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## Press Release

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### **NEMA ADDRESSES STATE EMERGENCY AUTHORITIES IN NEW PAPER**

**Lexington, KY** - The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) has released an informational paper “Considerations for State Legislation Addressing Emergency and Disaster Authorities”.

More than 30 states have introduced bills in their legislatures this year that seek to limit a governor’s emergency authorities during disasters.

The COVID-19 pandemic, the longest lasting disaster in modern history, has caused governors to take unprecedented and prolonged actions to protect the health and safety of citizens. This has been done largely without legislative consultation given the surging virus required swift action by governors at a time when most legislatures were out of session. Now, some states are seeking ways to ensure checks and balances are in place between the legislative and executive branch during disasters.

Proposed state legislation addresses, among other things, issues such as ending the state declared COVID disaster immediately; ending public health orders regarding social restrictions; limiting the governor’s ability to suspend rules and statutes for disaster response; requiring legislative approval to extend an emergency beyond the initial declaration; allowing the legislature to terminate disaster declarations; and redefining the terms “disaster” and “emergency”.

“NEMA fully understands and appreciates the authority and autonomy of legislatures to conduct oversight of executives and do that which is in the best interest of the state,” says Trina Sheets, NEMA Executive Director. “Given the depth and breadth of the potential impacts of some legislation currently being considered, the emergency management community hopes elected officials will consider the potential for unintended consequences that may hinder expeditious disaster response and recovery in the future.”

As state legislatures consider disaster related bills, the NEMA paper offers points of consideration to help ensure the continued effectiveness of disaster response and recovery.

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For more information on NEMA, contact Karen Langdon, Media Coordinator, at (859) 244-8143 or e-mail [klangdon@csg.org](mailto:klangdon@csg.org).

*NEMA is the association of professionals dedicated to enhancing public safety by improving the nation’s ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from all emergencies, disasters, and threats to our security. NEMA is an affiliate organization of The Council of State Governments, headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky.*