

PROPOSED POLICY POSITION

3. REGARDING THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANT PROGRAM FOR SOUTHERN STATES

BACKGROUND

The Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program remains the primary support mechanism for emergency management at the state and local level. The grant stands as the only source of federal funding directed to state, local, and tribal governments for planning, training, exercises and key professional expertise for all-hazards preparedness. This allocation supports a robust response capability, communications systems, emergency operations centers, mutual aid agreements, public outreach campaigns and countless other efforts to protect people and property.

One aspect of EMPG which always has been embraced by the emergency management community is the required 50 percent non-federal match on all funds. Even during these times of constrained fiscal resources, many state and local governments continue to demonstrate their commitment to building capacity by contributing far in excess of the required 50 percent contribution.

Without a strong and robust emergency management system at the state and local level, the response to many disasters would falter or require federal support. In total, 2,118 state and 9,796 local plans were developed, maintained or updated using EMPG funds in fiscal year 2011. In that same year, 99 disasters required a presidential declaration and direct federal assistance; 250 gubernatorial emergencies were declared under state authority; 13,041 events required state assets, but did not reach the level of a gubernatorial declaration; and 44,428 local and tribal events were supported using EMPG-funded staff or assets.

The EMPG program has been the lifeblood of state and local emergency management programs since its inception and, in many cases, they would not survive without it. In order to ensure the continued operation of the national emergency management system, it is imperative that the EMPG program funding not be diminished.

RECOMMENDATION

The Southern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments urges Congress to support \$350 million for the Emergency Management Performance Grant program and that it remain a separate grant program, not combined with funding from any other grant allocation or application process.

Further, the Southern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments requests that a copy of this policy position be forwarded to the Southern Congressional delegation, the secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the president of the United States.