Coordinated Response to Hurricane Harvey Continues

September 5, 2017

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its federal partners continue a coordinated federal response to Hurricane Harvey, as we move toward helping communities rebuild and recover.

Although there are still some areas in need of response efforts, including some areas in Houston, many survivors across southeast Texas and Louisiana are now returning home. In these areas, FEMA, along with federal, state, local, and tribal partners, is working to support recovery work that includes massive clean-up efforts by communities and individuals.

President Donald J. Trump has made additional disaster assistance available to the state of Texas, specifically authorizing an increase in the level of federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective measures as a result of Hurricane Harvey. The President increased cost sharing to 90 percent federal funding for debris removal, including direct federal assistance, and a 100 percent federal funding for emergency protective measures, including direct federal assistance, for 30 days from the start of the incident period, and then a 90 percent federal cost share thereafter.

FEMA continues to urge survivors to register

online <u>www.DisasterAssistance.gov</u> as this is the quickest way to register for FEMA assistance.

As survivors return home, many may find their homes are uninhabitable or still inaccessible. <u>Short-term housing assistance and other immediate funding</u> is available to eligible survivors who register and may include short-term lodging at eligible hotels and up to two months of expedited rental assistance. When survivors register, they will also receive information on other resources in their area, including available services from other federal agencies.

To help provide accurate information to survivors, FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) are now open in Houston, Columbus, La Grange, and Edna, Texas, to support disaster survivors with information and resources. DRCs will continue to open in other locations identified by the state of Texas. Survivors can visit <u>the DRC Locator</u> to find the closest location. There are also Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams (DSATs) out in the field in key locations, such as shelters, helping survivors who may not be near a DRC. Disaster Survivor Assistance teams are able to register survivors for disaster assistance, update their information, make referrals to community partners, and help address both immediate and emerging needs.

Information and resources are also available in other formats and languages to help all those affected by this disaster, including people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, find federal <u>resources</u>. Information is also available in the following

languages: Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

As of September 4, 2017 -

- FEMA has received more than **573,000** registrations for assistance.
- More than **180,000** survivors have already been approved for more than **\$148 million** in assistance from FEMA.
- Of that amount, **\$55 million** is approved for housing assistance, i.e. rental assistance, and nearly **\$93 million** is approved for other needs assistance.
- More than **53,600** survivors checked in to hotels and motels through the Transitional Sheltering Assistance program.

FEMA has provided the following commodities to Texas and Louisiana -

- Texas:
 - More than **5,220,000** meals
 - More than **4,532,000** liters of water
 - More than **13,900** blankets
 - More than **13,400** cots
- Louisiana:
 - More than **416,000** meals
 - More than **414,000** liters of water
- More than **73,000** National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) claims have been submitted, and more than **\$13.2 million** advance payments have been issued to insured survivors.

More than 6,470 disaster loan applications, primarily for homes, have been received by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA has fielded more than 15,000 calls, and completed more than 2,600 property damage inspections.

Other Ongoing Federal Efforts:

The American Red Cross (ARC): Sheltering remains the focus of Red Cross operations; overnight 284 Red Cross and partner shelters were open with more than 33,000 people sheltering in Texas. In Louisiana, the Red Cross is assisting the Louisiana state government with emergency shelters, which hosted nearly 1,300 people last night. The ARC still has shelter supplies for more than 85,000 on hand, and fed over 74,000 meals from mobile kitchens yesterday while feeding capacity increases daily. Nearly 3,400 Red Cross responders on the ground with another 460 en route.

The **Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)** is issuing safety alerts and has <u>issued a statement</u> from CPSC Acting Chairman Ann Marie Buerkle regarding Hurricane Harvey.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has deployed nearly 450 AmeriCorps members, including FEMA Corps, from across the nation to Texas, and has placed local Senior Corps members with additional members of the AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team on standby. AmeriCorps members are supporting American Red Cross efforts with shelter and mass care operations, and are providing assistance to FEMA's logistics and disaster survivor assistance teams. AmeriCorps Disaster Response Teams, in coordination with FEMA and the Texas Division of Emergency Management, are organizing the volunteer and donations management process and operations, a critical need based on demand. On the coast, AmeriCorps members have begun the volunteer coordination process to muck and gut homes, registering nearly 700volunteers in just four days. In addition, CNCS is leveraging its vast network of nonprofits and community organizations to communicate the correct channels for donations and volunteering as well as calling upon the more than one million AmeriCorps alumni – to fill the urgent need for trained shelter managers.

The **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** is providing assistance through their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and waiving some regulations to make food more accessible to SNAP recipients, school children, seniors, and people who have fled Texas for other states because of Harvey. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service has been working actively with Texas authorities to provide flexibility and access to SNAP benefits. Examples are <u>here</u>, <u>here</u>, and <u>here</u>. Veterinarians from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) <u>are working alongside</u> other organizations, conducting on-site assessments with producers, while APHIS has already helped make **25** tons of pet food available. Nearly **270** USDA U.S. Forest Service staff are in Texas, assisting with disaster response operations.

The **Department of Defense (DoD)** has stood up three additional Incident Support Bases (ISB) at Fort Hood, Joint Base San Antonio, and Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort-Worth, to support forward distribution of supplies and equipment to the affected areas.

- Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) is providing more than 645,000 gallons of fuel in several locations.
- USNORTHCOM deployed 73 helicopters, three C-130s, and eight pararescue teams for search and rescue and evacuation. Approximately 6,300 active-duty military personnel are deployed to the affected area. DoD active-duty military personnel have rescued/assisted more than 1,200 people to date.
- The National Guard Bureau (NGB) As of yesterday morning there are more than **19,000** Army and Air National Guardsmen from approximately **40** states supporting both Texas and Louisiana.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers currently has more than 150 personnel engaged and operating in coordination with county, state, and FEMA partners. USACE has received and is supporting FEMA Mission Assignments for temporary power, regional activation, subject matter experts, debris removal and technical assistance, and temporary housing technical monitoring. In addition, they are also focused on <u>flood mitigation and reservoir operations</u>.

The **U.S. Department of Education (ED)** has activated its emergency response contact center in response to the devastating impacts of Hurricane Harvey. The Department's K-12 and Higher Education stakeholders who are seeking informational resources should contact the Department toll free at 1-844-348-4082 or by email at <u>HarveyRelief@ed.gov</u>.

The **Department of Energy's (DOE)** Secretary of Energy has authorized the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to negotiate and execute two emergency exchange agreements with the Phillips 66 Lake Charles Refinery. This decision will authorize a total of **400,000** barrels of sweet crude oil and **600,000** barrels of sour crude oil to be drawn down from SPR's West Hackberry site and delivered via pipeline to the Phillips 66 refinery. DOE continues to provide <u>situation</u> reports on its website, and has added a page to <u>report gas price gouging</u>.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) worked yesterday to clarify information on the risk of tetanus. People who waded through flood waters with open sores or wounds, or who were cut, scraped, or punctured by objects in the water should ask their doctor if they need a tetanus shot.
- National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) National Disaster Medical System personnel and U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers have provided medical care to more than 3,000 people affected by Hurricane Harvey. The medical teams are operating a Federal Medical Station at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston and are providing care at other temporary care sites in the Houston area. More than 1,300 personnel from HHS currently are on the ground helping those affected by the storm. HHS Secretary Tom Price, M.D., declared public health emergencies for Texas and Louisiana to help residents receive unimpeded care from local providers and healthcare facilities. Additionally, the Disaster Distress Helpline, a tollfree call center, continues to be available at 1-800-985-5990 to aid people in coping with the behavioral health effects of the storm and help people in impacted areas connect with local behavioral health professionals. Since August 26, more than **1,100** people in Texas have called the helpline for assistance in coping with the behavioral health effects of the storm and to connect with local behavioral health professionals.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is advising people that food, medicine, and medical devices should be thrown out if they have come in contact with flood water or were stored improperly during a power outage. The FDA is also identifying regulated facilities affected by the storm to assess any risk.
- The U.S. Social Security Administration is coordinating with the U.S. Postal Service for 46 alternative pickup points in the impacted areas around Houston where individuals can go to pick up benefit checks. A <u>press</u> release identifies the pick-up points by zip code of where individuals can go. For beneficiaries with Direct Express cards, Comerica will be waiving fees for all cardholders impacted by Harvey, even if they have been evacuated to another area, out of danger.

The **U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** <u>activated the Surge</u> <u>Capacity Force</u>(SCF) on August 28, to supplement federal personnel supporting states as they respond to the catastrophic impacts from Hurricane Harvey.

- The DHS National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) is helping facilitate access to communications and other critical infrastructure as recovery efforts begin. Of note, NPPD is supporting critical emergency communications through multiple avenues: Emergency responders placed 1,599 Government Emergency Telecommunication Service (GETS) calls on Tuesday, August 29, 2017. NPPD has posted a <u>US-CERT alert</u> on Potential Hurricane Harvey Phishing Scams attempting to take advantage of efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to hurricane survivors. Deployed NPPD workers are helping to maintain or establish coordination with owners and operators of priority facilities to determine their facility status.
- The DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) and FEMA have <u>developed guidance for impacted states</u>, localities, and other federal recipients on how to effectively communicate with the whole community and carry out their disaster-related activities in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will reach out to stakeholders this week about how to replace lost USCIS-issued documents due to Hurricane Harvey and how natural catastrophes may affect various immigration situations to include applications, petitions, and Immigration status.
- The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is working with federal, state and local responders on active search and rescue in flood-impacted areas of Texas and Louisiana. To date, the Coast Guard has saved 10,618 lives and 1,429 pets. Working with port partners to facilitate recovery efforts, the Coast Guard has reopened the Port of Brownsville to full operations, and an additional 17 ports with operational restrictions. The service has deployed an additional 1,050 active duty, reserve and civilian personnel along with 22 cutters, 37 helicopters, 6 airplanes, and 102 shallow water vessels to assist in response efforts, and to augment the 4,300 Coast Guard personnel stationed within the impacted area.
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection deployed more than 600 agents and officers with over 25 aircraft and more than 50 boats, and rescued more than 1360people and over 30 pets.
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) <u>has deployed</u> <u>approximately 200 law enforcement personnel</u> from Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) and Special Response Teams (SRTs) around the country to provide security for search and rescue teams and to assist with search and rescue operations.

The **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** has deployed housing specialists to Texas and is deploying up to **100** additional personnel. HUD teams are currently evaluating damaged subsidized housing in the affected areas and they are developing comprehensive vacancy lists that will assist with relocating some shelter residents. HUD has also released a list of its <u>programs</u> <u>that help</u> following a disaster and is beginning a <u>social media Q&A</u> push specifically targeting homeowners affected by the flood.

The **U.S. Department of the Interior** has more than **226** employees now deployed to support Texas and local and federal officials through multiple FEMA mission assignments, including mobilizing **six** 25-member Quick Response Teams (a total of **150**personnel); one is operational in Galveston, another in Houston, and four others are en route to NRG Stadium Houston.

- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has deployed 17 crews to measure and repair damaged gages and take high-water measurements, often under dangerous conditions.
- DOI's Office of Law Enforcement and Security has assembled or deployed 7Quick Response Teams.
- The National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and USGS are supporting FEMA Task Forces by locating and providing dozens of shallow water boats for search and rescue.
- Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) pilots are guiding Interior drones to locate people in need of help.
- Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement continues to monitor Gulf of Mexico oil and gas activities and inspect platforms.
- Bureau of Indian Affairs is guiding responses in support of the Tribes impacted by Harvey.

The **Department of Justice (DOJ)** has over **2,000** federal law enforcement personnel deployed to support public safety and security efforts in Southeast Texas consisting of **59** Quick Reaction Teams and **18** Mobile Command Vehicles. **700** Federal Law Enforcement Officers have been approved to support Houston Police Department. In addition, ATF has **225** SRT agents supporting the Houston Fire Department and Houston Police Department.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued a summary news release, which can be found here: <u>https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/opa/opa20170831</u>. The U.S. Department of Labor also created a disaster assistance web page: <u>https://www.dol.gov/general/hurricane-recovery</u>. A total of **\$30 million** in Dislocated Worker Grants have been awarded to <u>the Texas Workforce</u>

<u>Commission</u>. A grant for **\$10 million** was awarded on Monday, August 28, 2017, and an additional grant for **\$20 million** was awarded on Thursday, August 31, 2017. The DOL Employment and Training Administration is assisting Texas in administering <u>Disaster Unemployment Assistance</u>.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued more

than **100** unmanned aircraft system authorizations to drone operators supporting the response and recovery for Hurricane Harvey or <u>covering it as part of the</u> <u>media</u>. The authorizations cover a broad range of activities by local, state and federal officials who are conducting damage assessments of critical infrastructure, homes and businesses to help target, prioritize and expedite recovery activities. Houston Hobby and George Bush Intercontinental are fully operational and back to normal schedules.

The **Department of the Treasury** has suspended <u>certain tax filing and payment</u> <u>deadlines</u>, as well as certain fuel excise taxes, for those affected. <u>Loans and</u> <u>hardship distributions</u> from employer-sponsored retirement plans have also been authorized, and facilities and personnel have been provided to assist with FEMA's response efforts. They are <u>encouraging national banks and federal</u> <u>savings associations to work with their customers affected</u> by the storm by reassessing various fees and debt obligations, and we are working to ensure that all federal benefit payments reach those in the affected areas.

- The Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee (FBIIC), has been coordinating federal and state banking agencies' responses to the storm's impact on the financial sector in Texas. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing stands ready to process all requests for redemption of mutilated currency.
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is providing special tax relief and assistance to taxpayers in the Presidential Disaster Areas and is monitoring the situation closely to resolve potential tax administration issues as they are identified. The IRS frequently updates its information on disaster relief efforts related to Hurricane Harvey.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has 143 personnel supporting the response efforts for Hurricane Harvey. Working together, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the <u>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</u> continue to coordinate with local, state and federal officials to address the human health and environmental impacts of Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath, especially the water systems in the affected areas. The **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)** has been monitoring the status of communications networks and coordinating with providers and government partners on communications restoration in the areas affected by Hurricane Harvey. In addition, the FCC has been releasing daily communications status reports for the impacted areas. On September 2, 2017, the FCC, in coordination with DHS NCC and FEMA, reduced the geographic area for this reporting to thirteen counties. These reports and other FCC resources, including tips for communicating during an emergency, are available on the FCC's <u>Harvey webpage</u>.

The **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** has information for people who want to help Hurricane Harvey survivors, and those who are dealing with, and recovering from, the storm's long-term effects. The FTC warns consumers to be cautious of charity scams, and to do research to ensure that your donation will go to a reputable organization that will use the donation as promised. For <u>survivors</u>, the FTC provides a few points to consider in a personal disaster recovery plan.

The **General Services Administration's (GSA)** top priority is protecting the life and safety of those in impacted areas. Several federal facilities are temporarily closed but GSA remains fully operational. Information on the status of federal buildings can be <u>found here</u>.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) plants in Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana continue to be unaffected by the storm. The NRC has two inspectors onsite at South Texas Project nuclear plant in Bay City, and is closely monitoring the status of radiological materials licensed by the agency located in the three affected states. The agency is using <u>Facebook</u> and <u>Twitter</u> to communicate status updates.

The **Office of Personnel Management (OPM)** is supporting federal agencies with guidance and tools regarding human resources issues for federal employees adversely affected by the storm. This includes <u>guidance on Human Resources</u> <u>Flexibilities</u> for Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath, the authorization of a special solicitation to allow federal employees and military personnel to <u>assist with cash</u> <u>or check donations</u> outside the normal Combined Federal Campaign, and the establishment of <u>an Emergency Leave Transfer Program (ELTP)</u> for federal employees adversely affected by the storm.

The **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)** announced that as of Aug. 31, the SBA will offer an automatic 12-month deferment of principal and interest payments for SBA-serviced business loan and disaster loans that are in "regular servicing" status for residents and businesses in the declared counties.

The **U.S. Postal Service (USPS)** has resumed mail delivery in the Houston area in all locations that are accessible. All major processing infrastructure is up and running so the mail is moving. The <u>USPS Service Alerts Page</u> continues to advise our residential and business customers where they can pick up mail, including mail containing prescription medications, in the event they cannot get to their residence. The Postal Service is at the major shelter locations and visiting all the other shelter locations, assisting with change of address and other services.

USA.gov and **GobiernoUSA.gov** continues to support federal agency messaging efforts on their home pages and they're compiling federal agency updates and messaging on rapidly growing Hurricane Harvey pages found at <u>https://www.usa.gov/hurricane-harvey</u>and<u>https://gobierno.usa.gov/huracanharvey</u>.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) <u>has information for veterans</u> on the Veterans Benefits Administration Loan Guaranty, rapid prosthetic replacement, re-issuance of special adaptive grants (home and vehicle) if destroyed in the disaster, continuation of education benefits and re-routing of pension checks. The VA has deployed four Mobile Vet Centers and three Mobile Medical Units to Houston, offering medical care and counseling services to veterans in the community affected by Hurricane Harvey.