

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2016

SENATOR CARPER HIGHLIGHTS WORK OF FEMA & FEMA TRIBAL AFFAIRS OFFICER

WASHINGTON – In case you missed it, earlier today Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, took to the Senate floor to highlight the work of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and FEMA Tribal Affairs Officer Milo Booth.

His [speech](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LP6vTU9GE7Q) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LP6vTU9GE7Q>), as prepared for delivery, is below:

“Mr. President, in 2014 I started coming to the Senate floor almost every month to highlight some of the great work being done each and every day by the men and women at the Department of Homeland Security. I continued that effort throughout 2015, and plan to continue coming to the Senate floor every month in 2016 with a new story to share. There is simply so much good being done across the Department that I may never run out of material.

“As you know, Mr. President, the Department of Homeland Security is made up of 22 component agencies and employs over 200,000 Americans. These men and women work around the clock to protect all of us, our families, and our country.

“One part of the Department, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has the unique and challenging task of keeping Americans safe when everything around them has been thrown into chaos.

“In times of crisis, the men and women at FEMA coordinate rescue operations, provide emergency medical care, and give shelter to those who have lost their homes. Simply put, they bring hope back to Americans whose towns and cities have been swept away by a flood, destroyed by a fire, or torn apart by a tornado.

“Ten years ago, in the days after Hurricane Katrina, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. That law completely overhauled FEMA from top to bottom. It increased its authorities and stature within the Department of Homeland Security and provided it with needed new resources. This legislation also required FEMA to bolster its regional offices and to build stronger relationships with state, local, and tribal governments. Taken together, these reforms have improved our capability at all levels of government to respond to disasters, while also improving FEMA’s capacity to support state, local, and tribal governments as they rebuild.

“Over the past ten years, the men and women at FEMA have worked countless hours to improve our preparedness for, response to, and recovery from disaster. Bad things still happen. In the aftermath of a tornado, a wildfire, or even a snowstorm like the one we saw on the East Coast this week, we still see the images of destruction and lives turned upside down on our television screens. But most of the work that the men and women at FEMA do 365 days a year to prepare for these events, and make them less damaging, rarely gets discussed.

“Every day, the men and women at FEMA create evacuation plans, stock emergency shelters with food and medical supplies, and partner with local law enforcement and first responders in every state to improve preparedness through exercises and drills.

“In addition to training first responders, one of FEMA’s top priorities is to educate and train all of us on what to do in the case of a disaster. The more you and I and our families know, the more likely we are to stay safe, and stay together, during a disaster.

“One FEMA employee charged with helping some of our most vulnerable communities prepare for disaster is Milo Booth, who serves as FEMA’s Tribal Affairs officer. Milo is an Alaska Native from the Metlakatla Indian Community on the southern-most tip of Alaska. After graduating from Oregon State University with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry and a minor

in Economics, Milo returned home to serve as the Metlakatla Indian Community Director of Forestry and Land Resources, working to protect his hometown for the next 16 years.

“Then, after two years with the U.S. Forest Service, Milo moved to FEMA to serve as the National Tribal Affairs Advisor, where he works today. In this role, Milo works to communicate disaster preparedness to our reservations, Alaskan Native villages, and tribes across the country. These communities, being some of the most remote and isolated in the country, are also the most at risk in times of disaster. Ensuring that these communities are educated and prepared helps protect some of the most vulnerable among us.

“As the primary FEMA liaison to Indian Country, Milo doesn’t just help our native communities prepare for disaster. He also educates senior FEMA officials and Department of Homeland Security Tribal Affairs staff on how FEMA can better help these communities prepare for, and respond to, hazards. In times of planning, Milo leads workshops and trainings for FEMA staff, advises senior leadership on tribal policy, and works every day to build strong relationships between FEMA and tribal leaders and their communities. And, in times of crisis, when disaster strikes, Milo coordinates with tribal emergency managers and FEMA regional managers on the best ways to help and support these communities.

“In only two years at FEMA, Milo has visited more than two dozen reservations and Alaskan Native villages, and has met with more than 100 tribes at trainings and regional tribal meetings.

“Perhaps more important than any of the technical work Milo does in planning is the work he has done building relationships and earning the trust of tribal leaders. When asked their thoughts on Milo, tribal leaders described Milo as accessible, responsive, and understanding. But most importantly, they described him as trustworthy. They trust that, in Milo, their communities have a voice at FEMA.

“When Milo isn’t working here in Washington, DC, he returns home to Alaska with his wife and two children, where he enjoys spending time outdoors. One of his favorite activities these days is going trout fishing with his young son, who says he wants to grow up to be like his dad.

“Milo is just one shining example of the thousands of dedicated men and women at FEMA who work to protect hundreds of communities across our nation – treating every one of them as if it were their own home town.

“Let me close with this. When Pope Francis addressed a joint session of Congress last year, he invoked the words of Matthew 25, which calls for us to help the least of these among us, saying, ‘I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me.’

“These have become known as the works of mercy or the acts of mercy. Milo Booth and all of his colleagues at FEMA perform these acts of mercy each and every day, protecting our children and our homes, saving lives, and doing truly remarkable deeds. And for the thousands civil servants at FEMA, and the tens of thousands of others across the 22 components of DHS, these acts of mercy are their life’s work. For all of these things that you do, to each and every one of you, I say thank you. Thank you, and God bless.”