

Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force



Governor Josh Green
Co-Chair
Hawaii



Governor Phil Scott
Co-Chair
Vermont

OUR JURISDICTION

The Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force has organizational jurisdiction over a broad range of issues including Disaster and Emergency Public Health Response, Defense, Homeland Security, Cybersecurity, Healthcare, Human Services, Nutrition, and Immigration.

NGA TOP PRIORITIES

Enhancing emergency management;

Streamlining permitting processes;

Supporting flexibility and waiver opportunities and funding for state and territorial designed Medicaid, SNAP, and TANF;

Ensuring the federal government meets its already committed obligations for federally funded projects across states, territories and Commonwealths.

OUR PRIORITIES

Ensure Governors are consulted, and their gubernatorial authorities are maintained, in the areas of defense, homeland security, emergency management, health, and human services, including those outlined in U.S.C. Title 10 and 32 pertaining to National Guard readiness and structure;

Advocate for flexibility and support for a robust health and human service system including safety net programs, such as Medicaid and SNAP, and oppose shifting essential federal funding obligations to states and territories without adequate planning;

Ensure the National Guard is equipped with sufficient resources and capabilities to fully recruit and man a force ready to support domestic emergencies and fulfill its role as the operational reserve for national security missions;

Enhance emergency response and disaster recovery by ensuring federal programs, such as Disaster Relief Fund, National Flood Insurance, and Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery, are sufficient, adaptable, and streamlined to meet the diverse needs of states and territories, and easier to navigate for individuals, businesses, and all levels of governments;

Strengthen preparedness efforts by fostering both inter-state and federal-state collaborations to maintain resilient supply chains and stockpiles for critical infrastructure before, during, and after emergencies;

Support federal initiatives that provide tools and flexibility to states and territories to ensure safe communities for all Americans in areas such as malicious unmanned aircraft systems, cyberattacks, border security, trafficking, substance use disorder, justice-involved re-integration, crisis response systems, and comprehensive safety measures.

OUR WORK

Examining the Current Status and Anticipated Plans for Borders and Ports of Entry

In February 2025, the Task Force hosted a [policy discussion](#) on Examining the Current Status and Anticipated Plans for Borders and Ports of Entry.

During the discussion Major General Burkett of the National Guard Bureau highlighted the transformation of the National Guard since 2001, from a strategic reserve to a force that now serves daily operations including overseas missions and homeland defense, with a particular note of medical and cyber capabilities. David BeMiller, Deputy Chief of U.S. Border Patrol, emphasized the rise of fentanyl and increased risk to border patrol agents, as well as the importance of partnerships with the DOD and state and local authorities, to provide a unified approach to counter challenges we face. Selwyn Smith, Deputy Assistant Director of Homeland Security Investigations, discussed HSI's strategy to combat illicit opioids by reducing the supply domestically and globally, and targeting precursor chemicals used in the manufacturing of fentanyl.

Building Readiness and Strengthening Resiliency To Combat Disasters And Emerging Threats

In May of 2024, the Task Force held a [congressional briefing](#) on building readiness and resiliency to combat disasters and emerging threats including cyber, health, National Guard, and homeland security. This briefing united congress, federal agencies, and private partners to understand the priorities of state and territory leaders.

Disaster Relief Funding and Resiliency

In December of 2024, the Task Force released a [statement](#) urging Congress to approve comprehensive disaster relief funding and pass the Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act. The Task Force also published an op-ed, by co-chairs Governor Green (HI) and Governor Scott (VT), emphasizing the importance of timely and predictable federal assistance in enhancing state recovery efforts. The op-ed highlighted that reducing uncertainty in federal aid enables states to plan more effectively, leading to quicker recovery and strengthened community resilience.

Funding Critical Needs for FY 25

In May 2024, the Task Force [wrote to House and Senate Appropriators](#) requesting the inclusion of Governors' top priorities in the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations bills. Within the health and human services portfolio, these requests addressed Community Mental Health Services Block Grants (MHBG), Substance Use Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Block Grants (SABG), and more for behavioral health. Applauding the previously requested funding increases for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Urging strong support for Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, Advanced Nursing Education, Public Health Data Modernization, and more.

Additionally, the letter highlighted funding requests for programs within the disaster response and preparedness portfolio including the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), Homeland Security Grant Program Suite, Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), and State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP). The letter also urged an increase in National Guard personnel and funding for critical items like facilities and health care.

Maintaining Governor Authority of National Guard

In April of 2024, the Task Force [sent a letter](#) including **53 Governors from U.S. States, Commonwealths and Territories** to Secretary of Department of Defense (DOD) Lloyd Austin calling for the discontinuation of legislative proposal (LP480) that would weaken or eliminate Governor authority over the National Guard and threaten readiness and operational efficacy of their units.

Preserving The State and Local Cyber Security Grant Program

In June of 2024, the Task Force [sent a letter](#) on behalf of NGA alongside other organizations representing the voice of state and local governments to House and Senate Appropriations. This letter urged Congress to preserve the State and Local Cyber Security Grant Program (SLCGP) funding for cybersecurity improvements at \$100 million for FY25.

Members

- Governor Katie Hobbs
Arizona
- Governor Gavin Newsom
California
- Governor Ned Lamont
Connecticut
- Governor Leon Guerrero
Guam
- Governor Kim Reynolds
Iowa
- Governor Jeff Landry
Louisiana
- Governor Tim Walz
Minnesota
- Governor Josh Stein
North Carolina
- Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
New Mexico
- Governor Kathy Hochul
New York
- Governor Spencer Cox
Utah

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