

**Pacific and Territorial Caucus Meeting
October 04, 2011**

Meeting Summary

Chair: Ed Teixeira (HI) not in attendance. John Madden (AK) facilitated the session in Ed's absence.

In Attendance: John Madden (AK), Gary Greenly (HI), Elton Lewis (USVI), Jacinta Brown (American Samoa), Jim Greene (past president liaison).

John began the meeting by stating how important it is that the PTC members note their *similarities* as much as *differences* and that the meeting would focus on policy, using the agenda as a point of departure rather than an absolute path.

- **The PTC and EMAC.** PTC members gave their opinions on EMAC and how it affects their state/territory. USVI prefers to seek out grant money to establish the USVI's own resources, since time and money constrain them otherwise. American Samoa thinks the EMAC concept is fine, but the territory has faced a number of issues and is working to maintain continuity and networking—i.e., strong communications. Hawaii has 20+ EMAC A-Team-trained personnel, but it also has to take care of itself in large part. In fact, Hawaii just acquired its first EMAC position and will be filling it soon. Although Alaska is too far away to assist greatly with material resources, the state can offer skilled personnel.

Leon Shaifer, EMAC senior advisor, asked to speak from the audience and noted that the issue of money as a prohibitive factor may be dealt with effectively by considering that when goods are needed, PTC members can likely partner with FEMA to use military aircraft to transport the goods when federal supplies are being delivered. In that way, the cost is similar to the cost that would be incurred within the contiguous United States. Nancy Ward of FEMA confirmed that this has, indeed, been done in the past, but reimbursement still has to be considered. The essential thing is getting the right resources to the right place at the right time. This involves checking the supply line among all territories and the mainland and using a push plan to move teams to an area nearby in advance of an emergency so they are prepared to move, if necessary.

The issue of interdependency came up: sometimes interdependencies are not obvious. The supply line can be extremely long in a single thread of resource provision. Regarding policy issues, if we have a better assessment of risk, how do we approach the mitigation issue? If consequences are extremely profound and risks are quite calculable, what do we need to do to make things manageable?

- **What does catastrophic mean to each PTC member?** Elton Lewis stated that the USVI is currently working on a catastrophic plan, so its definition will be determined as the plan is developed. However, he would now see it as a situation similar to the 1989 event, when the entire island was destroyed.
- **Levels of preparedness.** All the PTC areas have had earthquake/tsunami scares. What is the level of tsunami preparation for each member, especially beginning with family preparedness? USVI has a 95% tsunami-ready community, with signage in place, a completed annex where sirens will be sounded, etc. American Samoa is almost 100% tsunami ready, with 40 sirens installed as well as signage, public service announcements in seven languages, etc. Puerto Rico does not appear to be as well prepared in the area of sirens and warning systems, as the island is so large and there is some argument over who should do what. Hawaii has prepared similarly to the others and is working with a lot of faith-based initiatives to take care of their own neighborhoods, and they have had good results in this regard. Alaska focuses on training and outreach, and the state also is working on mitigation when a disaster occurs so that future events are less likely to destroy. The group discussed that *education*, however, is the prime concern in

preparing for an earthquake/tsunami event—and that education must be simple to reach the lowest level of audience possible.

- **Private sector, tourism, and volunteer aspects.** What can we do to bring the private sector into preparation for a disaster? A good idea would be to compare notes in such common areas as private sector involvement, tourism, and volunteerism. Gary (HI) noted the importance of sharing information and suggested starting a group e-mail system or something similar.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Investigate EMAC for Pacific Rim further
2. Implementation of PPD-8: THIRA (Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment)—make sure it includes the right range of things
3. Mitigation and cost analysis
4. Alaska to offer a case study of home-building the state did after an emergency
5. Examination of the private sector: share what each has within or without boundaries
6. Discussion of volunteer groups

John ended the meeting by providing a quote from Alaska’s past: “Prevent flight of the population. Prevent collapse of the economy.” This applies well to the Pacific and Territorial Caucus and, indeed, all communities.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.