



Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association

Post Office Box 3945
Englewood, Colorado 80155
Phone: (720) 874-8116
Fax: (720) 862-2181

www.colofirechiefs.org

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HLS-EM Change Committee
c/o Kevin Klein, Director
Colorado Division of Fire Safety
690 Kipling Street, Suite 2000
Denver, CO 80215

Change Committee:

This correspondence is in response to Governor Hickenlooper's request of the Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association (CSFCA) to assist in determining what improvements if any are required in the areas of homeland security and emergency management.

The CSFCA represents 231 fire agencies statewide including career, combination and volunteer agencies. The purpose of the CSFCA is to providing leadership, education, and support to the Chief Officers of Colorado fire departments in order to reduce the loss of life and property and to protect Colorado's citizens and institutions from all types of emergencies. Since the issues of homeland security and emergency management directly impact the mission of the fire service we appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the issue of emergency preparedness and response.

On March 4th the CSFCA quarterly General Membership meeting was held with CDPS Executive Director Jim Davis, DFS Director Kevin Klein, GOHS Director Larry Trujillo, and CDEM Director Hans Kallam present to provide an overview of the Scope and the Milestones of this process. The meeting provided an open forum for the attending members to ask questions and give feedback to the state representatives and to the CSFCA subcommittee that was selected to develop this response.

It seems apparent that while this review is of high level of importance, there is a practical difficulty in presenting the type of detail capability assessments required. The CSFCA requests that further discussion be held outlining what systematic processes could be used with key stakeholders to discuss, prioritize and develop capability improvement recommendations. However, in a good faith effort, we would like to present several areas that we feel should be considered through this process:

1. Organization assessment needs to be conducted to discover potential areas of duplication of staffing and service in areas of:

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- a. CDEM field manager positions with duplicate or overlapping services being provided by several all-hazards regions.
 - b. Training and Exercise coordination between the various state agencies and all-hazards regions.
 - c. Regional approach to grant allocation based on regional assessment and needs between the state, the all-hazards regions, and representation of local government. This needs to include rural communities and other interstate partners.
 - d. Assessment of the homeland security region structure and legal authority and ensuring representation of key stakeholders such as the CSFCA and affiliated fire service organizations.
2. Review of the connection between federal, state and local agencies for the planning, dispatching, response, and resource utilization to wild land fires. Local communities provide the bulk of personnel and resources for federal responses to major wildland deployment; however, the current system has numerous fractures in continuity and partnership which was once again highlighted during last summer's fires in Boulder County.
 3. Revisit and ensure priority is given to firefighter safety initiatives. This initiative was started under Governor Ritter and is the top priority for the Colorado fire service. In addition an in-depth review of the duplication and gaps that exist in fire safety-related programs and services, first identified in the CSFCA's Five Point Plan for a Fire Safe Colorado (1997), should be conducted.
 4. Review of the credentialing system initiated within the State and the homeland security regions. This program has struggled and has not met any level of reasonable expectations that was originally outlined.
 5. Review the current plan for Connect Colorado and ensure it interfaces with the real time needs of local communities and is managed effectively and efficiently as a state resource for local government.

This provides a broad brush approach to some of the key areas that are presented for consideration during this organizational review. It is the CSFCA position that these topics be divided into workgroups as suggested by the state. The work groups would then be responsible to forward specific capability shortfalls with what would be considered appropriate recommendations to the Executive Directors of DPS and DOLA. It is believed by conducting specific program area reviews that not only will program deficiencies be identified but organizational inadequacies will more clearly be identified.

Please let me know if you have questions or comments.

/S/ Joseph A. Bruce

Joseph A. Bruce, Fire Chief
North Metro Fire Rescue District
CSFCA Representative to the SAHAC



Steven J. Pischke, President
Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Assoc.