

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 1, 2008

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Administrator David Paulison
Federal Center Plaza, 500 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20472

Administrator Paulison:

We are writing to request that FEMA explore forming a partnership with Hawthorne Army Depot (HWAD) for the purpose of storing pre-positioned FEMA supplies on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The lack of pre-positioned supplies in northern Nevada leaves this area vulnerable. As you are aware, in January 2008, a 30-foot earthen levee containing the waters of Truckee Canal failed, causing flood damage to hundreds of homes in Fernley, Nevada. This levee break, which occurred in the middle of the night, caused 3,500 Nevadans to be evacuated from their homes in below-freezing temperatures.

In response to the levee failure, and due to the lack of pre-positioned FEMA supplies in northern Nevada, FEMA, through its agreement with the Defense Logistics Agency dispatched supplies to Nevada from California. The supplies were flown from Moffett Federal Airfield to Fallon Naval Air Station (NAS) by military aircraft and were transported by truck from Fallon to the affected area. The supplies were dispatched to Nevada by air rather than ground due to road closures caused by the hazardous weather in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. We were also troubled when we were made aware of the fact that the arrival of the military aircraft into Fallon NAS was delayed by over 24 hours due to the weather.

Our offices have already taken the liberty of discussing the feasibility of this partnership with HWAD and the onsite contractor, Securing Our Country. HWAD is only 69-percent full, which gives it the capacity to store additional FEMA supplies, and is strategically positioned within the state of Nevada. HWAD is 72 miles south of Fallon NAS, 130 miles southeast of Reno, and 310 miles north of Las Vegas. We believe this partnership will benefit all parties and we look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,


JOHN ENSIGN
United States Senator


HARRY REID
United States Senator


DEAN HELLER
United States Congressman

cc: Honorable Keith Eastin (Assistant Secretary of the Army – Installations and Environment)