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Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 15, 2012

Ongoing Response to Hurricane Sandy

On Thursday, November 15th the President travelled to New York, marking his second trip to the affected region since Hurricane Sandy made landfall. During the visit the President toured damaged communities in the New York City area, met with Governor Cuomo, Mayor Bloomberg, local officials, first responders, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff and families recovering from the storm.

At the President's direction, the Administration has continued to bring all available resources to bear to support our state and local partners as they continue to respond and recover from the storm. Prior to the storm making landfall, the President provided Emergency Declarations for states up and down the East Coast, and FEMA pre-deployed teams to support affected Governors in potentially impacted areas. Working with the Department of Defense (DOD), FEMA also established staging locations for water, meals, generators, medical supplies and other important resources, so that they could be quickly deployed to impacted areas once the storm had passed.

Since that time, following expedited Major Disaster Declarations for New Jersey and New York provided by the President, FEMA has deployed over 7,000 personnel to the impacted area, established 65 Disaster Recovery Centers to support affected communities, provided millions of bottles of water, hundreds of thousands of meals, and hundreds of generators to affected states, and approved over \$600 million in direct assistance to hundreds of thousands of individuals impacted by the storm.

Federal partners have also surged resources to continue to support power restoration, fuel challenges, and dewatering missions led by the states. While power restoration remains a priority for the thousands of residents still without power, since the height of the storm state, local, and private sector partners have restored power to 99% of homes who lost power as a result of the storm. DOD and FEMA have also provided millions of gallons of fuel to affected states and communities, and the Army Corps of Engineers in support of FEMA has helped drain over 470 million gallons of water from the New York metropolitan area.

While FEMA continues to support state and local response and relief activities, additional federal partners are also taking steps to support the Governors, Mayors and other local officials as they identify longer term priorities to help communities rebuild and recover.

Today, the President announced that he has asked Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan to continue to work closely with Governors, mayors and local officials of New Jersey and New York as they begin the process of identifying redevelopment plans for affected communities.

While the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FEMA continue to provide all available federal resources to support the immediate response and recovery efforts, Secretary Donovan will coordinate the federal support as states design their redevelopment plans, identify priorities, and over time begin implementation of their plans. This structure will streamline this process for Governors as they seek assistance for longer term projects they identify as priorities for community redevelopment.

Secretary Donovan has deep roots in the region. Before becoming HUD secretary in 2009, Donovan served as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). He created and implemented HPD's New Housing Marketplace Plan to build and preserve 165,000 affordable homes, the largest municipal affordable housing plan in the nation's history. He previously worked at the Community Preservation Corporation in New York City, a non-profit lender and developer of affordable housing, and Prudential Mortgage Capital in Newark, New Jersey, where he led its affordable housing portfolio. A native New Yorker, he also was a visiting scholar at New York University, where he researched and wrote about the preservation of federally-assisted housing.

Secretary Donovan will be working closely with FEMA and other agencies working under the National Disaster Recovery Framework, a construct developed in the first term of the Obama Administration to improve long term recovery. FEMA continues to lead response and recovery efforts in the region.

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National Disaster Recovery Framework Overview:

The National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) was created to ensure coordination and recovery planning at all levels of government before a disaster, and describes how the nation will work together, following a disaster. The framework establishes structures, defines leadership roles and responsibilities, and guides coordination and recovery planning at all levels of government. The NDRF was released on September 23, 2011, as the first framework published under Presidential Policy Directive – 8. The NDRF is available here: <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/recoveryframework/ndrf.pdf>

Response and Recovery Activities Continue

At the direction of President Obama, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) continues to lead the federal government's effort to provide assistance and support to states affected by Hurricane Sandy, ensuring the federal partners and its public and private partners continue to provide all available resources to support state, local, and tribal communities in affected areas. The Administration's top priority remains supporting states, tribes and communities, as response efforts continue.

Federal agencies, under FEMA leadership, continue to work to assist with power restorations and to address fuel shortages. The Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Energy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and representatives from the private sector and local law enforcement remain committed to supporting state and local governments in these efforts. The federal government has provided hundreds of generators and millions of gallons of fuel to help critical infrastructure sites and fuel stations operate until full power is restored.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has also executed an essential unwatering mission (removing water) at the direction of FEMA. Flood waters have been removed from all 14 critical infrastructure locations in New Jersey and New York as identified by local officials. Locations included the Jersey City PATH Train Tunnel, Brooklyn Battery, and the World Trade Center. Maintenance pumping continues throughout the affected areas. Additional USACE teams are clearing debris and providing technical assistance personnel to support emergency power operations.

For the State of New York, four additional counties have been designated for federal disaster assistance to help households and businesses recover. Individuals and businesses in Ulster, Sullivan, Orange and Putnam counties are eligible for assistance. Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster. Counties previously designated for individual assistance in New York include Bronx, Kings (Brooklyn), Nassau, New York, Queens, Richmond (Staten Island), Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester. For New Jersey, individuals and businesses in all 21 counties can apply for federal assistance.

Individuals and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut can apply for assistance by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362), register by web-enabled mobile device at m.fema.gov or apply online at www.disasterassistance.gov. Disaster assistance applicants, who have a speech disability or hearing loss and use TTY, should call 1-800-462-7585 directly; for those who use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 1-800-621-3362. The toll-free telephone numbers are operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week until further notice.

As of 8 a.m. on Nov. 15, more than 414,000 individuals in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut have registered for assistance. More than \$611 million has been approved in FEMA housing and for other needs assistance. After registering, most residents and business owners will receive an application for a low-interest disaster loan from the Small Business Administration (SBA). Thus far, SBA has issued 262,668 disaster loan applications to residents and businesses.

When survivors apply for individual disaster assistance through FEMA, their needs are assessed based on a number of factors, including eligibility requirements laid out under federal law. Sometimes people do not qualify for assistance right away and may receive a denial letter in the mail stating "ineligible." Receiving a denial letter does not necessarily mean an applicant is not eligible for disaster aid and can be an indication that further information is needed, or that the applicant's insurance claim needs to be settled first. The letter will specifically explain why an application needs to be revisited and might ask for insurance settlement documentation for property damaged or destroyed, or documents reflecting proof of occupancy or ownership of the damaged property. Or, applicants may need to return the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loan application.

SBA disaster loans are available to homeowners, renters, businesses of any size and private, nonprofit organizations for their uncompensated disaster-damaged property. Filling out the SBA loan application is a necessary step for homeowners and renters to be considered for some other forms of disaster assistance. Approved homeowners approved may borrow up to \$40,000 to repair or replace clothing, furniture, cars, or appliances damaged or destroyed in the disaster, or up to \$200,000 to repair/replace primary residences if not fully compensated by insurance or some other source. If the SBA is unable to approve a loan, the applicant may be referred back to FEMA for some other type of disaster aid in the form of a grant to repair or replace destroyed personal items, such as clothing and vehicles.

Survivors who have questions about available assistance are encouraged to visit one of the 63 Disaster Recovery Centers open in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. 32 Disaster Recovery Centers are open in New York, 24 in New Jersey and seven in Connecticut and more continue to open. To date, more than 26,000 survivors have visited disaster recovery centers in affected areas to meet with recovery specialist including representatives from both FEMA and the SBA. Survivors can find a disaster recovery center location at the disaster recovery center locator at www.FEMA.gov/disaster-recovery-centers or by mobile phone at m.fema.gov. They may also text DRC and a Zip Code to 43362 (4FEMA).

More than 7,700 FEMA personnel have been deployed to support response operations, including search and rescue, situational awareness, communications and logistical support in states affected by the storm. Community relations teams are on the ground in the hardest hit areas going door-to-door to inform disaster survivors about available services and resources and to gather situational awareness. FEMA continues to coordinate with federal agencies who have mobilized hundreds of staff to support community relations and operational activities. More than 2,112 housing inspectors are on the ground, meeting with disaster survivors to identify damages to homes, to further expedite assistance to individuals; and more than 114,793 damage inspections have already been completed in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut.

Secretary Napolitano has activated the DHS Surge Capacity Force (SCF), which was stood up as a volunteer capability to be deployed to a disaster location to help FEMA with response and recovery support. All SCF volunteers are trained and utilized in four primary program areas — Logistics, Community Relations, Individual Assistance, and Public Assistance before deploying. As of Nov. 13, there were a total of 1,032 Surge Force members in the region, including 386 in New York working on Community Relations and 366 in New York working at DRCs.

To date, the President has declared that major disasters exist in Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island and emergency declarations have been made in Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia and West Virginia. FEMA continues to deliver commodities including food, water, blankets, fuel, generators and others resources to distribution points across the region impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

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