

**Disasters Roundtable Workshop 15: Law, Science, and Disaster**

**October 18, 2005**

500 Fifth Street, NW – Room 100  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Overview: Through its public workshops, the National Research Council's Disasters Roundtable examines issues related to natural, technological, and human-induced disasters and how advances in science and technology can aid in disaster mitigation and preparedness. This Disasters Roundtable workshop, number 15 in the series, will focus on how disaster law is related to issues of public safety. Public safety is a major responsibility of local, state and the federal government. These entities develop and implement a variety of laws and regulations with this goal in mind that impact individuals and institutions in all sectors of society. Decision makers enact and implement hazard laws to regulate land use, building practices, emergency response planning and other actions. Like other laws, those related to public safety meet with varying degrees of success and are changed from time to time to meet new demands, such as those caused by the emergence of new threats and societal vulnerabilities.

It is recognized that science and technology can provide part of the basis for more effective hazard-related laws and regulations, including zoning laws, building codes, and hazard disclosure requirements. It is also clear that issues unrelated to science and technology also drive the development of hazard and disaster law. This workshop will consider recent developments and trends in hazard and disaster law and its implementation, and will draw on the September 11, 2001 experience to discuss the related issue of victim compensation. An important underlying issue that will be considered is the role of scientific understanding in providing a basis for designing and implementing laws and regulations that promote public safety in an era of increasing risk.

# **Disasters Roundtable Workshop 15: Law, Science, and Disaster**

## **Draft Workshop Agenda – Updated September 15, 2005**

**9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions –**  
William H. Hooke, *American Meteorology Society*, and Chair, *Disasters Roundtable*

**9:10 a.m. Session I – Overview**

Panelists will discuss some of the key principles of disaster-related law, relevant challenges, and the links between this policy arena and science and technology.

Moderator: Richard T. Sylves, University of Delaware

**Panelists:**

*Disaster-Related Law and Disaster Management* – David Brower, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

*Learning from Disasters: The Synergy of Law and Geography* – Rutherford H. Platt, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

**9:55 a.m. – Questions and Discussion**

**10:15 a.m. Session II – Some Recent Trends and Issues in Disaster-Related Law**

Panelists will discuss emerging patterns in disaster law and regulations and the extent to which they have been informed by scientific knowledge, such as the nature of particular risks and behavioral and societal responses to them.

**Moderator:** Melissa Cole, North Shore – LIJ Health System

**Panelist:**

*Emergency Management Law* – William C. Nicholson, North Carolina Central University

**10:40 a.m. Break**

**10:50 a.m. Session II (Continued)**

**Panelists:**

*Public Health and Disaster-Related Law* -Lance Gable, Georgetown University Law Center

*No Adverse Impact Floodplain Management* - Edward A. Thomas, Michael Baker, Jr. Inc.

**11:30 a.m. Questions and Discussion**

**11:55 a.m. Lunch (Cafeteria available on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor)**

**1:00 p.m. Session III – Victim Compensation Fund**

The speaker will discuss the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, including relevant legal and ethical implications.

**Moderator:** Claire Reiss

**Speaker:** Kenneth Feinberg, The Feinberg Group

**1:35 p.m. Questions and Discussion**

**1:55 p.m. Session IV – Sector Perspectives on the Role of Law in Meeting Future Disaster Management Challenges**

Panelists will discuss the challenges seen in disaster-related law, its implementation, and future needs.

**Moderator:** Ernest B. Abbott – FEMA Law Associates

**Panelists:**

*A Local Emergency Manager's View* – Rich Rotanz, Nassau County Office of Emergency Management

*A View from the States* – Robert Ianni, Michigan Attorney General's Office

*Post-Katrina and the National Response Plan* – Ernest B. Abbott, FEMA Law Associates

**3:00 p.m. Break**

**3:15 p.m. Session IV (Continued)**

*A View from the Private Sector* - Franklin W. Nutter, Reinsurance Association of America

**3:35 p.m. Questions and Discussion**

**4:00 p.m. Session V – Making Science Relevant to Disaster-Related Law**

The speaker will discuss ways to promote linkages between hazard scientists, legal experts and policy makers in order to further the development and implementation of disaster-related laws that enhance public safety in an era of heightened risks from natural, technological, and human-induced hazards.

**Moderator:** Havidan Rodriguez, University of Delaware

*Making Science Relevant to Disaster-Related Law* – Eric Noji, Office of the Surgeon General

**4:25 p.m. Questions and Discussion**

**4:35 p.m. Wrap Up - William H. Hooke**

**4:45 p.m. Adjourn**