

MEMORANDUM

To: Members, Task Force to Study Maine's Homeland Security Needs
From: Elizabeth Cooper, Legislative Analyst
Date: December 1, 2006
Re: Summary of Homeland Security Task Force work sessions held November 14 and November 16, 2006

November 14, 2006 – Work Session – Room 436 State House, Augusta

1. Members present – Senator Ethan Strimling (co-chair), Representative Stanley Gerzofsky (co-chair), Senator David Hastings, Representative Carol Grose, Dr. Paul Liebow, Charles Updegraph, Dr. Lawrence Muttu, and Kimberly Boothby-Ballantyne.
2. Meeting Overview – The meeting started at approximately 10:00 a.m. The Task Force members received reports required by Public Law 2005, c 634 from the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) along with information from the Maine Department of Education, the Maine Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management and the Governor's Office of Health and Financial Policy. The task force asked questions and requested that MEMA and the CDC bring additional information to the meeting on November 16, 2006. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30.
3. Public School adoption of all-hazards emergency planning –The task force received information from Commissioner Susan Gendron on the Department of Education's efforts addressing school safety and emergency preparedness plans. The Commissioner has the authority to withhold approval of state funding for schools if they do not comply. MEMA has provided tools and outreach to help schools prepare all-hazards plans.
4. Deployment of National Guard – General John Libby, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, reported deployment of Maine's National Guard and Reserve troops has not negatively impacted the ability of the National Guard to respond to state emergencies. Even at higher levels of deployment, the National Guard would still have sufficient resources to respond to state emergencies due to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) for interstate mutual aid. Maine officials, along with officials from other states bordering Canada, are working on an international mutual aid agreement, which will require congressional approval.
5. Communication and Interoperability – MEMA Interim Director Charles Jacobs and General Libby briefed the Task Force on the State of Maine's Concept of Operations for Incident Communications Interoperability (CONOPS) plan and provided information on communication between state and federal responders. At the state level the CONOPS reserves six radio frequencies for communication during emergencies. It allows the first responder leaders to communicate with the incident commanders and then use their own systems to communicate with front line staff.

6. Notification, Evacuation and Shelters – The Task Force members received information from Charles Jacobs and Rayna Leibowitz of MEMA and from Julia Bell of Maine’s Developmental Disabilities Council on notification systems, evacuation plans and capacity to shelter people including special accommodations for people with disabilities and plans for populations with special needs. MEMA staff noted that the County Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) have procedures to disseminate information about emergencies, but municipalities ultimately have the responsibility for the local notification or alert policies. The Task Force discussed the local EMA positions, local notification strategies and strategies for notifying disabled and special needs populations. The Task Force discussed shelter capacity and MEMA stated that statewide Maine has adequate shelter capacity. The American Red Cross provides many shelters and assesses the facilities for accommodating people with disabilities and special needs. Nursing home regulations require plans for evacuation and sheltering including the transfer of medical records.
7. Federal Homeland Security and Emergency Management Funds –MEMA Interim Director Charles Jacobs provided information on federal funding and indicated that over all Maine is receiving approximately \$7.6 million less in fiscal year 2006 than the State did in fiscal year 2005. Homeland Security Funds have continued to decline, but MEMA staff members anticipate the State’s Emergency Management Performance Grant to slightly increase.
8. MEMA Staffing and Budget Needs – MEMA Interim Director Charles Jacobs provided information on the need for additional dam inspectors at MEMA and inconsistencies in overtime pay for duty officers that must be available on weekends. The Task Force discussed these positions and the need to create two federally funded positions to support Maine’s Fusion Center. They also discussed the need for rain gages on six Maine rivers.
9. Governor’s Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) – The Task Force received an update on the activities of the HSAC. The next meeting will be in November 28 2006.
10. Surge Capacity – Dr. Dora Mills and Don Ward from Maine’s CDC provided information on surge capacity indicating that due to mutual aid resources Maine can handle a surge caused by a statewide or regional event. There is less capacity to handle surge caused by a pandemic as this type of event requires care for people in their homes and would significantly impact the health care workforce. The Task Force members also discussed the availability of hospital beds and requested additional information.
11. Local Health Officers (LHO) Dr. Dora Mills from Maine’s CDC and Trish Riley of the Governor’s Office on Health Policy and Finance presented information on their work with LHOs and how this ties in with the activities of the Public Health Work Group. The Task Force discussed qualifications for LHO and requested additional information.
12. Registration of Health Care Volunteers – Staff from the Maine CDC discussed the status of the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Voluntary Health Professionals (ESAR VHP) noting that it will be ready in Maine next summer, which is ahead of the federal deadline. The CDC will be hiring a volunteer coordinator.
13. HRSA Funds and Regional Resource Centers (RCC) - Staff from the Maine CDC briefed the Task Force on the status of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funds including the funding the RCCs received.

14. Process and Next Day's Agenda – The Task Force discussed the process for receiving additional information and developing recommendations as well as the agenda for the work session on November 16, 2006.

November 16, 2006 – Work Session – Room 436 State House, Augusta

1. Members present – Senator Ethan Strimling (co-chair), Representative Stanley Gerzofsky (co-chair), Dr. Paul Liebow, Charles Updegraph, Dr. Hugh Tilson, and Kimberly Boothby-Ballantyne.
2. Meeting Overview – The meeting started at approximately 10:00 a.m. The Task Force members received additional information requested during the November 14, 2006 meeting including information on LHOs, school emergency preparedness, shelters, dam inspections, rain gages, and surge capacity. The Task Force discussed and developed recommendation to include in the final Task Force report. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.
3. Review of Recommendations – The Task Force considered approximately 85 draft recommendations that were proposed by Task Force members, appeared in agency reports or were discussed at one of the recent Task Force meetings. The Task Force members discussed the following 25 proposed recommendations, which may require legislative action:
 - a. Require the State to allocate resources to county governments
 - b. Require all buildings to have systems in place for communication among responders as determined by Maine Radio Board;
 - c. Establish a seat for a healthcare volunteer coordinator at the MEMA Operations Center;
 - d. Mandate a certain number of "pet friendly" shelters among the general shelters;
 - e. Plan for the on-going medical care of people that are disabled or have other special medical needs who are transferred from hospitals, nursing homes and own residences to American Red Cross or other shelters;
 - f. Provide funding for cost of emergency notification pagers for deaf persons;
 - g. Identify the number of persons without transportation and develop a plan to address these evacuation needs;
 - h. Develop a disability indicator system;
 - i. Encourage all schools to develop, complete and keep all-hazard response plans in coordination with public safety officials and parents. Train all staff on the plans annually. Require that the plans be tested through drills and exercises;
 - j. Require public safety approval of schools' all-hazards emergency plans and provide incentives or penalties to obtain school compliance;
 - k. Require that all fuel tanks be attached to their building, be able to withstand high winds and flooding and to have emergency shut off valves;
 - l. Consider modifications to the composition, role and duties of the Governor's Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) and require a minimum number of meetings;
 - m. Establish an office solely focused on a systematic security plan for the movement of passengers and cargo through all modes of transportation and ports;
 - n. Develop a State plan for resumption of port services after a catastrophic event;

- o. Provide funding and tools to inspect cargo at ports at the local or state level such as X-ray machines;
 - p. Require municipalities to pay for training for harbor masters;
 - q. Update the LHO statutes;
 - r. Develop a strong LHO system;
 - s. Fund pilot project(s) that would establish "official public health agencies" at the county or multi-county level;
 - t. Allow the counties to assume jurisdiction and permit official delegation of public health functions from municipal to county levels during emergencies;
 - u. Adopt and implement the national public health preparedness performance standards and the standards of the National Association of County and City Health Officials for ensuring the competency of individuals and agencies;
 - v. Amend statutes to require minimum qualifications and training for LHOs and to clarify the role of the LHOs in emergency preparedness planning, response and recovery;
 - w. Identify policy, law or rule changes to optimize human resources during emergencies such as allowing persons other than a physician to certify deaths;
 - x. Update protocol, strategic deployment and training for emergency-use pharmaceuticals; and
 - y. Develop state emergency medical strike teams.
4. Recommendations to Include in Task Force Report – The Task Force agreed to include recommendations in the final report related to the following areas:
- a. Local communications systems in buildings such as hospitals and schools;
 - b. Pet friendly shelters;
 - c. On-going medical care of disabled people or people with special needs while staying in shelters;
 - d. Emergency notification pagers and on-going pager service for hearing impaired people with lower incomes;
 - e. Plans for persons without transportation during an evacuation including the disabled and people with special needs;
 - f. Disability indicator systems;
 - g. School compliance with requirements to prepare emergency plans, involve public safety in planning and hold regular training and drills on the plans;
 - h. Safety of fuel tanks during flooding or other emergencies;
 - i. MEMA staff for dam inspections and federally funded positions supporting the Fusion Center;
 - j. LHO qualifications and needed statutory changes;
 - k. LHO recommendations for consideration by the Public Health Work Group; and
 - l. Additional rain gages on Maine rivers.
5. Final Task Force Report – The final report, which is due in December 2006, will include recommendations and proposed legislation for the 123rd Legislature to consider. The Task Force staff from the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis will prepare a draft of the report and circulate it for approval by the Task Force.

FURTHER INFORMATION – This information is intended to summarize the general content of the meetings but is not intended to be meeting minutes. If you need more information on the work of the Homeland Security Task Force, please contact the State Legislature's Office of Policy and Legal Analysis at 207-287-1670 or visit www.maine.gov/legis/opla/homsec.htm.