

June 2025

VOICES FROM THE FRONT LINES

*WHAT SEASONED INDUSTRY LEADERS URGE
FEDERAL POLICY-MAKERS TO CONSIDER AS THEY
RETHINK DISASTER SURVIVOR SUPPORT*



ABSTRACT: This report distills over a decade of insights from longstanding private sector disaster response professionals who have coordinated all types of disasters across multiple sectors, offering actionable recommendations to strengthen federal support for states, communities, and survivors during major disasters.



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Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the All Hazards Consortium (AHC) and our 45,000+ nationwide network of public and private sector stakeholders, we are pleased to submit this report:

Voices from the Frontlines: What Industry Leaders Urge Federal Policy-Makers to Consider.

This report consolidates field-tested recommendations from 30+ senior leaders across key sectors—transportation, communications, water, retail, fuel, food, healthcare, chemical, commerce, and logistics—who have decades of experience working together supporting disaster response and recovery alongside state, local, and federal agencies. These insights are grounded in real-world operational experience across small, medium, and large-scale disasters and are intended to inform the development of future federal disaster policy.

As the federal government considers evolving the roles and responsibilities of agencies like FEMA—and potentially shifting more disaster responsibilities to states and local governments—it is critical to ensure that coordination with the private sector is not weakened. Effective disaster response relies on seamless collaboration between government and industry. The feedback included here identifies common challenges such as regulatory delays, fragmented federal coordination, and limited state/local capacity—all of which slow response and negatively affect survivors.

This report also responds directly to recent federal discussions and Executive Orders on enhancing efficiency through state and local preparedness. The private sector supports the intent but strongly advises that any federal-to-state transitions be implemented gradually and with clear communication to avoid disrupting the vital flow of goods, services, and support to affected communities.

Key recommendations include:

- Creating a centralized Federal Waiver Help Desk to expedite regulatory relief across agencies
- Sustaining FEMA's role as a coordination hub for federal agency support
- Bolstering state capacity through phased funding and training
- Institutionalizing private sector integration into federal and state disaster planning
- Improving situational awareness tools and multi-state coordination

The AHC stakeholders stand ready to support federal policy-maker efforts in further exploring or implementing any of these recommendations.

We deeply value the opportunity to contribute constructively to policy that directly impacts the lives of disaster survivors and the resilience of our communities.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to improving our nation's disaster readiness.

Respectfully,

The Board of Directors
All Hazards Consortium

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Executive Summary

Purpose:

- This report consolidates private sector feedback to provide senior federal policy makers with actionable recommendations to enhance federal agency support for states and industry during disaster response and recovery. The objective is to improve coordination, reduce delays, and better serve disaster survivors at the state and local level.

Overview:

- Effective disaster response requires seamless collaboration between federal agencies, state governments, and the private sector. The private sector, spanning critical industries such as energy, healthcare, and logistics, plays a vital role in mobilizing resources to support impacted communities. However, feedback from industry stakeholders highlights significant barriers that hinder rapid and efficient response efforts. These challenges, if unaddressed, risk delaying recovery and exacerbating the impact on survivors, particularly as the upcoming hurricane season approaches.



Background

Building on its proven 20 year track record, the private sector and government leadership of the AHC (All Hazards Consortium), a nationally recognized 501(c)(3) for resilience and problem solving between states and industry, has once again mobilized its network of stakeholders to deliver actionable insights from the private sector to federal decision-makers.

The AHC has long supported state-private sector collaboration, especially during small, medium and large scale natural disasters.

- e.g. Small scale = 1 state is impacted
- e.g. Medium scale = 2-3 states impacted
- e.g. Large scale = 3 or more states impacted

Drawing on more than a decade of collaborative disaster response experience, this group includes former and current state and local government officials, operational leaders and executives from companies, and leaders of key industry trade associations.

Together, they represent a unique operational coalition that has worked together and supported disaster survivors across small, medium, and large-scale incidents since 2012.

Informed by real-world operations and grounded in long-standing cross-sector relationships, this feedback offers a pragmatic, field-tested perspective to help shape the implementation of the new administration's policies around federal disaster support.

The overall context for this feedback is provided below:

- The current administration is considering reductions in federal government roles (e.g. FEMA), particularly in areas that serve disaster survivors, and moving more responsibilities to state/local governments to support disaster survivors.
- Focusing on survivors' needs is paramount. This includes government services (security/safety, access to food, water, shelters, repaired roads, reopened schools, small business loans, etc..) and private sector infrastructure restoration of power, communications, water/wastewater, fuel, retail stores, supply chains, access to cash, grocery stores, etc...).
- The federal government has a regulatory and statutory role in disasters that enables fast, coordinated disaster response by providing funding, waivers, and regulatory relief. State readiness levels vary, and many states rely heavily on FEMA and federal agency support during any size disaster.

- The private sector mobilizes quickly on their own but are often hindered by federal and state regulatory barriers that restrict driving hours, load sizes/weights, fuel transport, etc.... Waivers are needed from multiple government agencies to accelerate industry response efforts before, during, and after a large scale disaster.

What is FEDERAL Role Today?

- Regulatory and statutory role that enables fast, coordinated disaster response by providing funding, waivers, and regulatory relief.
- Funding to states/locals to support their ongoing preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation efforts.
- Many states have emergency management staffs that are grant funded.
- Disaster operations support to state(s) (e.g. Joint Field Offices, JFO's)

Key Issues Identified by the Private Sector:

- **Regulatory Barriers:** Complex or slow regulatory waiver processes impede the private sector's ability to deploy assets quickly in disaster-affected areas.
- **Fragmented Federal Coordination:** The lack of a centralized point of contact across multiple federal agencies creates confusion, with FEMA's traditional "reach-back" role being critical but potentially at risk.
- **State Capacity Gaps:** States face resource and personnel shortages, compounded by confusion over new federal policy responsibilities, which delays operational support for industry on the ground.
- **Communication Gaps:** Inconsistent or unclear federal guidance on disaster plans leads to uncertainty, causing significant delays in response and recovery across sectors.
- **Continuous Improvement & Feedback Loops:** There must be a coordinated, streamlined process that enables state, local, and federal agencies, along with private industry, to engage in honest, confidential discussions after disasters. This process should focus on identifying lessons learned and implementing improvements together. Currently, feedback efforts are fragmented and siloed, and many participants feel unable to speak candidly—especially when the issues reflect poorly on their organization.

If Changes in Funding/Roles/Staffing are Needed:

- Industry and states will need time to adopt and implement the funding and policy changes.
- Many states have grant funded emergency management staffs. Abrupt changes in state/local government policy/process/funding will cause staff shortages, confusion, and delay efforts to support survivors in disasters.
- Communicate these changes clearly and often to the private sector so they can adjust accordingly to avoid response delays and impacts to survivors.



Core Recommendations:

- **Streamline Regulatory Waivers Processes:** Innovate and streamline the federal agency waivers processes with all disaster appropriate federal agencies avoid delays in disaster response and recovery efforts. This is the most important frequent cause for delays across most industry sectors, and negatively impacts survivors directly.
 - Expedite or temporarily suspend regulatory barriers through pre-approved waivers or fast-track approvals to enable rapid industry mobilization before, during, and after a disaster.
 - Establish a centralized Federal Waiver Help Desk to serve as a 24/7 multi-agency waiver coordination and expediting center to speed up regulatory relief during disasters. This will reduce delays and confusion during large scale disasters across DOT, HHS, EPA, FEMA, IRS, Agriculture, etc.
- **Centralized Federal Agency Coordination During Disasters:** Currently, the FEMA/ESF#14 role as a primary liaison to other federal agencies needs to be a part of any new construct of the federal role in emergencies.
 - Establish a clear, accessible process and online directory of agency disaster contacts to resolve issues efficiently
 - Provide reach back into federal agencies to resolve problems and information requests for industry.

CORE RECOMMENDATIONS



Centralized Federal
Agency Coordination



Regional Coordination
Between States



Bolster State Capacity



Avoid Abrupt Funding &
Policy Changes/Disruptions



Support State/Local
Government Integration
w/Private Sector



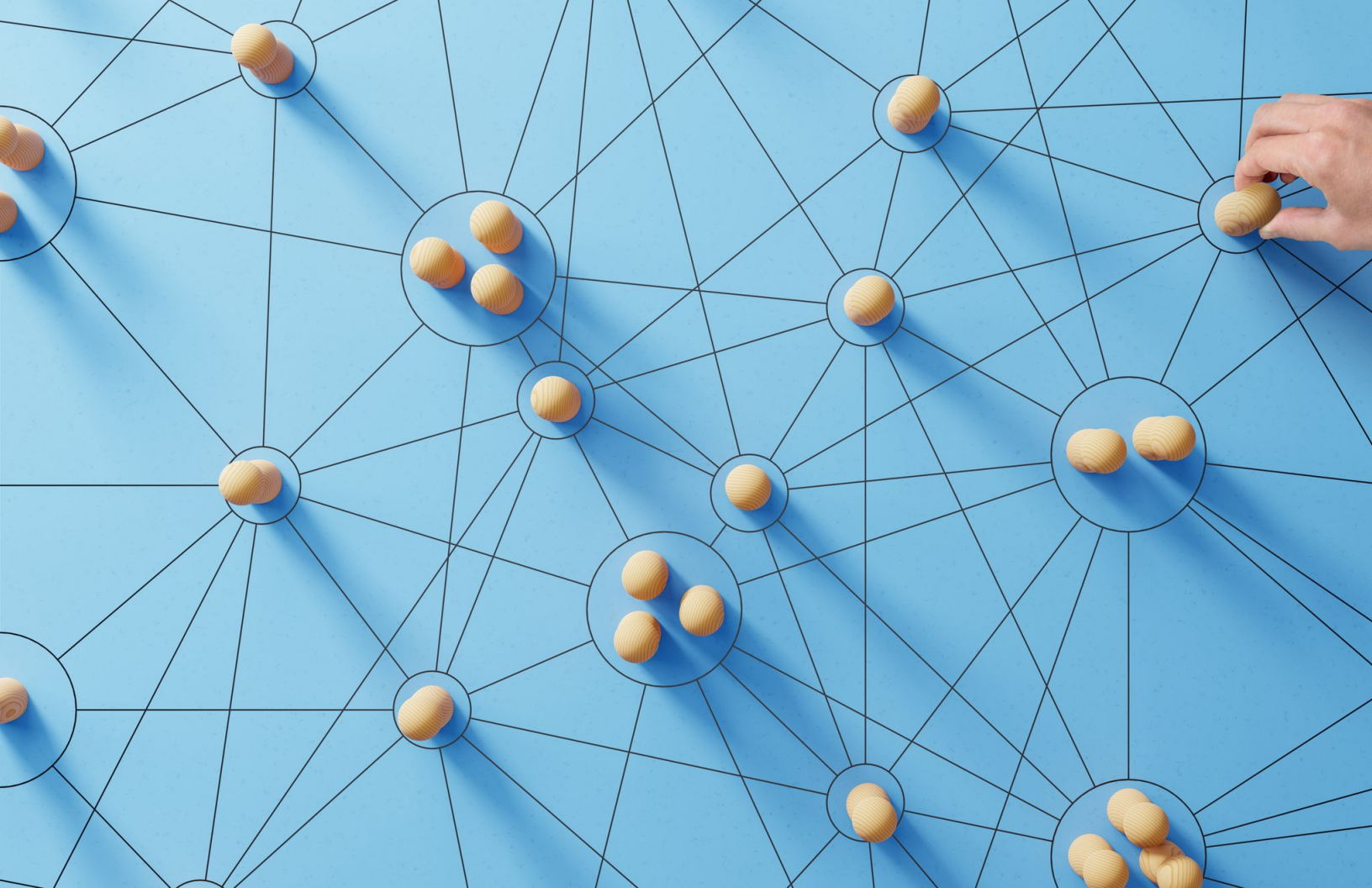
Support for State/Private
Sector Mutual Assistance
During Disasters

- **Regional Coordination Between States:** During large disasters, states naturally focus inward. Disasters often cross state lines, disrupting infrastructure supply chains across multiple states or regions. Effective multi-state coordination—essential for the private sector—is nearly impossible without a designated federal-state coordinating agency, and other regional trusted organizations working together throughout the year, not just during the large disasters that traditionally the federal government activates for.
- **Bolster State Capacity:** Provide federal funding, training, and clear timelines to help states build resources and personnel to manage new responsibilities. Changes may occur over a certain period of time, but they should not disrupt the state or private sector's ability to work together to address the disasters and help survivors recover.
- **Avoid Abrupt Changes/Disruptions:** Avoid sudden changes in funding or roles at the state and local level since this impacts the private sector. States can adapt to changes changes, but not abruptly. Phase in changes to everyone can adapt together (e.g. over a 1-2 year cycle).
- **Support State/Local Government Integration w/Private Sector:** Establish policy and funding mechanisms that supports states/locals in their efforts to innovate how they engage the private sector to jointly identify and reduce risks and enhance survivor support during disasters.
- **Support for State/Private Sector Mutual Assistance During Disasters:** Create policy the removes obstacles (e.g. regulatory, liability, etc..) and supports state/local government to share resources during disasters with each other and with private sector.

Summary:

- The private sector urges federal leaders to incorporate the private sector's recommendations into their short-, mid-, and long-term, planning and decision process as they consider changes to the federal disaster response ecosystem and the new policy outlined in the recent White House Executive Order titled Enhancing Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness.





Section 1 - Federal Coordination

Sector Coordination Needs with Federal Agencies During Disasters

Edison Electric Institute (EEI) - Electric Sector

- **U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) / FMCSA / TSA**
 - EEI works with DOT and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) for:
 - Hours of Service waivers
 - Weight limit exemptions
 - Hazardous materials transport permissions
 - TSA helps ensure expedited movement of power restoration crews across jurisdictions, including credentialing and priority fuel access.
- **U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) / Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER)**
 - DOE is the Sector Risk Management Agency (SRMA) for energy.
 - Coordinates energy restoration priorities, grid status, and cyber/physical threats to electric infrastructure.
 - CESER collaborates with EEI during hurricanes, wildfires, and cyber incidents to share data and convene response groups.
- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) / CISA**
 - Supports critical infrastructure protection, including cyber and physical security guidance.
 - Manages public-private information sharing via the Energy ISAC, NCC, and JCDC.
 - CISA's Protective Security Advisors (PSAs) may assist with site access and threat analysis.
- **National Coordinating Center for Communications (NCC)**
 - While primarily for telecom, EEI coordinates here when energy and telecom restoration intersect.
 - Helps synchronize restoration timelines across sectors (e.g., power and broadband).
- **FEMA National Response Coordination Center (NRCC)**
 - When activated, EEI participates in calls and coordination through the NRCC, hosted by FEMA.
 - Ensures industry input into federal decision-making and operational planning.
- **White House / National Security Council (NSC)**
 - During extreme disasters or national emergencies, EEI leadership may brief or coordinate with the NSC on restoration progress, impacts, and policy issues.
 - This was especially common during COVID-19 and major hurricanes.
- **Electric Sector Cross-Sector Coordinating Council (ESCC)**
 - A collaborative body that connects the electric power industry with the federal government to enhance the security and resilience of the energy grid.
 - Serves as a primary liaison for coordinating efforts to prepare for and respond to both natural disasters and threats to critical infrastructure
- **Congress / Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)**
 - EEI may engage with Congressional staff or FERC on policy implications, waiver requests, or post-disaster funding issues.

Energy Marketers of America (EMA) - Fuel Sector

- **Department of Energy (DOE)**
 - Lead federal agency for fuel coordination under Emergency Support Function (ESF) #12.
 - Oversees fuel supply chain situational awareness and interagency coordination.
 - During disasters, the Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER) collaborates with EMA on situational awareness and to share data.
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/FEMA National Response Coordination Center (NRCC)/National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC)**
 - Supports fuel logistics through coordination with states and other federal agencies.
 - Partners with private sector through NBEOC. Two-way situational awareness, contact facilitation and coordination hub.
 - Issues disaster declarations that enable waivers and funding.
 - During disasters, FEMA collaborates with EMA on situational awareness and to share data.
 - When activated, EMA participates in calls and coordination through the NRCC, hosted by FEMA. Ensures industry input into federal decision making and operational planning.
- **Department of Transportation (DOT)**
 - Regulates fuel transport; key for transportation waivers including Hours of Service (HOS) (Weight waivers are provided by the states)
- **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)**
 - Issues HOS and other transportation waivers essential for fuel haulers.
 - During disasters, DOT/FMCSA collaborates with EMA on situational awareness and to share data
- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**
 - Oversees national-level emergency coordination.
 - Includes infrastructure security and incident response through DHS components.
- **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**
 - Coordinates with critical infrastructure sectors like fuel to ensure secure and resilient operations.
 - Supports information sharing and threat mitigation.
 - During disasters, DHS/CISA collaborates with EMA on situational awareness and to share data.
- **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**
 - Provides fuel tax waivers or suspensions during emergencies (e.g., dyed diesel waivers).
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**
 - Issues temporary fuel waivers (e.g., RVP standards, blend requirements) to avoid supply disruptions.
- **U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)**
 - Oversees fuel port access, vessel traffic, and fuel barge coordination in coastal regions.
- **Oil and Natural Gas (ONG) Sector Coordinating Committee (SCC) and Energy Government Coordinating Committee (EGCC)**
 - Full fuel supply chain representation and multi-agency engagement during emergencies.
- **White House/National Security Council**
 - In emergencies EMA is sometimes briefed into national level calls or coordination efforts to inform federal leadership about on-the-ground logistics and needs.

- **NOAA/National Weather Service/National Hurricane Center**
 - Weather data.
- **FBI**
 - Physical security threats. Supports ONG SCC.
- **U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)**
 - Fuel data.
- **State Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs)**
 - Coordinate local-level permissions, inspections and National Guard support.

Food Industry Association (FMI) -Food Sector

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
 - Oversees SNAP and WIC food assistance programs
 - Issues waivers for food substitution, eligibility, and emergency benefit distribution
 - Coordinates with state agencies and food retailers during recovery
- **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**
 - Regulates food safety standards
 - Provides guidance on food recalls, inspections, and temporary compliance flexibility
 - Ensures safe food handling, labeling, and storage during crisis operations
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**
 - Coordinates national disaster response and provides logistical and funding support
 - Partners with private sector food distributors through the National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC)
- **Department of Transportation (DOT)**
 - Oversees transport of food products
 - Essential for issuing Hours of Service (HOS) and weight waivers for trucks carrying food and water
- **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)**
 - Provides transportation regulatory waivers for food delivery vehicles
 - Critical during high-volume, emergency response periods
- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**
 - Provides national coordination support through FEMA and CISA
 - Supports emergency management policy and resource prioritization
- **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**
 - Coordinates with the Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council
 - Supports food sector cybersecurity, information sharing, and critical infrastructure protection
- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**
 - Coordinates public health issues linked to food distribution and nutrition
 - May partner during feeding operations for at-risk populations
- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (in logistics-heavy operations)**
 - Occasionally supports food distribution infrastructure and staging area logistics
- **State Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs)**
 - Coordinate local-level permissions, inspections, and National Guard support
 - Serve as a conduit for state-specific food and agriculture needs

Verizon - Communications Sector

- **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)**
 - Primary federal coordination hub during declared disasters. Verizon relies on FEMA to:
 - Coordinate with other agencies and states.
 - Help resolve cross-jurisdictional barriers (e.g., access, waivers).
 - Provide a “one-stop shop” for requests, situational awareness, and problem-solving.
 - FEMA helps reduce Verizon’s overhead when responding across 10–15 states by streamlining communication.
- **Department of Transportation (DOT) / FMCSA / TSA**
 - DOT and FMCSA assist with:
 - Waivers for driver hours-of-service.
 - Movement of communications restoration fleets.
 - Weight restrictions for satellite trailers, fuel support, and backup power delivery.
 - TSA Surface Division helps with site access and credentialing for telecom response crews.
- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) / CISA**
 - Verizon works with CISA on:
 - Cybersecurity threats and coordinated vulnerability responses.
 - Access to protected information during incidents.
 - Coordinated sector response via the National Coordinating Center (NCC) and JCDC (Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative).
 - DHS also provides threat briefings and public-private collaboration tools.
- **National Coordinating Center for Communications (NCC)**
 - Verizon is a key player in the NCC, part of the DHS National Communications System. The NCC:
 - Synchronizes telecom sector operations during emergencies.
 - Works with FCC, CISA, and FEMA to resolve national issues.
 - Coordinates telecom mutual aid, spectrum use, and outages.
- **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)**
 - Verizon coordinates with FCC on:
 - Emergency spectrum allocation (e.g., Citizens Broadband Radio Service).
 - Temporary operating authority and reporting of outages (DIRS).
 - Support for public safety alerting systems like Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and EAS (Emergency Alerting System).
- **Department of Energy (DOE) / ESF #12**
 - In coordination with the electric sector, Verizon must work with DOE when telecom towers and network hubs depend on utility power restoration.
 - Shared situational awareness via Energy and Communications sector coordination is critical.
- **FirstNet / Department of Commerce / NTIA**
 - Verizon coordinates with FirstNet (AT&T-led but government-sponsored) during large-scale events where interoperability between carriers and public safety agencies is essential.
 - NTIA involvement relates to spectrum use and emergency communications programs.
- **White House / National Security Council (NSC)**
 - During national-level events, Verizon may coordinate through the NSC or brief federal leaders on communications restoration status or cyber incidents.

Retail Sector (Groceries, Fuel, Pharmacy, etc..)

Primary Disaster Coordination Agencies

- **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)** - Coordinates overall disaster response and recovery. Provides access to federal resources, situational awareness, and supports reopening of retail operations through joint coordination platforms.
- **DHS / CISA (Department of Homeland Security / Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency)** - Provides cyber threat intelligence, risk mitigation, and critical infrastructure protection. Coordinates sector-wide alerts and enables secure information-sharing with retail and food sectors.
- **Health & Safety Agencies**
 - **HHS / ASPR / FDA (Health and Human Services / Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response / Food and Drug Administration)** - Supports pharmaceutical supply chains, vaccination, and PPE distribution. Issues emergency waivers for clinics and pharmacies during public health emergencies like COVID-19.
 - **OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration)** - Advises retailers on worker safety following disasters, including guidance on debris removal, generator safety, and hazardous work conditions in damaged areas.
 - **DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration)** - Issues emergency authorizations for pharmacy operations involving controlled substances, ensuring continuity of prescription services during federally declared disasters.
- **Logistics & Supply Chain Support**
 - **DOT / FMCSA (Department of Transportation / Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration)** - Provides hours-of-service and weight waivers to retail truck fleets, ensuring rapid resupply of impacted stores after natural or man-made disasters.
 - **USACE (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)** - Offers engineering and public works support such as temporary power restoration and debris removal, critical to reopening retail infrastructure quickly.
 - **CBP (Customs and Border Protection)** - Facilitates rapid clearance of imported emergency goods, ensuring international retail supply chains remain functional during crisis conditions.
- **Food, Agriculture & Nutrition**
 - **USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture)** Coordinates SNAP waivers, food recalls, and disaster food logistics, ensuring food access and safety for impacted communities and grocery operations.
 - **FDA (Food and Drug Administration)** Grants waivers and emergency approvals to support the sale of medical products, food, and vaccines through retail outlets during crises.
- **Energy, Environment & Infrastructure**
 - **DOE (Department of Energy)** Supports restoration of electric power and fuel infrastructure to retail stores, warehouses, and distribution centers after grid-impacting events.
 - **EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)** Manages hazardous materials response and environmental safety concerns affecting retail locations, especially water quality and air contamination issues.
- **Finance & Economic Stability**
 - **Treasury / IRS / FinCEN (Department of the Treasury / Internal Revenue Service / Financial Crimes Enforcement Network)** - Issues tax relief and continuity guidance to retailers. Monitors financial impacts and supports employer incentives for disaster recovery operations.
 - **SBA (Small Business Administration)** - Supports small suppliers in retail supply chains through disaster recovery loans and technical assistance to maintain product flow.

- **Security & Intelligence**
 - **FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)** - *Coordinates with retailers on cybercrime, active threats, and supply chain attacks. Provides incident response support during security-related emergencies.*
 - **White House / NSC (National Security Council)** - *Engages retailers during catastrophic events to brief federal leadership on real-time logistics, operational needs, and private sector capabilities.*
- **Communications & Forecasting**
 - **FCC (Federal Communications Commission)** - *Supports restoration of wireless and broadcast communications and grants waivers to maintain connectivity in retail operations and customer services.*
 - **NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)** - *Provides forecasts, alerts, and early warnings on hurricanes, floods, and severe weather impacting supply chains and retail store operations.*
- **Voluntary & Nonprofit Coordination (Non-Federal but Critical)**
 - **American Red Cross / National VOAD** - *Partners with retailers on donation coordination, sheltering support, and feeding efforts, often integrated with FEMA's disaster recovery operations.*
- **American Red Cross / National VOAD** - While not federal agency, some retailers often supports or coordinates with Red Cross sheltering, donations, and feeding efforts, which are often aligned with FEMA operations.

Healthcare Ready – Healthcare Sector

- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**
 - Especially through ASPR (Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response).
 - Connected via the Health and Public Health Sector Coordinating Council (HPH SCC).
 - Supports coordination for healthcare infrastructure and supply chain resilience.
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**
 - Typically engages reactively, asking Healthcare Ready for help locating needed medical supplies (e.g., PPE during COVID).
 - Less involved in proactive planning or early coordination.
- **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**
 - Participates in HPH SCC activities alongside HHS.
 - Supports infrastructure protection and shares intelligence, especially cyber-related.
- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**
 - Designated Healthcare Ready as a sector-specific ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center).
 - Involved indirectly through coordination with CISA and FEMA.
- **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**
 - Involved indirectly in coordination through transportation waivers that affect road-use tax systems (e.g., IFTA/IRP waivers during emergencies).
 - Coordination needed when waiving tolls or taxes for medical supply shipments.
- **Other Federal Groups (Situational)**
 - **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**
 - Involved during infant formula shortages or pharmaceutical disruptions.
 - **Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**
 - When international supply chains or Canadian mutual aid is involved.
 - **Department of Transportation (DOT)**
 - Coordinates transportation waivers for critical deliveries.

Cencora - Pharmaceutical Sector

- **DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration)**
 - For controlled substances licensing and temporary relocation waivers after disasters.
 - Critical when pharmacies are damaged or need to operate from alternate locations (e.g., mobile units or trailers).
- **HHS (Health and Human Services)**
 - Partner during national health emergencies like COVID-19 (Operation Warp Speed).
 - Helps with priority access and logistics, especially when pharmaceuticals are not prioritized (e.g., in Puerto Rico).
- **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)**
 - Occasionally engaged for logistical support (e.g., fuel shortages, field hospital coordination).
 - Used when states can't provide necessary resources, but interaction is infrequent and often limited to specific needs.
- **Other Federal Group (Situational)**
 - DOT/FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration): Hours-of-service waivers are not typically needed due to regional logistics setup.
 - IRS: No notable coordination.
 - FCC: Not directly engaged; they work through private telecom providers.
 - TSA / DOT / Ports: Not typically involved unless overseas shipping or long-term disruptions are present
 - FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration): Hours-of-service waivers are not typically needed due to regional logistics setup.
 - IRS: No notable coordination.
 - FCC: Not directly engaged; they work through private telecom providers.
 - TSA / DOT / Ports: Not typically involved unless overseas shipping or long-term disruptions are present.

Commercial Property Sector

- **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)**
 - Coordinates on disaster declarations, funding recovery, and situational awareness.
 - Uncertainty around when and how FEMA engages directly versus through state emergency management.
- **National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC)**
 - Used in major events for industry coordination.
- **National Weather Service (NWS)**
 - Provides real-time, localized weather alerts that are essential for:
 - Emergency preparedness decisions (e.g., evacuations).
 - Internal communication with tenants and staff across commercial and residential properties.
- **Insurance-Related Programs (e.g., SBA or FEMA Disaster Recovery Programs)**
 - Interface needed to bridge large deductibles and limited small business resources.
 - Insurance coverage limitations often lead to liability concerns with tenants if disaster response appears inadequate.

Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) – Transportation - Trucking Sector

Primary Federal Agencies:

- **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)**
 - Situational awareness, coordination, and waivers
- **FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, under DOT)**
 - Hours of service, weight limit, and emergency waivers
- **DOT (Department of Transportation)**
 - Road closures, waivers, infrastructure information
- **DHS (Department of Homeland Security)**
 - Security-related events (e.g., bombings), physical and cyber threats
- **HHS (Health and Human Services)**
 - Public health coordination, vaccine access, cross-sector needs during health emergencies
- **USDA (Department of Agriculture)**
 - Fertilizer supply, agriculture-related transportation
- **EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)**
 - Emissions waivers, particularly for trucks entering restricted states like California
- **US Coast Guard / TSA (Transportation Security Administration)**
 - TWIC program coordination for port access

Coordination Platforms and Supporting Groups:

- **FEMA NBEOC (National Business Emergency Operations Center)**
 - Two-way situational awareness, contact facilitation, coordination hub
- **DHS Cross Sector Coordinating Council**
 - Multi-agency engagement during major emergencies
- **State Emergency Management Agencies**
 - Primary point of contact at the state level for all coordination and waivers
- **EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact)**
 - Mutual aid framework between states

Dupont - Chemical Sector

- **EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)**
 - For chemical spills, environmental releases, and emergency guidance.
- **US Coast Guard**
 - For port closures, navigational updates (e.g., James River), and barge operations.
- **FRA (Federal Railroad Administration)**
 - For rail-related incidents, waivers, and transportation situational awareness.
- **DOT (Department of Transportation)**
 - For roadway movement, supply chain interruptions, and hours-of-service waivers.
- **U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**
 - For port-of-entry container release during import delays (e.g., Norfolk).
- **DHS (Department of Homeland Security)**
 - Indirectly, through overall emergency coordination and policies affecting supply chains and ports.
- **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)**
 - Occasionally referenced, but not a primary coordination partner for DuPont's operations unless requested by the state.
- **TSA (Transportation Security Administration)**
 - Mentioned as a possibility, but not a direct coordination partner

American Logistics Aid Network (ALAN) - Logistics Sector

- **FEMA**
 - Primary federal coordination point during disasters.
- **CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency)**
 - Communications and cyber security.
- **DOT/FMCSA (Department of Transportation/Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration)**
 - Waivers for transportation and hours-of-service regulations.
- **NOAA/National Weather Service/National Hurricane Center**
 - Access to critical weather information.
- **FDA (Food and Drug Administration)**
 - Waivers for food and pharmaceutical logistics.
- **DOE (Department of Energy)**
 - Coordination for fuel and power sectors.
- **EIA (Energy Information Administration)**
 - Fuel data and coordination support.
- **FCC (Federal Communications Commission)**
 - Communication outage reports, indirectly supporting state access to communications status.
- **Commerce Department**
 - Broader economic and supply chain impacts.
- **IRS (Internal Revenue Service) (Situational)**
 - Mentioned but not heavily involved; potential impacts through financial systems.
- **USDA/Food Assistance Programs (WIC, SNAP)**
 - Food security and food benefits distribution for disaster survivors.

C & S Wholesales Grocers - Food Sector

- **FEMA**
 - Primary coordination for situational awareness during disasters; no direct asset support received.
- **CISA**
 - Engagement for cybersecurity threat information and general preparedness activities.
- **USDA**
 - Coordination via participation in the Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council; USDA also responsible for SNAP program logistics (e.g., hot food waivers during emergencies).
- **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)**
 - Indirect coordination through FEMA for travel waivers (hours of service, weight).
- **U.S. Coast Guard**
 - Coordination primarily in Hawaii for port security and situational updates.
- **FCC (via CISA)**
 - Registration for Wireless Priority Service (WPS) for emergency communications.
- **National Weather Service (NOAA)**
 - Critical for weather forecasting and operational decision-making during disasters, especially vital for small businesses without access to paid weather services.
- **US Chamber of Commerce**
 - Participation in donation and outreach calls post-disaster (informal coordination).
- **Limited or No Direct Coordination**
 - IRS, HHS, FBI (only informal or attempted connections), Department of Commerce, Department of Energy, EPA.

American Petroleum Institute (API) - Fuel Sector

- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**
 - Coordination for potential fuel waivers and fuel quality concerns.
- **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)**
 - For transportation waivers and movement regulations.
 - Pipeline safety through PHMSA; also relevant in emergency declarations.
- **Department of Energy (DOE)**
 - Serves as the central coordination point, especially through the Oil and Natural Gas Sector Coordinating Council and pre-/post-landfall calls.
 - Situational awareness and mutual information-sharing on supply chain issues and pinch points.
- **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Association)**
 - Primarily post-landfall coordination, especially through liaisons embedded in state EOCs.
 - Indirectly relied on to facilitate recovery by enabling states through grants and logistical support.
- **Coast Guard**
 - Engaged for coastal and maritime impacts for port access, TWIC card issues, and maritime logistics.
- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**
 - For port access, TWIC card issues, and maritime logistics.
- **Army Corps of Engineers**
 - Especially relevant for inland waterway transport routes (e.g., Mississippi River).
- **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**
 - When states waive fuel taxes or allow dyed diesel to be used on-road.
- **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)**
 - For offshore energy safety and evacuation coordination.
- **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**
 - Coordinates post-storm airspace for drone and helicopter inspections.
- **Department of Commerce**
 - NOAA and other entities involved, but recent severe travel and budget restrictions have affected responsiveness.
- **State Partners and BEOC (Business Emergency Operations Centers)**
 - API frequently coordinates with state emergency offices, including leaders like North Carolina's BEOC.
- **Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) (Situational)**
 - Regulates offshore operations and must clear facilities before personnel can return.
 - For offshore energy safety and evacuation coordination.
- **Other Entities Mentioned**
 - Department of Agriculture (limited)
 - DHS (rare).
 - Internal Revenue Service (IRS – via tax and trade policy).
 - Energy Marketers Association (for retail fuel sector coordination).

US Chamber of Commerce Foundation - Commerce Sector

- **FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)**
 - Central coordinating agency for federal disaster response.
 - Runs the National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC), a key entry point for private sector coordination.
 - Often seen as the “default” agency, but suffers from cultural and bureaucratic delays in response, according to interview feedback.
 - Engagement varies based on administration priorities—criticism noted around political leadership being slow to respond or unclear on operational roles.
- **CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency)**
 - Engaged in cross-sector lifeline coordination, particularly around infrastructure protection, cyber, and information sharing.
 - Often present on regular cross-sector calls, as noted in the interview (e.g., they “don’t miss them”). Plays a role in events with multi-sector impact such as hurricanes, cyber incidents, or infrastructure disruptions.
- **DOT (Department of Transportation)**
 - Key agency for interstate transportation, logistics, and issuing waivers to move fuel, goods, or fleet vehicles across state lines.
 - Works with FEMA and ESF-1 (Emergency Support Function for Transportation) during emergencies.
- **HHS (Health and Human Services)**
 - Lead agency for healthcare sector coordination, pandemic response, and deployment of public health resources (e.g., during COVID-19).
 - Coordinates with medical supply chains, pharmaceuticals, and hospitals.
- **USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture)**
 - Coordinates during droughts, food supply chain disruptions, and agricultural emergencies.
 - Noted for playing a large but underappreciated role in long-duration “slow-moving” disasters like droughts.
- **Commerce Department**
 - Engaged in supply chain issues, economic impact analysis, and regulatory relief related to business recovery.
- **HUD (Housing and Urban Development)**
 - Oversees CDBG-DR (Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery), which funds long-term housing recovery.
 - Criticized in the interview as being misaligned with rapid disaster needs (“Why is HUD managing recovery funds?”).

- **Event-Specific or One-Off Agencies**

- DHS (Department of Homeland Security)
 - Parent agency of FEMA and CISA.
 - Often perceived as too large and slow; there's a suggestion that FEMA should be removed from DHS to restore agility.
- Executive Office of the President / NSC / HSC
 - Engaged in policy development during major national crises.
 - Feedback indicates they should stay in policy and out of operations, as operational involvement creates confusion and delays.

- **Other Agencies Involved When Needed:**

- EPA – Environmental issues after floods or hurricanes.
- DOE – Energy sector coordination and power restoration.
- Treasury or SBA – Small business recovery support after disasters.
- FCC – Communications sector coordination.
- DOD – National Guard deployments or logistics support.

Finance Sector Company

- **FEMA (especially Region IV)**
 - Engages FEMA's private sector liaisons for situational awareness, especially during hurricanes and large-scale events.
- **CISA (DHS)**
 - Works closely with CISA's Protective Security Advisor (PSA) in North Carolina on:
 - Active shooter preparedness
 - Exercises
 - Infrastructure coordination
- **NOAA**
 - Monitors storm activity through:
 - Storm Prediction Center
 - National Hurricane Center
 - National Weather Service
 - Space Weather Prediction Center
 - NOAA data is critical for operational planning and risk modeling, even though interaction is indirect.
- **USGS (U.S. Geological Survey)**
 - Uses the PAGER system to assess earthquake impacts and prioritize damage assessments at our facilities.
- **National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC)**
 - Tracks wildfires nationally using daily situation reports and GIS overlays.
- **EPA**
 - Monitors air quality data to trigger safety protocols (e.g., sealing buildings during high-smoke events).
- **FBI**
 - Receives regular intelligence briefings (FOUO level) from local FBI liaison in Charlotte.
- **Department of Commerce**
 - Highlighted due to NOAA's funding structure; emphasized need for stable funding to preserve essential forecasting products.
- **Federal Information Feeds for Internal GIS Analysis**
 - The company has robust in-house GIS system and depends on these federal agencies to:
 - Track storms, wildfires, earthquakes, and air quality
 - Prioritize actions affecting employees, branches, and customer service
- **Make decisions that balance operational continuity and safety**

Comcast - Communications Sector

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**
 - Serves as the central coordination hub during national emergencies.
 - Comcast joins FEMA-led coordination calls to resolve access issues.
 - FEMA is key to validating crew movement across jurisdictions and aligning efforts between states and the private sector.
- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**
 - Oversees critical infrastructure protection and national emergency response.
 - Comcast works with DHS on broader continuity and resilience strategies.
 - Coordination often occurs through DHS sub-agencies like CISA.
- **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)**
 - Regulates telecommunications infrastructure and disaster response policy.
 - Comcast provides outage and restoration data through the FCC's Disaster Information Reporting System (DIRS).
 - Participates in FCC forums on communication sector resilience and policy during emergencies.
- **Department of Transportation (DOT)**
 - Supports emergency vehicle access and provides regulatory waivers.
 - Comcast coordinates with DOT to secure exemptions (e.g., hours-of-service) for response crews and equipment transport.
 - DOT's support is critical for rapid deployment during road closures or fuel shortages.
- **Department of Energy (DOE)**
 - Coordinates restoration efforts across the energy sector.
 - Comcast joins DOE calls when disasters impact power-dependent communications infrastructure.
 - Participates in cross-sector discussions with electric utilities and fuel providers.
- **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**
 - Facilitates cybersecurity coordination and infrastructure resilience.
 - Comcast engages in CISA-led working groups to address physical and cyber risks.
 - Receives real-time threat updates and participates in joint planning activities.
- **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**
 - Provides critical weather forecasting and storm tracking.
 - Comcast uses NOAA data to pre-position field crews and assess network risk.
 - NOAA intelligence is typically integrated into FEMA or DHS briefings Comcast relies on.
- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**
 - Leads public health and medical coordination during pandemics and health crises.
 - Comcast supports broadband and connectivity for hospitals and public health agencies.
 - Coordinates indirectly via FEMA or health-focused response centers during widespread health emergencies.
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**
 - Ensures environmental safety and oversees emergency fuel and emissions waivers.
 - Comcast interacts with EPA around generator usage, environmental compliance during infrastructure restoration, and operations near environmentally sensitive zones.

Auto ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center)

AUTO ISAC and the broader surface transportation sector coordinate with numerous federal agencies depending on the type and scope of disaster:

- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS):**
 - Especially CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency).
- **Department of Transportation (DOT):**
 - Includes headquarters-level engagement and the DOT Operations Center.
- **Modal administrations:**
 - Federal Highway Administration (freight/trucking/highways)
 - Federal Railroad Administration (freight/passenger rail)
 - Federal Transit Administration (mass transit)
 - Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (pipelines/hazmat)
- **Transportation Security Administration (TSA):**
- **Department of Defense (DoD):**
 - Particularly U.S. Transportation Command and Surface Deployment and Distribution Command for awareness of port and supply chain impacts.
- **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI):**
 - For situational awareness on physical and cyber threats.
- **U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:**
 - As needed post-disaster depending on impact.
- **Regional Offices:**
 - Engagement with regional FEMA and CISA offices for operational alignment.

AUTO ISAC emphasized providing consolidated reporting to minimize duplicative and disruptive information requests from multiple agencies during disasters.

Water Sector Coordinating Council - Water Sector

- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**
 - Sector-specific agency for drinking-water and wastewater oversight.
- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)**
- ESF-3 Public Works & Engineering lead, partnered with EPA for major incidents.
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**
 - Shares water-sector updates on ESF-14 calls and manages Community-Lifeline reporting.
- **Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**
 - Engaged for cyber-related threats to water utilities.
- **National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) / Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)**
 - Tapped when state Water/Wastewater Agency Response Networks (WARNs) need additional interstate support.
 - Routine bi-weekly coordination with state WARN leads since April 2020 ensures early situational awareness.

Section 2 - Concerns for States

Gaps in State / Industry Coordination During Disasters



Edison Electric Institute EEI - Electric Sector

- **Inconsistent State Capabilities:** EEI expressed concern that federal budget cuts would result in FEMA pushing more responsibility to states, many of which lack the expertise, funding, or personnel to manage major disasters on their own.
 - **One-to-Many Challenge:** Instead of coordinating with FEMA (one agency), EEI members may now have to work individually with 50+ states, which is inefficient and slows down response.
 - **Equity in Recovery Funding:** EEI fears that transmission providers, which support co-ops and municipal utilities, may not receive Stafford Act support—despite enabling power restoration for eligible recipients.
 - **Political Risk:** The sector is concerned that response and recovery may become influenced by politics at the state level, undermining consistency and fairness.
 - **Delayed Declarations:** EEI flagged examples of federal disaster declarations being denied in cases where they would have been granted in the past—forcing utilities and states to absorb disaster costs without reimbursement.
 - **Workforce Strain:** Cuts may exacerbate FEMA's staffing shortfalls, forcing utilities to fill gaps without sufficient public support, adding risk to employee safety and morale during prolonged response efforts.
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Verizon - Communications Sector

- **Strained State-Level Coordination:** Verizon voiced concern that smaller or less-resourced states may struggle to maintain 24/7 coordination, especially when federal support is reduced or delayed.
- **Loss of Trusted Coordination Hubs:** FEMA often plays the role of a “central expeditor”, linking telecoms to other federal agencies and states. Without it, there’s a risk of confusion, duplication, or misalignment.
- **Interoperability at Risk:** Verizon highlighted that standard-setting must remain at the federal level. Without FEMA or DHS leadership, interoperable communications between states, sectors, and responders could deteriorate.
- **Degradation of Trust and Networks:** Cuts could disrupt long-standing relationships between federal agencies and private telecom response teams, which are vital during hurricanes and cyber incidents.
- **Workforce Concern:** Budget uncertainty may discourage skilled federal partners from staying, leading to a loss of institutional knowledge and slower response coordination during critical events.

Commercial Properties Sector

- **Loss of Grant Funding and Staff Capacity**
 - Cuts to federal grants are causing loss of critical state/local staff positions.
 - This leads to reduced capacity for both preparedness and response activities at the local level.
- **Political Influence on State-Level Funding Distribution**
 - Concern that funds pushed to states will be unequally distributed based on political priorities.
 - Rural areas with fewer votes may receive less support compared to urban population centers.
- **Increased Regionalization Leading to Poor Local Service**
 - Centralization and remote management (e.g., HR or coordination teams based in other states) lead to confusion, inefficiency, and lack of accountability.
- **Lack of local contacts results in:**
 - Poor situational awareness, misinformation, delayed or misaligned responses.
- **Delayed Response from Lack of Embedded Expertise**
 - Without embedded federal roles or expeditor teams, disaster response is delayed.
 - Verifying damage (e.g., structural integrity, mold) is costly and slow without federal or state support.
 - Private companies left to bear high costs and potential liability alone.

Retail Sector (Groceries, Fuel, Pharmacy, etc..)

- **Lack of Consistency Across States**
 - Without FEMA as a central coordination hub, retailers must navigate different rules, contacts, and priorities in each state, creating confusion, delays, and operational friction.
- **Reduced Federal Funding and Support**
 - States heavily depend on FEMA grants to maintain emergency management programs, staff, and planning capabilities. Budget cuts could force states to scale back, weakening disaster readiness.
- **Increased Burden on States Without Additional Resources**
 - States fear being asked to take on more responsibility without added funding, personnel, or federal partnerships—leading to slower responses, miscommunication, and unmet community needs.
- **Coordination Gaps and Delayed Decision-Making**
 - Budget and staffing cuts may lead to fewer people at the coordination table, slower transportation waivers, and delayed decisions that disrupt supply chain movement and response timelines.
- **Loss of Institutional Knowledge at FEMA**
 - Departures of experienced federal staff threaten trusted relationships with state partners. These longstanding relationships are essential for fast, coordinated response during crises.
- **Disruption of Established Communication Channels**
 - FEMA often acts as the backbone for multi-jurisdictional coordination. Without it, states may struggle to access timely information or communicate effectively with federal partners, the private sector, or neighboring states.
- **Lack of Clear Federal Leadership in Multi-State Disasters**
 - FEMA provides a unique role in convening states and agencies across regions. Its absence could lead to fragmented efforts, especially problematic for private supply chains that operate across borders.
- **Preparedness Messaging at Risk**
 - Cuts to federal outreach and education campaigns may reduce public readiness, increasing reliance on retailers to meet urgent needs for food, water, and supplies.
- **Loss of Training and Joint Planning Programs**
 - Blue-sky day collaboration through exercises, trainings, and conferences may be reduced, eroding the proactive coordination that strengthens response when disasters hit.
- **Staffing Concerns at State Level**
 - Many state emergency management positions are funded through federal grants. Reductions may cause staffing shortages during critical response times.
- **Fragmentation and Loss of Shared Situational Awareness**
 - Without strong federal-state frameworks, states could operate in silos, lacking access to national or global disaster intelligence that is essential for coordinated action.
- **Increased Burden on Private Sector**
 - Retailers may be expected to fill gaps in food, water, and medicine delivery in overwhelmed or underprepared areas, especially where state capacity is limited.
- **State Capacity and Political Constraints**
 - Even with additional responsibilities, there are concerns that resources may be diverted by politics or bureaucracy, reducing impact at the operational level.
- **Uncertainty About National Preparedness Program Continuity**
 - States are unsure whether federally supported programs—like information-sharing platforms or regional coordination frameworks—will be sustained, causing planning instability.

Energy Marketers of America (EMA) - Fuel Sector

- **Limited Access to Escorts at Fuel Terminals**
 - Concern: During disasters, waterborne terminals provide transportation workers identification card (TWIC) escorts for drivers that do not usually pull fuel from port terminals and therefore do not have a TWIC card. Providing the escorts allows for more access to fuel which speeds recovery.
 - The concern is about knowing in advance (for route planning) when the escorts will be available. Some are available 24/7, some are available fewer hours, and some of the waterborne terminals may not provide escorts at all.
 - Developing a system to notify petroleum marketers of such information would increase routing efficiencies and faster disaster recovery.
 - Impact: Less efficient loading of fuel slows recovery and regional restoration efforts.
- **Inconsistent Regulatory Support Across States**
 - Concern - states vary in how quickly they process or coordinate:
 - Situational awareness.
 - Hours-of-service (HOS) waivers.
 - Weight limit exemptions.
 - Fuel taxes and EPA fuel waivers.
 - Impact: Delays and inconsistencies create confusing patchworks of rules, making fuel routing or access to fuel inefficient.
- **Lack of Unified Multi-State Coordination**
 - Concern: Although there has been improvement, states still tend to operate independently during disasters.
 - Impact: Fuel companies face challenges navigating separate rules, contacts, and requirements when trying to serve a multi-state impacted area.
- **Workforce Housing Gaps**
 - Concern: Drivers and fuel logistics staff can't operate in areas where housing is destroyed or unavailable.
 - Impact: States that don't prioritize temporary housing for essential workers may struggle to restore fuel services quickly.
 - Need for Pre-Established Federal-State-Fuel Communication Protocols

Food Industry Association (FMI) - Food sector

- **Regulatory Flexibility and Waiver Coordination**
 - Concern: States may not know how—or have authority—to request food-related waivers quickly:
 - SNAP/WIC substitution approvals
 - Hot food waivers
 - Vehicle weight or HOS exemptions
 - Impact: Delayed approvals stall food deliveries and prevent stores from reopening quickly.
- **Shortage of Food Safety Inspectors**
 - Concern: States don't always have surge capacity in their food inspection workforce post-disaster.
 - Impact: Delays in inspections prevent grocery stores and food warehouses from reopening, even when shelves are stocked.
- **Weak State Coordination with Federal Food Agencies**
 - Concern: Many state officials lack direct lines to USDA, FDA, or FEMA food program managers.
 - Impact: States can't effectively communicate urgent food needs or access emergency food assistance programs quickly.
- **Security for Food Deliveries**
 - Concern: Some states lack plans or resources to provide escorts or protection for food trucks entering disaster zones.
 - Impact: Drivers may be unable or unwilling to deliver food to high-risk areas without security, risking food shortages.
- **SNAP/WIC System Readiness**
 - Concern: States may not be ready to handle rapid electronic benefit replenishment or temporary program changes.
 - Impact: Vulnerable populations may face delays in accessing food during critical recovery periods.
- **Housing Access for Grocery Sector Workforce**
 - Concern: Without housing, employees cannot return to restock, reopen, or operate grocery stores.
 - Impact: Even when food is available, store closures persist due to lack of staff living locally.

Cencora - Pharma Sector

- **States Lack Resources to Take on FEMA's Role**
 - If FEMA is downsized, states may be expected to manage more of the disaster response burden—but many states do not have the funding or staffing to do so.
 - Concern: Federal funding might be cut without reinvestment in states, leaving them underprepared and unsupported.
- **States Are Not Organized Consistently**
 - Every state structures emergency management differently—some use departments of emergency management, others use state police or departments of military affairs.
 - Concern: This inconsistency causes confusion and delays during disasters when private sector partners are trying to coordinate access or support operations.
- **States Tend to Turn Inward During Disasters**
 - Without a strong federal coordinating body like FEMA, states may focus only on their own needs, making multi-state industry operations harder to execute.
 - Concern: A lack of regional coordination will disrupt supply chains that depend on cross-border cooperation.
- **State-Federal Disconnects Could Delay Response**
 - If states are given more responsibility without federal coordination support, industry won't know who to contact, what the process is, or how to get help quickly
 - Concern: This will slow down logistics, recovery, and patient care, especially for pharmaceutical distribution and healthcare operations.
- **Many States Rely Heavily on FEMA Grants**
 - These grants fund EOC operations, staff, and coordination roles.
 - Concern: Removing these grants without alternatives will cripple state emergency management capabilities, especially in less-resourced states.

Owner–Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) – Trucking Sector

- **Reduced Federal Grants to States**
 - Uncertainty around the scope and scale of grant cuts (e.g., EMPG).
 - Many states have 50–90% of their emergency management personnel funded by federal grants.
 - If grants are cut, states may lose key staff, severely impacting disaster readiness
- **State Emergency Management Staffing Shortages..**
 - Concern that staffing gaps will delay:
 - Situational awareness
 - Waiver requests
 - Resource mobilization
 - Permitting processes
 - Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) may not be able to perform timely coordination.
- **Credentialing and Access Delays**
 - Ongoing confusion and inconsistency with truck driver credentialing for disaster zone access.
 - Without consistent state-level coordination, drivers face delays and denials at checkpoints.
- **Roadway and Permitting Challenges**
 - Each state (and even counties) has different rules and authorities, especially Commonwealths with many local jurisdictions.
 - Oversize/overweight permitting is slow and complicated, especially without centralized help from the state.
- **Lack of Clarity About Future Roles**
 - Concern that states are being asked to take on more disaster support roles without clarity or transition plans.
 - Fear that cuts could come before states are ready, leading to operational breakdowns.
- **Unknown Impacts Until the Next Event**
 - Stakeholders fear they won't know what's missing until the next major disaster hits, making it impossible to prepare or advocate effectively in advance.

Dupont - Chemical Sector

- **Delayed Emergency Actions**
 - Without established processes for verifying incoming federal agency requests (e.g., Coast Guard, Dept. of Homeland Security calls), states might delay responses that impact survivor aid or supply flows.
- **Increased Responsibility Without Added Resources**
 - If FEMA downsizes or block grants responsibilities, states may be overwhelmed without corresponding staff, funding, or authority.
- **Information Bottlenecks at Ports**
 - States may struggle to get real-time port updates during closures, which directly impact supply chains for fuel, chemicals, and medical goods.
- **Lack of Unified Coordination Channels**
 - States aren't always positioned as the central hub for federal-to-private sector coordination, even though they're better situated locally to do so.
- **Delayed Emergency Actions**
 - Without established processes for verifying incoming federal agency requests (e.g., Coast Guard calls), states might delay responses that impact survivor aid or supply flows.
- **Strain on Emergency Management Systems**
 - If multiple private sector companies reach out for help without a streamlined state-level intake process, emergency managers will be buried in requests during crises.
- **Inconsistent Cross-State Collaboration**
 - Disasters often require coordination across multiple states (e.g., when a port in Maryland affects propane delivery in Pennsylvania). Many states are unprepared for this level of multi-state coordination.
- **Dependency on Federal Guidance**
 - States may lack the technical expertise to evaluate chemical hazards, rail logistics, or natural gas dependencies without federal agency input during disasters.

Healthcare Ready – Health Sector

- **Federal response delays place added pressure on states.**
 - States are often forced to respond quickly while waiting on slow or unclear federal action, especially in the early stages of a disaster.
- **Lack of early coordination disrupts healthcare supply chains.**
 - Without timely information and coordination, critical healthcare products can't be moved or prioritized, causing downstream effects on hospitals and pharmacies.
- **States struggle with unclear communication pathways.**
 - During smaller-scale disasters, it's difficult for state officials to know who to contact at the federal level or within utility providers to escalate urgent issues.
- **Low awareness of federal support programs like EPAP.**
 - Many states are unaware of programs like the Emergency Prescription Assistance Program and therefore don't request activation, leaving uninsured individuals unsupported.
- **High staff turnover at the state level weakens continuity.**
 - Changes in leadership and staff disrupt established relationships and institutional knowledge needed for smooth disaster response coordination.
- **Smaller disasters still cause major impacts but receive minimal federal support.**
 - Events that don't trigger a federal declaration can still have large-scale supply chain or infrastructure impacts, especially in the healthcare sector.
- **Federal preparedness exercises are often misaligned with state needs.**
 - Large, complex FEMA-led exercises rarely reflect the real operational needs of states or their private sector partners.
- **States are left to advocate for healthcare restoration prioritization.**
 - In some cases, critical facilities are not automatically prioritized for power restoration or resource delivery without state-level advocacy.
- **Policy and leadership changes at the federal level disrupt state planning.**
 - Frequent shifts in federal policy priorities and personnel make it difficult for states to maintain consistent preparedness strategies.
- **States may lack funding to fully support healthcare readiness.**
 - Budget constraints limit a state's ability to prepare for or respond to healthcare infrastructure failures or supply chain disruptions.

American Logistics Aid Network (ALAN) - Logistics Sector

- **Degradation of common disaster response processes**
 - Degrading of response processes across states, risking fragmented, inconsistent responses (e.g., Florida system vs. Tennessee system).
- **More Complexity for Private Sector**
 - Increased complexity for businesses and nonprofits if every state develops their own unique disaster procedures and processes.
- **Reduces Resilience**
 - Weakened resilience of communities because experienced recovery personnel may leave when funding dries up.
- **Operations Impacts**
 - State funding instability can make it harder for businesses to maintain operations or assist states during disaster response and recovery.
- **Public-Private Partnership Impacts**
 - Potential for greater difficulty in public-private partnerships if standardization and commonality across states erode.
- **Delays to Survivors**
 - Concern that future disaster survivors will experience even greater delays and hardships without a coordinated, nationwide disaster response approach.

C & S Wholesale Grocers - Food Sector

- **Staffing Reductions**
 - Fear that loss of grant funding will eliminate critical emergency management and private sector liaison positions at the state level.
 - Reduced staffing could delay debris clearance, utility restoration, and critical response activities, slowing the private sector's ability to resume operations.
- **Decreased Situational Awareness**
 - Without sufficient liaisons, private sector companies would lose vital real-time information on disaster impacts across multiple jurisdictions.
 - Loss of consistent points of contact at states could lead to a fractured, inconsistent response across different areas.
- **Impact on Medium and Small Communities**
 - Risk model-based funding (favoring high-population urban areas) could neglect medium and small communities, creating supply chain and food security vulnerabilities.
- **Increased Burden on Private Sector**
 - Private sector companies may be forced to fill coordination gaps previously supported by government partners, increasing operational costs and complexity.
- **Erosion of Disaster Preparedness Gains**
 - Concern that progress made since 9/11 in national coordination, cross-sector planning, and food supply chain resilience could be undone.
- **National Weather Service Concerns**
 - Potential reductions in update frequency and forecast detail could severely impact operational planning, particularly for smaller companies relying on public weather data.
- **Consistency and Standardization Gaps**
 - Fear of growing inconsistency between state responses if positions are eliminated, making multi-jurisdictional coordination harder for companies like C&S.

American Petroleum Institute (API) - Energy Sector

- **Loss of Certainty & Continuity**
 - States are facing increased personnel turnover, organizational change, and budgetary uncertainty—creating unpredictability in emergency coordination.
- **Weakened or Broken Relationships**
 - High staff turnover threatens institutional knowledge and trusted public-private relationships that are critical during crises.
- **Loss of Institutional Knowledge**
 - Massive retirements in federal and state agencies have resulted in the loss of hundreds of years of experience, especially in oil spill response.
- **Reduced State Capacity**
 - States lack sufficient financial resources, technical capabilities, and personnel to handle large-scale incidents like deep-water spills or major hurricanes.
- **Delayed Recovery**
 - Without FEMA's grants and assistance to locals, delays in debris removal and power restoration ripple into delayed industry operations and economic recovery.
- **Diminished Technical Expertise**
 - Critical science offices that handle oil dispersant policy, marine impact response, and spill containment have been cut or downsized.
- **Worker Welfare Dependency**
 - Companies can't resume operations if their workforce—who lives in the affected communities—can't return to work due to lack of power, shelter, or cleared access routes.
- **Urgency to Reframe the Role of Industry**
 - With federal cutbacks, there's concern that the private sector may be pushed into filling public roles without the legal protections or clarity to do so safely or efficiently.
- **Private Sector Burden**
 - Confusion and inconsistency at the state level often shifts operational burdens to private companies during response and recovery.

US Chamber of Commerce Foundation - Commerce Sector

- **Funding Uncertainty**
 - States fear a “funding cliff” with no clear path forward.
 - New grants often come with vague or shifting requirements.
 - The National Preparedness Report lacks actionable insight.
 - States want a “balanced scorecard” with measurable goals.
- **Operational Strain**
 - More responsibilities are shifting to states without added support.
 - Retirements are draining experience from emergency management.
 - EOCs lack timely federal data and clear points of contact.
- **Fragmented Federal Support**
 - Disaster programs are scattered across too many agencies (FEMA, HUD, CISA, etc.).
 - States struggle to navigate disconnected systems and policies.
 - They need open-data tools, not closed or siloed platforms.
- **Shifting Priorities & Trust Issues**
 - Frequent federal policy changes make long-term planning difficult.
 - FEMA is seen as unresponsive or over-controlling.
 - States want honest, two-way communication and fewer politics.
- **FEMA's Evolving Role**
 - States want FEMA to enable—not control—operations.
 - FEMA should provide tools, data, and national situational awareness.
 - Support state-led coordination, not top-down mandates.

Finance Sector

- **Slower Recovery Timeline**
 - Cuts to FEMA and state grant programs may delay recovery operations, especially in states less experienced or resourced for disaster response.
 - Delays in funding and staffing will increase downtime for infrastructure, affecting operations, customers, and employees.
- **Impact on Business Operations**
 - Prolonged disruptions may lead to:
 - Regulatory violations if financial services can't be delivered as required.
 - Operational losses and poor customer experience.
 - Without regulatory flexibility, businesses may face penalties for circumstances beyond their control.
- **Uneven State Readiness**
 - Some states recover quickly, while others struggle for 10+ days from even moderate events.
 - The gap in resiliency across states could worsen without federal and state investment in recovery capacity.
- **Degraded Data Timeliness**
 - NOAA/NWS reporting delays (e.g., 48-hour tornado confirmation lag) due to funding/staff cuts reduce decision-making speed and safety.
 - Business continuity plans depend on timely, accurate data to prioritize response actions.
- **Lack of Scalable State Engagement**
 - With a broad physical presence in 39 states and over 30 countries, it's not feasible to build direct relationships with every state.
 - A lack of centralized or consistent state-level liaisons makes cross-state coordination more difficult during crises.

Comcast - Communications Sector

- **Inconsistent Access Policies Across States Cause Delays**
 - Comcast likely faces challenges when each state enforces different credentialing, access, or curfew rules during disasters.
 - Lack of standardization slows down restoration efforts and creates confusion for field crews operating across multiple jurisdictions.
 - DHS Access letter are not always accepted by local law enforcement
- **Reduced State Capacity to Coordinate Multi-State Issues**
 - Budget and staffing cuts may reduce states' ability to engage in proactive planning or participate fully in joint-sector coordination. This causes delays in restoring communication outages.
 - States may struggle to resolve interdependencies that affect regional networks or multi-state infrastructure.
- **Reliance on Federal Coordination May Increase**
 - As state capabilities decline, Comcast may need to depend more heavily on FEMA, DHS or other agencies for consistent decision-making and conflict resolution.
- **Gaps in Situational Awareness and Data Sharing**
 - States may lack the tools or funding to maintain accurate, real-time information about road closures, flooding, power outages, and network disruptions that Comcast needs for planning.
 - Communication gaps with state emergency management may become more pronounced under tighter budgets.
- **Potential Delays in Permitting and Regulatory Waivers**
 - During disasters, Comcast often requires fast-track permitting to deploy assets or generators. Need consistent processes across states.
 - States facing cutbacks may not have the staff or flexibility to expedite these processes efficiently.

Auto ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center)

- **Fracturing of Capabilities:**
 - Federal restructuring and funding shifts risk breaking coordination mechanisms just as more responsibility is being pushed to states.
- **Dismantling of Advisory Structures:**
 - Valuable federal coordination bodies (e.g., Surface Transportation Advisory Committee, JCDC) have been disbanded, creating voids during critical planning periods.
- **State Resource Gaps:**
 - Many states lack the personnel, expertise, or operational bandwidth to handle increased federal expectations, especially during high-impact events like hurricanes.
- **Impediments to Access:**
 - When states are overwhelmed, industry's ability to access impacted areas is delayed, risking both public safety and infrastructure restoration.
- **Loss of Institutional Knowledge:**
 - New state and federal officials often lack awareness of the existing voluntary private-sector coordination networks, leading to inefficiencies.

Water Sector Coordinating Council - Water Sector

- **Fragmented federal structure:**
 - Water responsibilities are spread across four ESFs, diluting visibility and slowing prioritization of water system needs for states and local utilities.
- **Resource gaps:**
 - State WARNs handle most mutual-aid but can be over-taxed during large incidents, requiring EMAC missions.
- **Funding uncertainty:**
 - Possible cuts to the State Revolving Loan Fund and ambiguity in FEMA BRIC and State/Local Cybersecurity Grant programs threaten long-term resilience; loan-based models and cost-share matches strain rate-based utilities.
- **Persistent NRF distraction:**
 - Despite FEMA designating Drinking Water/Wastewater as a standalone Community Lifeline in 2021, the underlying ESF fragmentation remains unresolved, complicating state coordination.



Section 3 - Recommendations

Policy Shifts That Matter: Private Sector Recommendations for a More Effective Federal Role In Disasters

Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) - Trucking Sector

- **Create a Waiver Help Desk for Every Federal Agency**
 - Establish a centralized, rapid-response waiver system during disasters.
 - Helps industry quickly navigate agency-specific requirements (EPA, DOT, FMCSA, DHS, etc.).
 - Would be “money well spent” according to Morris, as delays in waivers create the biggest bottlenecks.
- **Standardize Credentialing for Drivers Entering Disaster Areas**
 - Reinstate or replace systems like SARA (Standardized Access and Registration for Access and Housing).
 - Clarify what credentials are acceptable (e.g., bill of lading, driver’s license, dispatcher notice).
 - Reduces delays and confusion at checkpoints and staging areas.
- **Ensure State Emergency Management is Fully Staffed**
 - Avoid sudden cuts to critical grants (e.g., EMPG) without a phased approach.
 - States need time to seek legislative funding to replace federal support.
 - Without state EOC staff, resource requests, waivers, and response coordination will stall.
- **Encourage Mutual Aid Agreements Among States**
 - Expand and streamline use of EMAC or similar state-to-state mutual assistance frameworks.
 - Helps states support one another as federal support roles evolve or diminish.
- **Improve Situational Awareness Sharing**
 - Enhance information sharing platforms (e.g., NBEOC) for real-time updates, road closures, and access coordination.
 - Leverage RV community apps and trucker apps as valuable sources of road and logistics information.
- **Clarify DHS’s Role in Security-Related Disruptions**
 - DHS should maintain clear communication channels during events like bombings, cyberattacks, or physical lockdowns.
 - Help restore access and deliveries more quickly by informing affected logistics providers.

Cencora - Pharma Sector

- **Create a Centralized Federal Waiver Coordination Hub**
 - Problem: Today, companies must call multiple federal agencies (e.g., DEA, DOT, HHS) separately to request disaster-related regulatory waivers.
 - Recommendation: Establish one federal coordination point or phone number that streamlines and expedites waiver processing across agencies during declared disasters.
- **Ensure States Receive FEMA Funds if FEMA is Downsized**
 - Problem: If FEMA headquarters functions are reduced or dismantled, and responsibilities shift to states, those states may lack capacity.
 - Recommendation: Redirect FEMA HQ funds to states via block grants or phased funding, ensuring states can build the capacity to coordinate with industry effectively.
- **Phase in Federal Disaster Policy Changes Gradually**
 - Problem: Abrupt federal changes can cause confusion and disrupt public-private coordination.
 - Recommendation: Implement changes over 1–2 years to allow states and industries to adapt, plan, and reestablish coordination pathways.
- **Invest in Blue-Sky Day Coordination and Exercises**
 - Problem: Federal regions and agencies are not holding enough pre-disaster exercises with states and industry.
 - Recommendation: Mandate and fund annual regional exercises, especially in disaster-prone areas, to build relationships and coordination capacity before the next crisis.

Food Industry Association (FMI) - Food Sector

- No Sudden Shifts or Changes:
 - Gradual implementation of federal reforms allows time for state and industry adaptation.
- **Support Over Structure:**
 - Focus less on agency restructuring (e.g., FEMA) and more on how to deliver critical services efficiently.
- **Keep Industry at the Table:**
 - Include private sector in preparedness, planning, and policy reform discussions—not just during response.
- **SNAP/WIC Program Flexibility**
 - Allow substitution of non-listed items when WIC-approved products are unavailable.
 - Enable emergency SNAP/WIC benefit replenishment and rapid onboarding of retailers.
- **Surge Support for Food Safety Inspections**
 - Increase availability of FDA and USDA food safety inspectors post-disaster.
 - Create temporary inspection standards or guidance to help stores reopen safely and quickly.
- **Security Escorts for Food Deliveries**
 - Develop local and state protocols to ensure safe passage of food trucks through disrupted or dangerous areas.
- **Simplified Reopening Guidelines**
 - Provide clear, disaster-specific checklists to speed up grocery store reopening and reduce confusion around compliance.
- **Policy Feedback to Federal Leadership**
 - Survivor-Centered Focus: Policy must prioritize speed and effectiveness in restoring services survivors depend on.

Retail Sector (Groceries, Fuel, Pharmacy, etc..)

Energy Marketers Association (EMA) – Fuel Sector

- **Survivor Focus**
 - Recommendations: Focus on recovery, not bureaucracy.
 - Streamline processes that get fuel where it's needed—fastest ways to safely do so.
- **Streamline Regulatory Relief / Waivers**
 - Challenge: Improved coordination among federal agencies that regulate the fuel sector may improve efficiencies. DOE's role that was created in 2012 in being the lead department regarding petroleum deliveries and access has been helpful – it is important that there is an office that oversees fuel and has the authority to make things happen.
 - Fuel sector drivers need waivers to expedite fuel deliveries during disasters.
 - Recommendations:
 - Expediting hours-of-service and weight waivers and providing the waivers 5 days in advance of a reliably predicted event (hurricane, winter storm).
 - A central point of contact for regulatory coordination is important - to serve as a "help desk" on fuel waivers/issues that can produce actionable results quickly.
- **Fuel Terminal Access and Security**
 - Communication About When TWIC Terminal Escorts are Available
 - Challenge: Non-TWIC (Transportation Worker Identification Credential) holder driver access delays.
 - During disasters, waterborne terminals (e.g. maritime ports) provide transportation workers identification card (TWIC) escorts for drivers that do not usually pull fuel from port terminals and therefore do not have a TWIC card. Providing the escorts allows for more access to fuel which speeds recovery. The concern is about knowing in advance (for route planning) when the escorts will be available. Some are available 24/7, some are available fewer hours, and some of the waterborne terminals may not provide escorts at all. Developing a system to notify petroleum marketers of such information would increase routing efficiencies and faster disaster recovery.
 - Policy Recommendation:
 - Communicate terminal TWIC escort availability schedules during emergency response.
 - Formalize general terminal credentialing nationwide to minimize the need for terminal credentialing access protocols. All terminals have their own credentialing that must be acquired before pulling fuel.
 - When it is warranted, facilitate police or highway patrol driver escorts from terminals to delivery points, especially late at night/early morning to encourage more drivers to load fuel during these parts of the day.
- **Support for Mutual Assistance Networks**
 - Observation: Industry-led fuel mutual assistance programs are fast and efficient.
 - Policy Recommendation:
 - Leverage existing fuel mutual assistance programs (EMA Disaster Fuel Response Program) into federal response efforts.
- **Removal of Logistical Roadblocks**
 - Challenge: Regulatory or procedural hurdles delay fuel movement during crises.
 - Examples:
 - Local permitting issues.
 - Contraflow notification should be provided to marketers at least 24 hours in advance. Deliveries must be re-routed.
 - Routing restrictions.
 - Confusing or delayed federal guidance.
 - Recommendation:
 - Engage industry early. Pre-disaster planning with agencies ensures smoother execution during crises.

Commercial Properties Sector

- **Embed Federal Liaisons in State Agencies**
 - Place FEMA or SBA staff full-time within state emergency agencies like PEMA.
 - This liaison would be a trusted, day-to-day point of contact to expedite coordination and cut red tape.
- **Create Agile Federal “Expeditor” Teams**
 - Deploy 2–3 person response teams to disaster areas immediately.
 - These teams would:
 - Help assess conditions.
 - Cut through red tape.
 - Facilitate faster access to support and recovery funding.
 - Think of these as operational “facilitators,” not commanders — modeled after ICS and mutual assistance field coordination.
- **Improve Federal Website Usability**
 - Federal disaster and funding websites are difficult to navigate.
 - Suggest contracting out user experience design to non-government web professionals.
 - Simpler, clearer websites would allow smaller companies to find and use resources without needing a large bureaucracy.

Dupont - Chemical Sector

- **Strengthen Real-Time Situational Awareness Systems**
 - Invest in tools like SISE or state portals to give companies direct, real-time visibility into port closures, rail disruptions, and customs delays.
- **Empower States as Coordination Hubs**
 - Formally recognize and support states as central conduits for communicating with ports, FEMA, and local private sector facilities during disasters.
- **Improve Access to Verified Emergency Contacts**
 - Establish and maintain a directory of verified federal and state emergency contacts to prevent delays caused by trust or verification issues (e.g., confirming Coast Guard identities).
- **Expand Awareness of Waiver Processes**
 - Proactively educate logistics companies and manufacturers on how to request or benefit from DOT, EPA, and FRA waivers during emergencies.
- **Streamline Communication for Port & Rail Operations**
 - Ensure ports and captains of the port have support to handle incoming information requests—possibly routed through FEMA or the state to reduce congestion.
- **Support Cross-Sector Tabletop Exercises**
 - Encourage federal funding or recognition of private/public tabletop exercises that uncover vulnerabilities (e.g., natural gas dependency or water infrastructure gaps).
- **Create Emergency Flexibility for Regulated Operations**
 - Develop policies to allow faster-than-usual decision-making during disasters (e.g., when hazardous material needs to be relocated quickly).
- **Integrate Supply Chain Partners into Information Flow**
 - Enable broader access to critical information for third-party suppliers and carriers who often don't realize waivers or updates are available.

Healthcare Ready - Health Sector

- **Engage Before Disasters Happen**
 - Assign federal reps for planning—not just during response.
- **Create Backup Manufacturing Plans**
 - Build contingency strategies for single-source medical supply facilities.
- **Invest in Supply Chain Resilience**
 - Support infrastructure and redundancy to reduce disruption risks.
- **Improve Awareness of EPAP**
 - Promote the Emergency Prescription Assistance Program to states and survivors.
- **Streamline Multi-Agency Coordination**
 - Simplify waivers and approvals across DOT, IRS, HHS, CBP.
- **Prioritize Critical Infrastructure Restoration**
 - Support timely power restoration at healthcare supply chain facilities.
- **Fund Targeted Preparedness Exercises**
 - Back industry-led exercises based on real disaster use cases.
- **Include Private Sector in Federal Exercises**
 - Make FEMA exercises relevant, actionable, and inclusive of industry.
- **Enhance Cyber Redundancy for Tools**
 - Ensure continuity for systems like Rx Open during attacks.
- **Maintain Institutional Knowledge**
 - Retain long-term federal contacts to prevent coordination gaps.

American Logistics Aid Network (ALAN) - Logistics Sector

- **Common Disaster Framework**
 - Create a harmonized national disaster response framework across states to reduce inconsistencies and confusion for businesses, nonprofits, and survivors.
- **Ongoing Communications**
 - Improve direct communication between government and private/nonprofit sectors at both planning and operational levels, even if solutions are still being formed.
 - Maintain regular conversations and feedback loops between FEMA, states, private sector, and nonprofits — not just during disasters but also during preparedness phases.
- **Managing Expectations**
 - Facilitate easier understanding for citizens, businesses, and nonprofits about what to expect during disasters, no matter where they are located.
- **Support Logistics Planning**
 - Encourage more inclusive planning involving private sector logistics, fuel, food, freight, communications, and supply chain resilience actors.
- **Simplify Grants Administration**
 - Avoid overcomplication in federal and state funding/grant administration to retain essential personnel and expertise critical for disaster recovery.

C & S Wholesale Grocers - Food Sector

- **Improve and Expedite Waiver Processes**
 - Create a centralized FEMA waiver help desk for private sector and states to quickly obtain guidance and official documents during all disaster scales (not just national-level).
- **Standardize waiver postings and documentation across states and agencies.**
 - Increase integration and coordination between federal declarations and waivers, ensuring predictable, simultaneous release.
- **Enhance Cross-Jurisdictional Information Sharing**
 - Build an automated but verified information collection and dissemination tool to provide trusted, cross-jurisdictional operational information quickly.
 - Maintain federal-private sector communications during small and medium-sized events, not just major disasters.
- **Strengthen and Preserve State Private Sector Liaison Functions**
 - Advocate for increased, not reduced, private sector liaison staffing at the state level to ensure streamlined communication and coordination.
- **Support and Protect NOAA/National Weather Service Capabilities**
 - Maintain (or enhance) the frequency and detail of NWS forecasting to support operational decision-making for companies, especially small businesses without private weather services.
- **Enhance Food Supply Chain Planning**
 - Expand food supply chain planning support to the state level, not just major cities, using urban area grants or equivalent funding mechanisms.
- **Advance Use of Existing Tools**
 - Leverage tools like Signal and the CVSA Waiver Repository more effectively for real-time disaster declarations, waivers, and coordination.

American Petroleum Institute (API) - Energy Sector

- **Centralized Waiver Coordination Hub**
 - A federal “one-stop shop” or expeditor to streamline all waiver requests (fuel, transport, tax, etc.) across agencies during disasters.
- **Direct Access to Decision-Makers**
 - Maintain relationships with individuals authorized to sign waivers (e.g., Kurt Gustafson at EPA), not just liaison staff.
- **National Repository for Issued Waivers**
 - Publicly accessible, real-time listing of issued federal/state waivers (suggested integration with tools like SISE-net).
- **Streamline Waiver Approvals**
 - Identify key agency contacts responsible for issuing fuel, emissions, and regulatory waivers and establish a quarterly or seasonal pre-/post-disaster workshop with them.
- **Develop a Centralized Waiver Contact Network**
 - Create a directory of waiver approvers across federal agencies to remove confusion and delays during events.
- **Protect & Sustain Specialized Field Capabilities**
 - Reverse cuts to NOAA, BSEE, and other federal field expert offices critical for managing spills and response operations.
- **Facilitate Industry-Led Debris Coordination**
 - Encourage federal support to allow vetted private companies to assist in coordinated debris removal, especially in underserved areas.
- **Address Liability Protections**
- **Increase Cross-Sector Tabletop Exercises**
 - Involve waiver-issuing officials and industry in realistic drills to test response coordination and reinforce roles/responsibilities.
- **Cross-Sector Legislative Education Events**
 - Bring together policymakers, emergency managers, and private sector to learn regional issues and establish relationships annually.

US Chamber of Commerce Foundation - Commerce Sector

- **Establish Clear, Trusted Coordination Points**
 - Create a single, well-known federal entry point (like a revitalized National Business Emergency Operations Center, or NBEOC) to avoid confusion.
 - Avoid duplication and “proliferation” of access points across agencies.
 - Make it easy for businesses to know where to go, who to contact, and what to expect in a crisis.
- **Improve Speed, Transparency & Communication**
 - Respond to private sector requests within the operational period, not days later.
 - Be honest about what you can’t do, not just what you can.
 - Provide specific contacts, not bureaucratic runarounds.
- **Shift to National, Not Just Federal, Planning**
 - Disasters require national plans—federal, state, and private sector together—not just FEMA-driven federal ones.
 - Bring industry into the planning process from the start (not just for feedback).
 - Example: If industry had been included early under DPA Section 708, COVID supply chain challenges could have been reduced.
- **Support Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Resilience**
 - Invest in pre-disaster actions to reduce long-term costs.
 - Make funding more predictable and tied to performance goals (balanced scorecard model).
 - Fund what works and is measurable at the state and community level.
- **Streamline Operations and Authorities**
 - Reduce federal fragmentation: disaster support is spread across FEMA, HUD, USDA, DOT, etc.—consolidate or align.
 - Ensure the Executive Office and White House stay strategic, not operational.
 - FEMA should be a strategic enabler, not a gatekeeper.
- **Build Trust through Consistent Engagement**
 - Don’t wait for disasters—build relationships before the storm hits.
 - Ask businesses: “What do you need to keep operating?”
 - Shift from control to support and partnership.

Finance Sector

- **Restore Public-Private Conferences**
 - Reinstate funding for FEMA regional and national public-private partnership events. These meetings build relationships, share best practices, and reconnect partners lost to retirements or pandemic disruptions.
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 - Reinstate funding for FEMA regional and national public-private partnership events. These meetings build relationships, share best practices, and reconnect partners lost to retirements or pandemic disruptions.
- **Maintain Critical Data Feeds**
 - Ensure continued funding for NOAA, USGS, and NIFC.
 - The company depends on these for storm, wildfire, air quality, and earthquake situational awareness.
 - Recent delays in tornado reporting (e.g., St. Louis EF-3) show how cuts affect decision-making.
- **Empower DHS PSAs (Protective Security Advisory) as Private Sector Conduits**
 - CISA's Protective Security Advisors (PSAs) should be the go-to federal link for businesses.
 - PSAs are responsive, know infrastructure needs, and can escalate issues better than FEMA regional contacts.
- **Improve State-Level Coordination**
 - Help states provide a single point of contact for large companies operating across multiple states.
 - Centralized engagement helps avoid overloading local EOCs during disasters.
- **Enable Regulatory Relief**
 - Allow waivers or flexibility during prolonged outages that impact service delivery.
 - Regulatory leniency prevents compounding business losses during extended recoveries.

Comcast - Communications Sector

- **FEMA**
 - Maintain FEMA as the Primary Coordination Hub during large scale disasters (multi-state)
 - Ensure FEMA remains the central access and conflict-resolution point during disasters, especially for cross-state infrastructure movement, expediting waivers, and credentialing issues.
- **Standardize Access Credentialing Across States**
 - Work with DHS/FEMA and states to implement a national standard process for access passes or crew movement protocols to reduce delays when crossing state lines.
- **Expand Support for Public-Private Information Sharing**
 - Strengthen federal led programs and coordination calls to share timely, actionable threat and situational updates across all critical infrastructure sectors.
- **Streamline Emergency Waivers and Regulatory Approvals**
 - Create pre-approved or fast-track federal waivers (via DOT, EPA, FCC) for vehicle movement, generator use, and communication restoration activities.
- **Ensure Reliable Supply Chain Access**
 - Advocate for consistent federal-level coordination to resolve supply chain disruptions (e.g., fuel, replacement parts) that impact response and restoration.
- **Protect Critical Infrastructure Prioritization**
 - Reinforce policies that give telecom providers priority access to fuel, security checkpoints, and response resources alongside energy and healthcare sectors.
- **Invest in State-Level Capacity and Consistency**
 - Provide grants or technical support to help states strengthen their emergency management teams, ensure consistent policies, and actively engage with private sector partners.

Retail Sector - (Groceries, Fuel, Pharmacy, etc..)

- **Strengthen Government–Private Sector Partnerships**
 - Maintain strong, two-way communication, connectivity, and regular training between federal, state, and private sector partners to ensure operational readiness and mutual trust.
- **Issue Waivers Earlier and Streamline the Process**
 - Approve critical waivers (e.g., hours of service, fuel taxes) earlier during notice events—not at the last minute.
 - Establish a centralized federal waiver coordination system (e.g., one phone number or group) to streamline multi-agency waiver requests (DOT, IRS, etc.).
 - Use SIGNAL or similar real-time communication tools to coordinate and track waiver decisions.
- **Accelerate Preemptive Communications**
 - Provide earlier alerts about potential threats or events—even before full confirmation—so that private sector partners can mobilize staff, reroute shipments, and stage resources.
- **Expand and Improve Federal Exercises**
 - Conduct more simple, integrated, operational-level exercises involving FEMA and functional agency players (e.g., DOE, CISA, DOT, IRS, USDA), not just policy or planning representatives.
- **Establish a Unified Federal Coordination Framework**
 - Create a central disaster coordination office or standardized federal playbook to streamline decision-making and reduce confusion across agencies during multi-state or complex events.
- **Maintain a Primary Federal Entry Point**
 - Empower a central coordinating body for federal support, ensuring it can rapidly convene DOT, HHS, USDA, and other agencies to act decisively.
- **Require Pre-Disaster Relationship Building**
 - Require federal agencies to participate annually in cross-sector preparedness exercises with state governments and private companies to build familiarity and trust.
- **Expand Emergency Waiver Authorities**
 - Grant FEMA and partner agencies the authority to issue pre-approved waivers during declared emergencies to avoid bureaucratic delays in transportation, healthcare, and workforce movements.
- **Improve Housing Access for Survivors and Critical Workers**
 - Invest in scalable housing options like pre-approved trailers or hotel partnerships to support displaced residents and essential workers returning to affected areas.
- **Bolster State and Local Government Surge Capacity**
 - Develop and fund deployable teams (IT, finance, planning, logistics) to temporarily reinforce under-resourced state or local emergency management agencies during major disasters.
- **Fund Cross-Sector Operational Tools**
 - Invest in public-private information sharing platforms (e.g., SISE-net at siseusa.org) that improve real-time situational awareness and decision-making across industry and government.

- **Institutionalize Private Sector Input into Federal Policy**
 - Establish a Private Sector Advisory Council within the federal government to ensure continuous industry input that enhances the speed, relevance, and practicality of disaster programs.
 - **Modernize Disaster Recovery Processes**
 - Digitize and automate Individual Assistance and Public Assistance application and payment systems to speed up survivor aid and reduce burdens on local governments.
 - **Standardize Workforce Credentialing for Critical Sectors**
 - Create a national system or mechanisms that can be easily and cost effectively implemented at the local government level for credentialing essential workers (fuel, electric, communications, healthcare) to ensure seamless access to disaster zones across state lines.
-

Auto ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center)

- **Restore Coordination Structures:**
 - Re-establish dismantled public-private councils (e.g., Critical Infrastructure Cross-Sector Council, Regional Consortium Coordinating Council) to ensure real-time dialogue and solution development.
- **Use FEMA and DHS as Conveners, Not Briefers:**
 - Shift federal role from presentation-focused to facilitation-focused — creating space for problem-solving between industry and government.
- **Support State Capacity Building:**
 - Provide staffing, training, and funding to help states meet expanded responsibilities without collapsing under operational strain.
- **Centralize and Streamline Federal Information Sharing:**
 - Federal agencies must coordinate internally so industry can report once through a designated channel (e.g., ISACs) instead of responding to multiple redundant requests.
- **Institutionalize Access Planning:**
 - Pre-approve access credentials and response protocols in coordination with states to prevent critical delays during disasters.
- **Maximize Cross-Sector Dialogue:**
 - Encourage consistent, structured conversations among multiple infrastructure sectors — modeled after the electricity sector's mutual aid and preparation systems.
- **Capitalize on Federal Convening Power:**
 - Recognize the unique power of federal agencies to draw the right stakeholders into productive problem-solving forums.
- **Act Quickly Before New Bureaucracies Are Cemented:**
 - Use this transition window to propose and pilot new collaboration methods before federal agencies finalize their new structures.

Water Sector Coordinating Council - Water Sector

- Create a unified Water System Services mission inside ESF-3 and elevate EPA to Primary Agency status, working jointly with USACE, to mirror the clear lead roles enjoyed by Transportation (ESF-1), Communications (ESF-2), and Energy (ESF-12).
- Consolidate federal roles and responsibilities for water under that single ESF to streamline decision-making, improve information-sharing, and speed support to states and utilities.
- Expand federal grant support (not just loans) for resilience, cybersecurity, and WARN mutual-aid capacity; protect or increase SRF, BRIC, and State/Local Cybersecurity Grant funding and ease local match requirements.
- Support and formalize WARN/EMAC integration to ensure states can rapidly source out-of-state technical crews and critical parts during disasters.
- Maintain close EPA–FEMA–CISA coordination so water-system physical and cyber issues are addressed holistically within federal response doctrine.



Appendix 1 - Federal Agencies Mentioned in Interviews

This is not an complete list of federal agencies involved in disasters

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 - Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
 - Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
 - Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
 - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
 - Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Department of Energy (DOE)
 - Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER)
 - Energy Information Administration (EIA)
- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
 - Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
- Department of the Treasury
 - Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
 - Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN)

- Department of Defense (DoD)
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Department of Justice
 - Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
 - Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- White House
 - National Security Council (NSC)
 - Homeland Security Council (HSC)
 - Executive Office of the President
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE)
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- National Coordinating Center for Communications (NCC)
- National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC)

Learn More About FEMA Emergency Support Functions: https://www.fema.gov/cbrn-tools/key-planning-factors-chemical-incident/appendix_f



Appendix 2 - Report Contributors

Participating Organizations (Grouped by Sector)

- **Electric Sector**
 - Edison Electric Institute (EEI)
- **Fuel Sector**
 - Energy Marketers of America (EMA)
 - American Petroleum Institute (API)
- **Food Sector**
 - Food Industry Association (FMI)
 - C&S Wholesale Grocers
- **Retail Sector (Groceries, Fuel, Pharmacy, etc..)**
 - Walmart
 - Albertsons
 - Wegmans
- **Communications Sector**
 - Verizon
 - Comcast
- **Health/Pharmaceutical Sector**
 - Healthcare Ready
 - Cencora
- **Transportation & Logistics Sector**
 - Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA)
 - American Logistics Aid Network (ALAN)
- **Chemical Sector**
 - DuPont
- **Finance Sector**
 - Anonymous Finance Sector Company
- **Commercial Property Sector**
 - Anonymous Commercial Property Management Firm
- **Water / Wastewater Sector**
 - Water Sector Coordinating Council
- **Other Participating Organizations**
 - US Chamber of Commerce Foundation
 - Auto Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC)

About All Hazards Consortium (AHC)

- The AHC is a state-sanctioned 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that bridges industry and government into a safe legally protected planning and problem solving framework to solve industry and state problems during crises via structured collaboration.
- The AHC is a non-partisan organization focused only on cross-section, cross-functional problem solving to reduce infrastructure risks and increase resilience to businesses and communities to the threats they face.
- Formed in 2005, the AHC is governed by a Board of Directors and supported by voluntary working groups, the AHC serves a nationwide network of over 40,000 stakeholders through the innovation of processes, technologies, and problem solving activities that require cross-sector collaboration to achieve meaningful operational results.

Vision

- To build a collaborative problem solving and policy ecosystem that enables states and private sector companies to jointly address the most pressing disaster and crisis coordination challenges.

Mission

- The AHC solves the critical disaster/crisis problems that require coordination and information sharing between states and private sector companies. Its mission is to unite public and private sector partners to accelerate disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts by leveraging its secure, FOIA-protected legal framework that enables coordinated planning, problem solving, and trusted information sharing to address prioritized critical challenges in crisis management, cybersecurity, operational information sharing, and emergency response communications—strengthening resilience and reducing risk.

Website: **ahcusa.org**

2024 Annual Report: **[AHC Reports](#)**



REPORT: VOICES FROM THE FRONT LINES



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