



Testimony for Kevin Hamby
for
Senate Committee on Transportation and Homeland
Security

Interim Hearing

Region 16 Center
Amarillo, TX
Tuesday, June 8, 2010

- **Good morning Mr. Chairman and Members. For the record, my name is Kevin Hamby and I am Senior Counsel for the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.**

Thank you for inviting us to be here and for allowing us to briefly explain what our Department's short-term and long-term role is in the State's response to natural disasters.

- **Texas has many needs in disaster recovery even though we have most recently experienced the efforts of Hurricanes, TDHCA has been involved in the longer term recovery efforts from wildfires, tornados, flooding as well as hurricanes and tropical storms.**
- **TDHCA has played a central role during the last five years in long-term disaster recovery. What we have discovered is that using federal funds to repair or replace homes damaged or destroyed by Hurricanes is a difficult and time consuming task.**

- **Until the 81st legislative session TDHCA's primary role in immediate response was to serve on the State's Emergency Council and TDHCA is activated to work in the State Operations Center during times of crisis. Other than assisting the Emergency Council TDHCA was essentially a post-disaster agency through HOME funding or more recently special CDBG federal funding for disaster Recovery in Rita, Katrina, Ike and Dolly. In fact due to the amount of disaster recovery work we have been assigned by the governor and the legislative directives, we created a permanent Division of Disaster Recovery with a Deputy Executive Director for Disaster Recovery.**

- **Through initiatives directed by the Office of the Governor and through statutory changes enacted by the 81st Texas Legislature, TDHCA has now been**

called upon to expand its early disaster recovery role to include emergency temporary housing in the immediate aftermath of declared disasters.

- **Additionally, HB 4409 passed during the 81st Session requires the Department to enter into pre-positioned contracts for emergency temporary housing following a disaster.**
- **TDHCA has taken this as a mandate to return people to their communities more quickly in safe livable temporary housing after a disaster.**
- **However, as we have worked on implementing HB 4409 to set about identifying ways in which we could have pre-positioned contracts to meet emergency temporary housing needs, the Department has found,**

quite honestly, obstacles at every turn. The primary concerns are:

- a lack of funding , despite that funding may be available from the disaster contingency fund established under TEX. GOV'T. CODE, §418.073, and**
 - concern from vendors about securing a large enough stock of homes without an upfront financial guarantee.**
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- We have published RFP's and received comments and some not so practical solutions therefore e remain engaged in discussions with the Division of Emergency Management and others in hopes of finding a solution.**
 - So that Mr. Chairman briefly highlights our role to date and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have at this time.**