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# **CASEY, CARPER, COLLINS, BEGICH, MCCAUL RELEASE GAO REPORT LAYING OUT GAPS IN U.S. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, OPPORTUNITIES TO CLOSE CAPABILITY GAPS**

**Washington, DC-** Today, U.S. Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Co-Chair of the National Security Working Group; Tom Carper (D-DE), Chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee; Susan Collins (R-ME), former Ranking Member of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee; Mark Begich (D-AK); and Congressman Michael McCaul (R-TX), Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, released a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report laying out gaps in the nation's emergency preparedness and identifying opportunities to close capability gaps. The GAO analyzed the federal government's preparedness for so called 'no-notice' catastrophic disasters which pose one of the greatest challenges to national emergency preparedness. The report finds that steps need to be taken

to increase coordination among federal agencies so that federal officials are more consistently carrying out emergency preparedness activities. The Department of Homeland Security said that it will implement GAO's recommendations, in coordination with other agencies.

"This report shows that additional steps and better coordination are needed at the federal level to make sure our agencies are prepared to respond to emergencies," **Senator Casey said**. "I'm hopeful that the Administration will use this report to improve current policies and ensure that federal agencies with relevant jurisdiction are working with one another to enhance our nation's preparedness."

"Disasters can strike at any time and at any place. Whether a disaster is natural or man-made, large or small, our federal government needs to be prepared," **said Chairman Carper**. "This report makes it clear that federal agencies need to do a better job of coordinating and sharing information with each other and providing that information to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Responding to a disaster is a shared responsibility by a number of agencies. While FEMA plays a central role in this effort, it's crucial that other agencies are prepared and coordinate their response. I will continue to monitor agencies' progress in implementing the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) recommendations to improve overall coordination and collaboration. I will also continue to work with our partners at GAO as the agency conducts follow-up work to this report."

"I am concerned that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has not been tracking the efforts by agencies to address their capability gaps in responding to "no-notice emergencies," **Senator Collins said**. "As the name implies, these emergencies come with no advance warning and no time to prepare. It is vitally important that DHS address the findings of this report to ensure that we are as prepared as we possibly can be for any disaster. After observing the poor response at all levels of government to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, especially by FEMA, I led the effort to reshape and improve FEMA's response to emergencies with limited notice. I hope this report will act as a catalyst for similar improvements in the 'no-notice' area."

"The Secretary of Homeland Security is the principal federal official responsible for domestic incident management. Yet, according to GAO, cross-government coordination on preparedness efforts between DHS and other federal agencies are insufficient," **said Chairman McCaul**. "As such, there is no way to know just how prepared the whole of our federal government is to respond to a terrorist attack or natural disaster. More than thirteen years after the terrorist attack on 9/11, this is unacceptable. I look forward to working with the Secretary and

FEMA Administrator to address GAO's recommendations, including through my committee's efforts to authorize the Department of Homeland Security next year."

GAO's report can be found here: [LINK \(http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-20\)](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-20).