

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council

Date: Thursday, January 8, 2004
Location: COG Board Room-Third Floor
777 North Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

MINUTES

1. **Welcome:** In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, COG Executive Director David Robertson convened the January meeting of the National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council at 12:15 p.m.

Upon motion made and seconded, the minutes of the November 6, 2003 meeting were approved as circulated, with an addition that Mr. Fisette desired an update on proposed or potential siren warning systems.

2. **Program Administration Update:** David Robertson, COG Executive Director, provided an update on current issues concerning the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan, the Regional Incident Coordination and Communication System, and COG's efforts to support the RECP and the efforts of the NCR-EPC.
 - **Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System:** Summary report on the RICCS, and its utilization was presented. All RICCS servers are up and running and capable of driving the system. The protocol used by the RICCS Centers and the RICCS User Groups was presented.
 - **Power Summit:** COG will host a regional power summit in the spring; all EPC members are invited to attend.
 - **Leadership transition:** Consideration will be given to increasing the formal role of stakeholders in the EPC – perhaps as Vice Chairs.
 - **Quarterly Meeting Calendar:** The EPC will follow a presumptive quarterly calendar.
 - **Mutual Aid Legislation:** Lee Ruck, COG General Counsel, reported on the current status of the region's proposed Mutual Aid Authorization Act. DHS has approved the language and forwarded it to DOJ and OMB for comment. Both have expressed concerns.
3. **EPC/Urban Area Work Group:** In 2003 the EPC agreed to serve as the Urban Area Work Group in conjunction with the oversight and administration of Urban

Area Security Initiative (UASI) funds. Approximately \$60 million in UASI funds for the NCR in FY2003 and approximately \$29 million were approved for FY 2004. The Senior Policy Group (SPG) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have approved a governance structure which places the COG Chief Administrative Officers in a technical and advisory role on planning, the identification of projects, and the specifics of grants, and places the EPC in a policy and advisory role on these same issues.

- Tony Griffin, Fairfax County Executive, reported on the activities of the CAO's to date in reviewing specific proposals for the FY 2003 funds and general planning directions for FY 2004 funds.
- Ken Wall, DHS, indicated that procedurally the process is in a good spot; that DHS the SPG, and the District as administrative agent can move grants easily and quickly.
- Robert Malson, DC Hospitals, expressed his appreciation but indicated the level of difficulty in getting 32 hospitals to agree on the specifics of a single regional hospital surge grant.
- Mr. Griffin and Mr. Wall reflected on the need for expeditious decisions on the FY2003 funds, since those decisions would impact the technical and policy review of the CAO's and EPC on FY 2004 funds, probably in the March-May time frame.
- Margaret Kellems, Deputy Mayor, DC, expressed concern about the need to integrate FY 2003 and 2004 decisions, and funding any gap between them.
- David Snyder, Falls Church Council and TPB, requested a priority for projects that would facilitate public communication and the linking of all relevant agencies.

4. National Capital Region – Code Orange Status Reports: Mr. Wall expressed appreciation for all those who participated in the RICCS calls and other efforts subsequent to Secretary Ridge's elevation of the national code level status to orange. DHS is currently considering a downgrade to yellow.

- Ms. Kellems indicated that there have been daily regional public safety calls (all police and fire chiefs), heightened patrols, and related activities. Currently reviewing all procedures and protocols..
- Don Keldsen, MEMA, reported similar activity to that of DC.
- Tom Lockwood, MD, stated Maryland also had a series of bioterrorism communications.
- Mike Cline, VA, said there were increased activities throughout Virginia in the same fashion as the heightened levels in the NCR.
- Lt. Gov. Hager reported a daily feedback loop with DHS for all Virginia activity in both the NCR and in the Hampton Roads region.
- Caroline Cunningham, BOT, Mr. Lockwood, Carol Schwartz, ECP Chair, and Rick Rappaport, Fairfax City Police Chief, had a colloquy on telephone calls and tips to law enforcement and related agencies and the current level of comfort that these calls are being appropriately placed and responded to.

5. **RECP Regional Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination Annex:** In 2003, the EPC recommended that COG update and substantially expand the RECP Annex relating to transportation/evacuation/protective measures. Mr. Snyder gave a status report on the project and stated that a more complete presentation would be made at the March meeting:
 - Preparing (1) a revised annex, (2) a technical compendium, not to be made public, and (3) a series of public communications, including (a) changes to the emergency alert system, (b) school coordinating plans, and (c) input for public institutions and agencies.
6. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be on March 4, 2004 fro 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
7. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.