

F I N A L R E P O R T

DISASTER SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

December, 1981

The Disaster Services Subcommittee of the Senate and House Standing Committees on State Government and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation was created by the Legislative Council to investigate the functions, operations and responsibilities of the Office of Disaster Services of the Department of Public Defense.

The Legislative Council appointed a six-member joint subcommittee consisting of members of the Senate and House Standing Committees on State Government and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation. The members appointed to the Subcommittee are as follows:

Senator Michael Lura, Chairperson
Senator Rolf V. Craft
Senator Charles P. Miller
Representative James O. Anderson
Representative Darrell Hanson
Representative James O'Kane

The Legislative Council authorized one meeting day which was held on October 15, 1981. Senator Craft was absent.

The Subcommittee received testimony from John D. Crandall, Director of the Office of Disaster Services, Patrick Breheny, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VII, Ellen Gordon, Jasper County Civil Defense Director and Vice President of the State Association of Civil Defense Directors, Perry Baker, Director, Central Iowa Office of the National Weather Service, and Major General Roger W. Gilbert, Iowa Adjutant General, relating to the functions, operations, strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the Office. It was a general consensus of the testimony presented to the Subcommittee that the Office does not have sufficient personnel to operate the emergency operation center located in the Hoover State Office Building on a continuous basis during a disaster of long-term duration, to provide adequate assistance to local civil defense directors in the preparation of disaster plans, to adequately review local disaster plans to insure coordination among federal, state, local and volunteer agencies, and to adequately assist local agencies in training local civil defense personnel and volunteers. Major General Gilbert testified that combining the operations of the Iowa National Guard and the Office of Disaster Services is not feasible because federal regulations prohibit the use of full-time federal military personnel on nonmilitary duties, the consolidation of physical facilities at Camp Dodge would violate agreements concerning the use of federal funds in constructing the emergency operation center in the Hoover State

Office Building, and there are no full-time state military personnel to assign even on a part-time basis to the Office. Mr. Perry Baker testified that the National Weather Service assigns personnel on a part-time basis to assist in the training of local ground weather observers, but these efforts cannot adequately cover the total state needs. Mr. Breheny also testified that the Office of Disaster Services is prepared to meet weather-related disasters and potential nuclear power plant accidents, but there is concern about the capability of the Office to handle a longer-term disaster or multiple disasters because of staff shortages. He also expressed concern that federal emphasis on Nuclear Civil Defense Preparedness planning and Crisis Relocation planning requires substantial planning efforts which cannot be met with staff shortages.

The Subcommittee, after discussing various alternatives including additional funding, recommends that the Office of Disaster Services:

1. Remain a separate office or agency attached to the Department of Public Defense.
2. Utilize other federal, state, local and volunteer agencies to carry out recovery operations after the immediate emergency situation has been resolved. Long-term, post-disaster recovery operations should be delegated to other appropriate agencies.
3. Emphasize the training of local civil defense personnel and volunteers to improve local planning and operation efforts. The Subcommittee requests that the Office of Disaster Services submit an estimate of the cost of shifting emphasis from planning activities to training activities to the House Transportation Appropriation Subcommittee and the Senate Transportation and Law Enforcement Appropriation Subcommittee.
4. Refer requests for assistance regarding individual or personal economic disasters to the Office of Citizens' Aide.
5. Submit recommended amendments to Chapter 29C of the Code to the Chairpersons of the Senate and House Committees on State Government.

Copies of written testimony and background material submitted to the Subcommittee are filed with the Legislative Service Bureau.