

# **DISASTER PREVENTION AND RESILIENCY TASK FORCE**

## **Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2025 Interim**

**June 27, 2025**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The Disaster Prevention and Resiliency Task Force held its first meeting on June 27, 2025, at 11:00 AM in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Robin L. Webb, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

Members: Senator Robin L. Webb, Co-Chair; Representative Chris Freeland, Co-Chair; Senators Keturah Herron, Scott Madon, and Aaron Reed; Representatives Mark Hart, Ashley Tackett Laferty, and Mitch Whitaker.

Guests: Eric Gibson, Director, Kentucky Division of Emergency Management; Anne Brody, State Government Relations Director, American Flood Coalition; Jack Krolikowski, Flood Planning Director, American Flood Coalition; and Mathew Sanders, Senior Officer, The Pew Charitable Trusts.

LRC Staff: Kayla Carroway, Stefan Kasacavage, Jesse Farler, and Logan Schaaf.

### **Introduction by Chair Webb**

Chair Webb discussed the task force's creation and provided an overview of its purpose.

### **Kentucky Emergency Management: Flood Response Update**

Eric Gibson, Director, Kentucky Division of Emergency Management, provided an overview of Kentucky's natural disasters, emergency management and response programs, and discussed the recent flooding in February and April. He also discussed the Commonwealth Sheltering Program, disaster recovery centers, and urban search and rescue.

Responding to Chair Webb, Mr. Gibson said the estimated replacement cost for the existing IFLOWS water gauge system is approximately \$1 million. Chair Webb noted the reliability and accuracy of the IFLOWS system.

Responding to Representative Tackett Laferty, Mr. Gibson discussed the use of state parks, hotels, and travel trailers in the Commonwealth Sheltering Program.

Responding to Chair Webb, Mr. Gibson said state parks that are used for shelter after natural disasters are reimbursed with funds from the Federal Emergency Management

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Agency (FEMA).

Responding to Representative Whitaker, Mr. Gibson said preparedness, mitigation, and recovery are all functions of the Division of Emergency Management, and discussed some of their preparedness and mitigation programs.

Representative Hart praised the IFLOW system and discussed its importance to Pendleton County's response to the recent flooding.

Senator Reed praised Mr. Gibson and Emergency Management, and encouraged everyone to visit Emergency Management's headquarters.

Responding to Chair Webb, Mr. Gibson provided an overview of Western Kentucky University's Mesonet system, which is a network of automated weather and climate monitoring stations.

Senator Madon praised Mr. Gibson and Emergency Management's recent work to prevent flooding in Pineville. Responding to a question from Senator Madon, Mr. Gibson estimated that the total cost of the recovery and cleanup for the February and April floods would be in the hundreds of millions.

### **Flooding 101: A Discussion on Flood Planning and Resilience**

Anne Brody, State Government Relations Director, American Flood Coalition (AFC); and Jack Krolikowski, Flood Planning Director, AFC, discussed AFC's mission, financing, and work on flood resiliency. AFC's four pillars for flood solutions are: fixing federal data, empowering state leadership, protecting communities, and defending national security. Mr. Krolikowski discussed the two major categories Kentucky's floods can be grouped into: overbank river floods and flash floods.

States can reduce flood risks over time by adopting a complementary mix of mitigation strategies, including: removing hazards, limiting exposure, and communicating risk. Mr. Krolikowski expanded on each of these strategies. Ms. Brody highlighted the role of state governments in protecting communities from flooding and discussed various legislative solutions.

### **A Primer on State Disaster Resilience Policy and Planning: Models and Insights for Kentucky**

Mathew Sanders, Senior Officer, The Pew Charitable Trusts, provided an overview of natural disasters in Kentucky and discussed resilience models and insights from other states. Resilience includes interagency coordination, strategic planning and risk assessment, capital planning and budget input, grants and funding alignment, and technical assistance and

capacity building. It is distinct from, but complementary to, emergency management.

Mr. Sanders discussed common models for state-led resilience and explored the efforts of South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia, and Alabama in detail. He also provided three broad recommendations for Kentucky: develop a good understanding of current and future risk and projected impacts, catalog existing resilience activities across state government, and survey national models for potential replication.

Responding to Co-Chair Freeland, Mr. Sanders highlighted the national map of resilience models, which includes three different models of establishment: executive order, statutory authority, and an executive order to statutory codification hybrid.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business before the task force, the meeting adjourned at 12:40 PM.