



Appendix J
**Associate Director
Memorandum: Continuing
the FEMA/State Dialog in
Mitigation, January 2000**



Federal Emergency Management Agency

Washington, D.C. 20472

JAN 11 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: Regional Directors
Regions I – X

ATTENTION: Mitigation Division Directors

FROM: *Michael J. Armstrong*
Michael J. Armstrong
Associate Director for Mitigation

SUBJECT: Continuing the FEMA/State Dialog on Mitigation

The purpose of this memo is to request that you and your Mitigation staff begin to develop profiles of State-level mitigation programs and activities within your respective Regions. These profiles should be based on information gained during visits to States for technical assistance and support, and should be used by you in subsequent discussions with State management officials.

In a planning guidance memo dated October 22, 1999 I provided you with some ideas and thoughts on how, using our strategic partnerships with States and local governments, we might establish more collaborative and integrated mitigation planning processes that would yield more effective plans. Attached to that memo was a summary of planning guidance and tools as well as a "checklist." The checklist was designed to both communicate a new strategic vision for mitigation planning and to assist your staff in reviewing plans as they are submitted to you for approval. One of the central ideas expressed in the October 22 memo was that Regional Directors should use the results generated by the checklist to engage in a constructive dialog with States regarding their progress in establishing more effective plans that show clear linkages between State and local mitigation planning efforts.

As you know from my meetings and correspondence with you, I am fully convinced that the key to broadening and strengthening the current partnerships with States will be determined by our success in maintaining an open, constructive exchange of information and ideas. While we have established the basis for this in the area of planning, I believe we have an opportunity to do this in other areas of mitigation as well. Therefore, beginning in January 2000, I am requesting that your staff begin to provide you with an informal analysis of the mitigation initiatives and programs for each State within your region. The analysis might talk about creative new mapping initiatives under the Cooperative Technical Community (CTC) concept, new processes to expedite obligations under our mitigation grant programs and/or new ideas to quantify and measure the benefits of mitigation projects. Similarly, the analysis might highlight new initiatives used in other States that your staff thinks might work and benefit the State for which the analysis is being prepared.

After a time, I believe a profile will emerge that you can use as the basis for a "constructive dialog." Input for this analysis could be drawn from staff visits to the State and localities within the State, planning checklist results as well as from the Capability Assessment for Readiness (CAR) process. Attached for your review is a sample analysis that I had my staff develop to further illustrate this idea. This attachment by no means exhausts all the areas that might be explored.

As you know, we have worked long and hard to provide the States with the flexibility to focus resources and emphasis on the areas of emergency management that they believe need development or improvement. Therefore, I want to emphasize to you that this profile is not a report card, it is simply a suggested means to facilitate your discussion with the State on how together we can reduce disaster losses through mitigation.

Please send me a copy of all State profiles as they are completed. I am requesting that a profile for at least one state within each of your respective regions be completed and sent to me by February 18, 2000, with all States to be completed by June 2000. I intend to make this an item for discussion in our subsequent meetings and will continue to look for creative means to support you as you do mitigation business with FEMA's State partners.

STATE MITIGATION PROGRAM ANALYSIS

Mapping Hazards and Assessing Risks

- State staff is working more closely with local governments to provide improved mapping products to high-risk communities.
- Under the Cooperating Technical Communities initiative, communities and State are working together toward taking increased responsibility for maintaining up-to-date FIRMs. The State is coming up with innovative ways to provide assistance to communities so they can determine whether maps are accurate, and to determine what tasks would need to be accomplished to provide the updates. The State is also coming up with innovative ways to find new sources of funding, and to package funds and other resources needed to accomplish map updates.
- As communities get involved in local hazard identification and risk assessment activities, the State is beginning to compile a map of hazard "hot spots", which represent areas subject to a high degree of losses during a natural hazard event. This map will include State-owned facilities at risk.

Mitigation Planning

- The State is reviewing its current mitigation plan against the new mitigation planning checklist to determine where improvement is warranted. The State is seeking out plans from other States for comparison purposes and to reveal new ideas and concepts for mitigation programs. As a result, the State is updating its plan to reflect the items in the checklist.
- The State is developing an "all hazard" mitigation planning process whereby goals, objectives, projects and strategies are pursued in partnership with local government. Increased communication with communities and attendance at meetings during the planning process is resulting in the State becoming a more active partner in the development of local plans. Community mitigation plans are showing a closer relationship to State goals and policy.
- The State is developing ways to expand the number of State agencies participating in mitigation efforts by holding periodic meetings with agencies that may have goals in common with mitigation. Resources for mitigation are now being increased due to participation by these additional agencies.

Efficient Management and Use of Grant Funds

- State should increase the rate at which it obligates funds under the HMGP and FMA programs. State can do a better job in working with communities to target repetitive flood loss properties.

Project Impact

- State is promoting the principles of Project Impact by increasing the number of communities that approach loss reduction through forming community partnerships, assessing risks, prioritizing needs, and communicating successes.
- State is giving priority to Project Impact communities in the distribution of mitigation resources.
- State has developed innovative ways to share mitigation successes from Project Impact communities with all its other high-risk communities.

Provision of Technical Assistance to local jurisdictions

- State is working to provide an increased level of assistance to local jurisdictions in developing, adopting, and implementing building and fire codes, and land use ordinances. Greater attention should be given to establishing more effective enforcement capability.

Commitment to Floodplain Management

- Local governments are beginning to review their existing floodplain management ordinances to determine if they still address existing and future flood risks. The State is assisting communities in revising or updating local ordinances, with priority given to communities with highest number of repetitive losses.
- The State needs to work to increase the number of communities participating in CRS.

Communicating Success

- The State has produced a first-rate publication documenting mitigation success stories and demonstrating the cost-effectiveness of mitigation.

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