



## 2018 Annual Report to the Coalition of North Eastern Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers

On behalf of the dedicated members of the International Emergency Management Group, it is a pleasure to present the IEMG 2018 Annual Report.

Improving the understanding and awareness of disaster risks requires collaborative efforts between emergency management professionals and key stakeholders. Hazard risk assessments that incorporate climate-related risk and vulnerability help to guide focused efforts on how best we can become more resilient and reduce future disaster impacts. While we cannot completely remove all risk, we can work toward preventing or reducing these hazards from becoming disasters. To do this effectively requires strong partnerships to explore opportunities and innovative ways to support each other.

While response and recovery activities can consume the majority of efforts in emergency management, enhancing our preparedness capabilities offers greater value when supported by coordinated planning validated through exercising. Over the year, member jurisdictions were involved in conducting and participating in over 180 reported exercises. Each year we see an increased sophistication and complexity of exercising as we are exposed to new risks. For example, on August 4, 2017 a widespread telecommunications outage impacted much of Atlantic Canada. While the outage only lasted for approximately six hours, it heightened the interdependency we all have to technology. From this event countless technology based exercises were created to ensure the required down time procedures were validated through testing.

The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was forecast to be a moderate year, and while none of 10 hurricanes or six major hurricanes made landfall in any of the member jurisdiction provinces or states, we did see many cascading impacts. Several of the New England States provided assistance to other states that were impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. It reminded us that events don't always have to occur within our boundaries to have an impact to our agencies operations. In addition to that support, the New England States and Eastern Canadian jurisdictions opened their Emergency Operations Centers 62 times for other events and disasters. Of those activations, 58, (90%) were related to severe weather events.

Disaster recovery is often hard to measure until fully completed. Disaster losses continue to increase as a result of the drivers of change, including climate-related risks, critical infrastructure dependencies, shifting demographics and urban sprawl just to name a few. As the states and provinces continue to finalize previous years claims an additional six new events were added during this past year adding another \$112 Million US or \$147.5 Million Canadian of damages.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Coalition of North Eastern Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers on the activities of the International Emergency Management Group (IEMG) for the period of June 2017 through May 2018.

**Mission:**

The International Emergency Management Assistance Compact provides a framework for participating jurisdictions to render mutual aid to each other when preparing for, responding to, or recovering from an emergency or disaster. Members of the International Emergency Management Group meet face-to-face at least twice a year, and maintain close communication via email and conference calls to enhance regional situational awareness and provide opportunities for collaborative emergency management planning, training, exercises, and sharing of best practices.

**Mandate:**

The role and responsibility of the International Emergency Management Group (IEMG) is to enhance the capability of member jurisdictions to extend support to provinces and states in the preparation for, response to, and recovery from, significant emergency events. The member jurisdictions of IEMG have remained dedicated to developing the capacity to respond to these events through mutual aid support. This capability has been maintained by regularly meeting, training, and exercising.

**Member Jurisdictions****Eastern Canadian Provinces:**

New Brunswick  
Newfoundland and Labrador  
Nova Scotia  
Prince Edward Island  
Quebec

**New England States:**

Connecticut  
Maine  
Massachusetts  
New Hampshire  
Rhode Island  
Vermont





## **Meetings of the IEMG**

The International Emergency Management Group met twice during the 12-month period covered by this report: in Fairlee, Vermont in November of 2017 and in Halifax, NS in June of 2018. The meetings are summarized below:

### ***2017 Fall Session – Fairlee, Vermont Agenda Topics:***

- Presentation – NEG–CEP Committee on the Environment: Update on cross-border climate change adaptation action plan – Peter Walke, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
- Presentation – Local Emergency Management Director Program – Todd Sears, Vermont Emergency Management
- Discussion – Alignment of three regional international compacts – next steps
- Discussion – legal impediments for IEMAC
- Discussion – Concept and objective session for IEMG participation in FEMA 2018 Exercise
- Discussion – Future opportunities for cross-border planning funding support
- Presentation – Tactical Level Support Vermont and Quebec – Cross Border HazMat Resource – Christopher Herrick, Chief, Vermont Hazardous Materials Response Team
- Presentation – Regional Resiliency Assessment Program (RRAP) – Matt McCann, Department of Homeland Security
- Presentation – Reducing Flood Impacts Through Post-Flood Protection & Restoration – Mike Kline – Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
- Exercise – Vermont Statewide Exercise – IEMG participation

### ***2018 Spring Session – Halifax, Nova Scotia Agenda Topics:***

- Report – Follow up on the meeting to discuss alignment of three International Compacts
- Presentation – NEG–ECP Regional Climate Change Action Plan, Todd Dupuis PEI Climate Change Secretariat
- Presentation – New Hampshire Fuel Supply During Extreme Cold Winter Event – Jennifer Harper, NH HSEM Assistant Director
- Presentation – Public Alerting to Wireless – NS EMO
- Presentation – NS 2016 Cape Breton Floods – Lessons Learned – NS EMO – George Muise
- Discussion – Providing supporting role to IEMG jurisdictions – IEMG Liaison concept



### ***Near Term Objectives:***

**Continue to foster the relationship with the Climate Change Steering Committee (CCSC) as directed by the NEG-ECP resolution from August 2017** where CCSC and IEMG will report on the continued efforts of working closely to share information, improve communications, and incorporate climate-related risk and vulnerability into planning and decision making. This effort will lead to a coordination meeting between climate change, environment, infrastructure, and emergency management officials from the jurisdictions, possibly in the spring of 2019.

**Continue to solidify working relationships and partnerships with both Canadian Border Services Agency and the US Customs and Border Protection.** This objective will enable expedient border crossing of emergency management resources requested under the IEMAC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

**Continue to share incident/event situational awareness reports among the IEMG member jurisdictions.** With this objective, there will be a requirement to update and maintain current distribution lists at director and operational levels, and with emergency management partners.

**Continue to work on emergency management (EM) prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities as they relate to hazardous materials (HazMat) transport.** State and provincial emergency management entities continue to work with key stakeholders to maintain enhanced situational awareness of the challenges regarding the transport of hazardous materials. Effort over the upcoming year will concentrate on coordination of cross-border HazMat response exercises with border state and provincial teams coordinating expedited response capabilities.

**Continue to identify opportunities of offering support and resources through the IEMAC MOU and the impediments of doing so.** There is a need to identify and develop strategies to provide jurisdictions more efficient ways to make requests for resources, identify needs, and to overcome legal impediments. These opportunities will leverage training and through operational staff support.

**Continue the efforts towards alignment of the approach of the three bi-national agreements, including NEMAC, PNEMA and IEMAC.** While it is paramount to respect jurisdictional uniqueness of the three groups, there are several opportunities to align to a common process and share valuable insight among these compacts. Further efforts in this area could see a reduction of duplication, enhanced economies of scale, and identification and implementation of best practices when responding to emergencies and disasters across member jurisdictions.





**Conduct and participate in regular exercising of the IEMAC Operations Plan.** This objective will ensure a state of readiness throughout and within all jurisdictions. The next exercise will be held in the fall of 2018 in Rhode Island.

### **Opportunities and Challenges**

As the quality of severe weather prediction continues to improve, current events continue to present uncategorized impacts and damages. Over 75% of the flood damages from Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Oklahoma occurred outside of the 100 year flood zone with unprecedented rainfall amounts exceeding 1539 mm; Hurricane Ophelia was the first hurricane to travel the farthest east in recorded history, making landfall in Ireland; the 2017 hurricane season was the seventh most active season in the past 167 years; Hurricane Irma left the island of Barbuda totally uninhabited for the first time in 300 years. With these statistics, we must leverage and explore all opportunities for stronger collaboration, cooperation, and partnership.

The approaches used for effective and efficient emergency response regardless of where we are in the world needs to continue to evolve and engage every community element and partner agency; as emergencies become more complex and sophisticated the emergency management profession must equally mature and evolve.

The IEMAC provides the mechanism to provide a prompt, more effective and efficient response in our regions because of our collective capacity and familiarity of each other. Broadening awareness and understanding will only continue to strengthen these relationships and enhance interoperability between our agencies and jurisdictions.

### **Fall Session:**

Efforts have already started to define the work for the remainder of 2018 and into 2019 to advance the strategic goals and next steps. The next IEMG meeting will take place in Newport, Rhode Island, tentatively scheduled for October, followed by the 2019 spring session to be hosted by Newfoundland and Labrador.

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron Campbell  
Canadian Co-Chair

Perry Plummer  
United States Co-Chair