

Joyce Bender - Disability Matters Radio Show  
#AdvocacyMatters Segment  
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## Federal Emergency Management Agency

A coalition of organizations, led by the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), is sending a letter to the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to protest the decrease in the number of disability integration advisors deployed to states that have been declared federal disaster areas. The proposed reductions were announced on May 24<sup>th</sup>. FEMA intends to drop the number of disability integration advisors from 60 to only 5 per disaster site.

Disability integration advisors are important because these individuals are subject matter experts on the ground and provide guidance, training, and technical assistance throughout the disaster response and recovery process. They also facilitate the federal government's obligation to provide equal access in compliance with federal law to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities during and after disasters.

Disability Rights Pennsylvania signed onto this letter and we will post a final copy on our website once it is available with all the organizations who have signed the document.

FEMA made this change without stakeholder input.

We are concerned because we know that there is great confusion and delay in meeting the needs of people with disabilities during a disaster. With less support on the ground, we are concerned that the response we be slower and unmet needs will grow.

Many disability activists have worked for years to increase the government's response to disasters, including Marci Roth, who used to work for FEMA and is now the CEO of Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies.

We are asking that FEMA delay the implementation of this plan and seek stakeholder input.

You can visit our website later this week to learn more about this issue and contact the Department of Homeland Security to express your concerns as well.

#AdvocacyMatters as does disaster preparedness and FEMA's response to disasters. Let's make sure FEMA does not rollback critical disability resources when disaster impacts our communities.