



**DRCA Board of Directors Quarterly Call**  
**September 14, 2020**

**DRCA Board Members Present:**

- Dan Craig, Tidal Basin
- Tom Lewis & Chris Walker, WSP
- Roy Dunn, CDR Maguire
- John Sullivan, DRC
- Jonathan Burgiel & John Buri, Tetra Tech
- Will Rachal, Lemoine Company
- Ed Noonan, United Rental
- Al McClaran, Southern DR
- Lou Hayden & David Venables, Lowe's

**DRCA:**

- Casey Long, DRCA
- Lisa Miller, DRCA

**DRCA Board of Directors Agenda:**

- Roll Call & Introductions
- Current FEMA Policy Issues:
  - Federal COVID-19 Funding
  - Debris Management
  - 428 Implementation
  - Disaster Housing (STEP)
  - Utilizing Rental Equipment in Disaster Response
- Priorities for Remainder of Hurricane Season
- Potential Impact of the Election on FEMA Leadership
- Old Business & New Business
- Closing Remarks

**Call Commenced 10:32am:**

**Casey Long, DRCA:** Casey opened the call giving a brief overview of the agenda and talking about some of the initiatives outlined in the agenda including:

- DRCA held a call on August 31<sup>st</sup> with Tony Furr of FEMA Region 6 to discuss CPA issues in LA.
- DRCA Completed FEMA Call on Puerto Rico on Aug 20<sup>th</sup> with Alex Amparo on debris issues, housing challenges and 428 Implementation.
- DRCA worked with United Rentals to complete a white paper for FEMA Logistics titled, "Utilizing the Equipment Rental Industry to Expedite Response Efforts."
- DRCA is working with MG Butch Graham, USACE's Deputy Commanding General for Civil Emergency Operations, and his team to schedule a DRCA video conference call for members.
- DRCA is working on setting up a call with HUD to discuss CDBG-DR issues for members.
- DRCA completed our 2<sup>nd</sup> call with Eric Heighberger, FEMA's Chief of Staff, on August 6<sup>th</sup> to present our letter on asking for clarification on Federal COVID-19 funding. and reimbursement.
- DRCA completed our 2<sup>nd</sup> call with Keith Turi & Tod Wells from FEMA Recovery on August 5<sup>th</sup> to present the same DRCA's July 31<sup>st</sup> letter on COVID-19 funding.

- He thanked the DRCA members who went through thousands of questions from State and local officials to submit the most commonly asked questions to FEMA. In essence, members “carved up” concerns into applicant categories (schools, cities/counties, first responders, etc.) and we believe it had an impact on the Guidance FEMA recently released. DRCA sent an email to the membership sharing the areas our group impacted and where we were able to influence the FEMA guidance.

**Dan Craig:** I am worried with the new set of storms and how these may dictate a new set of policies. Dan invited the group to provide input.

#### Federal COVID-19 Funding Discussion:

Casey asked for Jonathan Burgiel and John Buri’s input on FEMA guidance. Jon Buri responded by saying FEMA is putting boundaries on the assistance they are providing. FEMA is “stepping back” from any longer-term assistance for local governments. John continued, “FEMA’s memo put the September 15<sup>th</sup> guidance on what they will pay for and not pay for. That is concerning for the fall season with the second wave coming... Local governments will need to re-energize their programs which will be the battleground in the coming months.”

**Jonathan Burgiel, WSP:** Do we want to have DRCA weigh in even more with FEMA?

**John Buri, WSP:** They have set the deadline. They have identified their cost reimbursement and the FEMA directive is “you can do anything else as long as you can defend it.” The only concrete example was contact tracing, although they alluded to other services.

**Jonathan Burgiel, WSP:** Everyone is struggling with what the impact is now that FEMA has drawn their line in the sand. Do we make a bigger push?

**Roy Dunn, CDR Maguire:** Remember that our call with the FEMA Chief of Staff focused on cost share. How do applicants budget the CARES Act as they are now having to go through the decision-making process in their individual budgets. Locals are saying we did our RPA and we will figure out where the budget will shake out. The guidance letter was a win and DRCA had its name on the win when the guidance came out. Some of the sub-applicants are saying they will use their CARES Act as best they can and move on with Stafford funding requests when they can. There are a lot of unknowns... My recommendation is that we watch how it develops and then do the follow up along with a narrow, focused scope.

**John Buri, WSP:** I am looking at the interim policy from the FEMA side and they have put their stake in the ground. The Treasury is the outstanding piece. The first bill released in the Senate didn’t extend CARES Act past December 31<sup>st</sup> and sort of defined that the CARES Act can be a cost share. The bill’s draft shows that 25% of CRF funds are available, but no decision yet. I don’t think it’s so much on the FEMA side of the equation.

**Roy Dunn, CDR Maguire:** I agree.... The Treasury side is a bigger driver.

**Casey Long, DRCA:** We can pull additional policy guidance and make recommendations to FEMA quickly if we need to. We have FEMA’s ear and we can also go to the key Congressional Committees (House T&I, Senate HS, etc.) and reach out to State and local partners to participate in this conversation as well. It sounds like the group wants to hold for now on following up with another policy paper.

**Debris Management Discussion:** John Sullivan was asked to comment on DRCA’s presentation of our Debris White Paper to FEMA.

**John Sullivan, DRC:** We need to figure out how to get FEMA to pay attention to us better. We write these papers and they are good ideas. We submit these things to FEMA that takes time and money. These are good agenda items and

good for taxpayers, good for legitimacy and good for all to further FEMA's mission and then they sit on it... I applaud DRCA for having these phone calls with Keith and Eric, but it's time we demand action from FEMA. If that means different lobbying efforts, so be it. We need to say to FEMA we are responding to every storm with you and you want us to carry your message to your customer, but we as DRCA need to drive our concepts to completion. We need Pete Gaynor to take us seriously. We need to set a goal of 6 to 12 months to see action from them and push to make that happen. FEMA is talking out of both sides of their mouths. They have allowed sole source contracts in Cedar Rapids, yet they won't allow Cooperative Purchase Agreements (CPA's) in Lake Charles. Either way, we can't have it both ways and we need a consistent message from FEMA.

**AL McClaran, Southern DR:** Al was asked about the debris white paper and stated, "I think that my comments were addressed in the white paper and I appreciate that they were."

STEP / Disaster Housing Discussion:

**John Sullivan, DRC:** We have heard very little movement on housing in Lake Charles. We need some direction and some decisions. All we would ask Pete Gaynor and Tony Robinson to do is that we need to have something move forward. The FEMA customers need help, but it looks like FEMA isn't doing anything regarding housing.

**Casey Long, DRCA:** We have the election coming up, and as Lou Hayden knows, it's going to be difficult to push big initiatives through FEMA as the election gets closer. We should think about how to make sure DRCA is plugged into the transition team as they work on building FEMA's leadership team. We will reach out to our entire membership to see who we might help facilitate transition team relationships and participation.

Potential Impact of the Election on FEMA Leadership Discussion:

**Lisa Miller, DRCA:** Lisa asked the group if they have federal lobbyists who we could huddle with and lay out a strategy for the coming weeks and beyond. Casey will discuss that further with individual members.

**Jonathan Burgiel, WSP:** I want to discuss getting some wins from FEMA and if there is a way to act on them. We experience the same thing the Sullivan companies experiences every day. The different directions FEMA takes is challenging.... with one region saying one thing and another region carrying a different message. I believe Pete Gaynor and others at FEMA can't do much about this and I assume the Administration is leading. If you think about it, we are the industry.... and represent a good chunk of the industry and we need to have the ear of FEMA to be effective but it's the politico's behind them that are getting things done. Perhaps we add a layer of our advocacy using political relationships.

**Casey Long, DRCA:** We should leverage our collective relationships with Federal and State Officials, lobbyists, and consultants to assist. We all have the shared frustration that FEMA is not moving fast enough. They have engaged with us and listened to our recommendations but have been slow to respond and implement our policy recommendations. Perhaps we should consider taking a more political approach.

**Dan Craig, Tidal Basin:** Dan discussed his corporate PAC and stated, "As Lisa said, they are going to respond to certain committees and certain politicians." Dan suggested that we should be targeting members and senior staff members on certain committees like the House T&I Committee, the Senate Homeland Security & Government Affairs Committee, etc.

**Next Steps:** Let's make sure each member wants to participate with their individual advocates from a corporate standpoint. Dan asked Casey to follow up with everyone and think about a "Day on the Hill." The key message Dan stressed is that whatever we do we have to talk about how FEMA's inaction and confusing messages effect the elected officials' individual districts which is the most effective way to make a difference.

**Dan Craig, Tidal Basin:** It will be a wild ride the next two months. And we may find out who will be seeking FEMA leadership and can get one or two folks on the transition committee as well.

**John Sullivan, DRC:** Commented on fire work in CA... It shocks me how restrictive some states can be and that is one of those things we can work on. Let's talk further about a strategy to impact locally. An "on high directive" would be helpful when it comes to debris procurement policy.

**Al McClaran, Southern DR:** We pay for it with our tax dollar and FEMA stops competition.

428 Implementation Discussion:

**Dan Craig, Tidal Basin:** Dan discussed Alex's Amparo's thoughts running 428 as a regular PA program. FEMA is still forcing communities to stick to dollar caps and oversight as the applicant and the state is not getting any positive net effects. It's not being run that way anywhere else though. Alex and FEMA are now allowing some communities to opt out of certain projects. Dan doesn't think we need to pursue FEMA with 428 implementation as of now as it's not a nationwide issue and we have bigger policy issues to pursue.

Utilizing Rental Equipment in Disaster Response Discussion: Casey asked for comments by the end of the week for the white paper that is circulating.

Old Business & New Business: No new or old business discussed.

The call ended at 11:15am EST.

## Addendum to Minutes

### Overview of Current Priorities & Activities:

- Working with FEMA Region 6 on CPA Issues: Completed call on August 31<sup>st</sup> with Tony Furr of FEMA Region 6 regarding a CPA issue in LA.
- Sent out latest FEMA Debris Guidance and Memo from Tony Robinson in FEMA Region 6 on August 31<sup>st</sup>: Sent out the latest guidance to DRCA debris members as CPA's continue to be a challenging issue (particularly in LA).
- Completed FEMA Call on Puerto Rico on Aug 20<sup>th</sup>: Completed call with Alex Amparo on Puerto Rico recovery with members of DRCA's Board. Topics included debris, housing and 428 implementation. The minutes were sent out to the membership.
- Completed Draft of White Paper on the Equipment Rental Industry August 31<sup>st</sup>: Worked with United Rentals to draft a white paper is titled, "Utilizing the Equipment Rental Industry to Expedite Response Efforts." Completed the draft and sent it out to the membership for review and approval. Plan is to present to FEMA Logistics and select State DEM's.
- DRCA Video Conference w/ USACE: MG Butch Graham is taking over for MG Scott Spellman as the Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations who is transitioning to a new role. Casey is in touch with COT Rhys Hearn who has agreed to set up a call for us. Hope to have a date soon after the dust settles on current disaster response efforts.
- DRCA Video Conference with HUD: Roy Dunn from CDR Maguire is assisting in setting up an introductory DRCA meeting with HUD (CDBG-DR focus).
- Completed 2<sup>nd</sup> Call with FEMA Chief of Staff on August 6<sup>th</sup>: Conducted video conference call with FEMA Chief of Staff, Eric Heighberger, on Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this call was to present our letter to Mr. Heighberger pressing FEMA to provide clarification on their policy as it relates to COVID-19 funding and reimbursement. Mr. Heighberger is the longest serving and senior-most political appointee at FEMA with the exception of the FEMA Administrator. The minutes were sent out to the membership.
- Completed 2<sup>nd</sup> DRCA FEMA Recovery Call with Keith Turi on August 5<sup>th</sup>: Conducted video conference call with Keith Turi on August 5<sup>th</sup> which provided members with the opportunity to discuss COVID-19 funding and reimbursement issues in detail. The minutes were sent out to the membership.
- Submitted a Letter to FEMA on Federal COVID-19 Funding & Reimbursement on July 31<sup>st</sup>: Worked with DRCA members who analyzed the most commonly asked questions from State and local clients on COVID-19 funding. Quickly drafted and submitted a Letter sent to Keith Turi & Eric Heighberger on July 31<sup>st</sup>. FEMA has since released updated COVID-19 guidance which was distributed to the membership on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Business Development Update: We are in discussions with ICF, Hagerty, AECOM & Ardurrra regarding DRCA membership this year.