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TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2011

FEMA NEEDS TO RELEASE LONG OVERDUE DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

WASHINGTON— On the eve of hurricane season, and with storms and flooding ravaging the midwest and south, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee are urging the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to release its disaster recovery plan as required by legislation enacted nearly five years ago.

In a letter sent to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano Tuesday,

Chairman Joe Lieberman, ID-Conn., and Ranking Member Susan Collins, R-Me., stressed the importance of a clear plan for disaster recovery. FEMA released a draft of the plan in early 2010, but a final version has yet to be made public. The plan was due four years ago.

The Disaster Recovery Framework would provide guidance on how community recovery is supported at the national level. The Administration has stated that the Framework is intended to fulfill the National Disaster Recovery

Strategy required by a provision in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006, authored by Lieberman and Collins.

A copy of the letter follows:

May 31, 2011

The Honorable Janet Napolitano

Secretary

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, we are writing to urge you to promptly finalize and release the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF). As storms and flooding continue to ravage the Central and Southeastern United States, and with hurricane season beginning tomorrow, it is critical that we have a clear plan for disaster recovery.

After the federal government's failed response to Hurricane Katrina, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 which created a new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – with responsibilities, missions, capabilities, and resources far exceeding those of FEMA at the time of Hurricane Katrina. Section 682 of the Post-Katrina Act dealt specifically with disaster recovery by requiring FEMA, within 270 days of the Act's implementation, to develop a National Disaster Recovery Strategy – a requirement that still has not been met. Administrator Fugate informed us in a letter dated September 16, 2009, that FEMA was launching the development of the National Disaster Recovery Framework, which would address all of section 682's requirements. While FEMA released a draft of the NDRF in early 2010, over a year has passed and a final version of the NDRF has yet to be released.

We have learned from the difficulties in the recovery from Hurricane Katrina that a well-developed recovery plan is essential to ensure that communities will be better able to recover from disasters – and to do so with coordinated assistance.

We request that you ensure FEMA quickly complete and release the NDRF and implement it as soon as possible. We also ask that you provide us with a timetable and plans for releasing and implementing the final NDRF, including information as to how DHS will ensure proper implementation and exercising of the NDRF, within seven days of receipt of this letter.

Sincerely,

Joseph I. Lieberman

Susan M. Collins

Chairman

Ranking Member

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