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THE FLORIDA SENATE
COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS
AND DOMESTIC SECURITY

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January 11, 2010

Mr. David Halstead
Interim Director
Florida Division of Emergency Management
2555 Shumard Oaks Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Mr. Halstead:

The Florida Senate Committee on Military Affairs and Domestic Security has oversight responsibility for the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM). As Chair of the committee, I am asking for your candid responses to several questions regarding the current operational status of the division.

In light of the recent changes at DEM and your new role as the interim director, it is important for our committee to understand what the division's preparedness and response capabilities and challenges are as DEM moves ahead.

I ask that you respond to the following questions about DEM's operations, and its ability to administer emergency management funds and equipment. I would appreciate your prompt response, along with any other pertinent comments you wish to provide.

- In 2006, DEM became an independent budget entity reporting directly to the Governor for operational matters. Has this new structure provided for the effective delivery of emergency management services, and appropriate accountability for the division?
- What is your evaluation of the division's ability to respond to emergencies within its jurisdiction?
- Are internal audit and inspection functions being properly performed, and which entity (Governor's office or DCA) is responsible for those audits and inspections?


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- Please define the division's progress and schedule for development of appropriate performance measures and standards.
- Does DEM have adequate personnel or procedures in place to perform its fiscal responsibilities in a timely manner? If not, please enumerate actions you would recommend to alleviate this concern.
- Is personnel properly trained to manage the federal, state, and local guidance, statutes and ordinances that govern use of administered funds? If not, please enumerate any changes you would recommend to be made to correct deficiencies.
- Are appropriate oversight and audit procedures in place to assure proper use of federal, state, and local funds for approved expenditures? If not, please indicate procedures you would recommend.
- What is the DEM policy on personal use of state-owned equipment? Please offer your recommendations for change, if any.
- Please explain the division's travel policy for in-state and out-of-state travel. Include an explanation of reimbursable travel for EMAC deployments as well as reimbursement for in-state disaster travel for Stafford Act events, if applicable.
- What procedures are in place for exceptions to travel policies? Are there approval levels for such exceptions, and if so, who is authorized to approve the exceptions?

In closing, I appreciate the commitment you have shown to the emergency management needs of our state throughout your career. Your insight into the operational capability of the state's emergency preparedness functions is critical to this committee and our fundamental responsibility to assure the readiness of the state's response efforts.

Sincerely,



Dave Aronberg, Senator

Chair, Senate Committee on Military Affairs and Domestic Security