picture of roles and responsibilities in the recovery process.

And finally, I am interested in hearing a status update regarding FEMA's efforts towards the recoupage of Individual Assistance funding received by those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.