

## Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Revamping State Hazard Mitigation Team

10/6/2023

**TRENTON** – Governor Phil Murphy today signed Executive Order No. 344, which will update the leadership of the State Hazard Mitigation Team, restate the Team’s mission to better reflect its present-day operations, and provide increased public insight into FEMA resilience funds to combat climate change. Together, these improvements will position the State to more effectively respond to extreme weather events, which are increasing in frequency and severity as a result of the climate crisis.

“As we near the eleventh anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and reflect upon the countless extreme weather events that have impacted our state since that tragic storm, we continue to leverage every resource at our disposal to bolster New Jersey’s resilience,” **said Governor Murphy**. “That means not only utilizing every tool in our arsenal, but ensuring that those tools are as far-reaching and readily accessible as possible. By revamping the State Hazard Mitigation Team, we will adapt to the new realities of the intensifying climate crisis while building upon our proven track record of responding to disasters as a highly impactful and cohesive unit.”

Under the Order, the State Hazard Mitigation Team will be led by the Executive Director of the Governor’s Disaster Recovery Office and the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management State Hazard Mitigation Officer (who will serve as co-chairs), and will include the Department of Environmental Protection’s Chief Resilience Officer and principals or designees from the State Police, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Office of the Attorney General. In addition to routinely meeting several times each year to coordinate annual FEMA resilience funding applications, this core group of agencies will also activate in the immediate aftermath of a disaster event to begin strategizing how to best use disaster-specific funding to rebuild resiliently.

“DCA is proud to help lead the State Hazard Mitigation Team. Our Division of Disaster Recovery and Mitigation has tremendous experience in developing initiatives that promote the long-term resilience of New Jersey communities and will certainly be an asset to this team of experts,” **said DCA Acting Commissioner Jacquelyn A. Suárez**. “This effort to combine the State’s most knowledgeable hazard mitigation public servants on a team will undoubtedly help New Jersey obtain FEMA funding for proactive resiliency projects and maximize the funding to help as many people as possible strengthen their homes and neighborhoods against natural disasters.”

“Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of storms and flooding across the globe – and we are experiencing some of the worst impacts right here in New Jersey,” **said Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette**. “Preparing and responding to these disasters requires extensive planning, collaboration, and coordination across state government agencies. By creating an Executive Committee under the State Hazard Mitigation Team, the Murphy Administration is ensuring a whole-of-government approach to resilience, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts that will more effectively protect lives, property, infrastructure, and assets across New Jersey.”

“NJDOT crews play a key role as first responders in clearing and securing roadways during severe storms and natural disasters,” **said NJDOT Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti**. “Working with our sister agencies as part of the State Hazard Mitigation Team will provide the opportunity for regular collaboration before disaster strikes so we are better prepared and more resilient.”

“Under Governor Murphy’s leadership, New Jersey is better prepared to take on the challenges of climate change, and by modernizing the State Hazard Mitigation Team, poised for a more resilient future,” **said Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin**. “Our world has changed and we are seeing an increase in frequency and intensity of natural hazards that threaten our state. But we are meeting these problems head-on to fortify our municipalities and infrastructure to protect our residents, visitors, and businesses. I applaud the forward-looking vision to ensure that in times of crisis and in their aftermath, aid will be delivered swiftly and efficiently as part of our effective and robust response and recovery efforts.”

“This is an excellent opportunity for experienced state leadership to collaborate on how to make New Jersey more resilient in our battle against climate change and recover quickly after a disaster,” **said State Director of Emergency Management and Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police Colonel Patrick J. Callahan**. “By using a strategic approach to effective disaster management, I am hopeful for the future of New Jersey and look forward to being a member of this team.”

To coordinate statewide planning and coordination, the Order will also require that the State Hazard Mitigation Team annually submit to the Governor a report on its efforts to reduce New Jersey’s risk to natural hazards by clearly identifying the sources of FEMA funding that have been provided to the State and by identifying each project in progress.

For a copy of Executive Order No. 344, click [here](#)

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