

Association of State FloodPlain Managers
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Resolution in Support of Removing FEMA from DHS

WHEREAS, nationwide damages from natural disasters have continued to increase every year and flood damages have risen to an estimated \$6 billion annually and the United States of America needs a nimble federal agency that is able to respond to, to plan for, to recover from, and to mitigate against natural disasters,

WHEREAS, millions of American homes, businesses, and public facilities and infrastructure are exposed every day to threats of floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires and other natural hazards,

WHEREAS, a presidential executive order in 1979 merged many of the separate disaster-related responsibilities into a new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA),

WHEREAS, through several reorganization initiatives over the past 15 years, FEMA had become a capable and responsive agency with a new emphasis regarding preparedness and mitigation as evidenced by their recognition and acceptance by the American public as the primary agency which delivers disaster assistance and mitigation assistance following natural disasters, including the administration of the National Flood Insurance Program,

WHEREAS, it has been found by the General Accounting Office, even in the face of rising disaster damages, that mitigation is cost-effective, and analysis of mitigation activities demonstrates at least twice as many future benefits as costs,

WHEREAS, avoiding, reducing or eliminating future damages and lessening the risk and vulnerability of our country's citizens and their properties to disasters can be achieved through hazard mitigation planning and initiatives,

WHEREAS, in March 2003 FEMA was merged with 22 other federal agencies into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) which has the primary mission to protect the nation from terrorism and preparing the nation's first responders,

WHEREAS, it is important for the Nation, at this time, and important for DHS, to have a terrorism oriented mission; however, that objective must not be accomplished at the expense of the nation's ability to prepare, respond, recover, and mitigate the impacts of natural hazards,

WHEREAS, as a result of the DHS merger, FEMA is no longer an independent agency having direct input to the President, nor does it have Presidentially nominated / Senate confirmed positions leading the agency as Mitigation Director or Federal Insurance Administrator,

WHEREAS, FEMA's role as related to terrorism, can be accomplished through interagency coordination with DHS without necessarily being part of a large bureaucracy such as DHS,

WHEREAS, the DHS's actions such as taking resources from FEMA for unfunded or under funded DHS initiatives and transferring FEMA positions and programs to other areas within DHS are harming FEMA and its critical missions, especially its essential natural hazards programs, and diminishing the ability of States and communities to cope with natural hazards,

WHEREAS, several reports, including those from the General Accounting Office and Congressional Research Service have identified challenges with the creation of DHS including the loss of focus on FEMA's traditional critical mission and identity,

WHEREAS, these same concerns have been voiced by several members of Congress,

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Association of State Floodplain Managers supports FEMA's critical role in disaster response, recovery, and mitigation,

BE IT FURTHER resolved that the Association of State Floodplain Managers strongly recommends that FEMA be taken out of DHS and restored as an independent agency reporting directly to the President,

BE IT FURTHER resolved that FEMA senior leadership positions be Senate confirmed appointees.

Approved by the Board of Directors August 17, 2004

Attested Rhonda Montgomery, ASFPM Secretary