

Opening Remarks of Erik A. Hooks
Nominated to serve as Deputy Administrator,
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
November 18, 2021

Good morning, Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Portman, and distinguished Members of the Committee. My name is Erik A. Hooks, and it is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to the position of Deputy Administrator for FEMA. I am honored to have been nominated by President Biden for this important emergency management leadership role.

I am humbled by the opportunity to appear before this Committee and thank you for considering my nomination.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Mayorkas, Administrator Criswell, and the entire team at FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security on building a more resilient and prepared nation.

I would like to thank my wife of almost 30 years, Muriel and our son, Brandon who have sacrificed along with me in my deep commitment to public service and a career in public safety.

I would also like to acknowledge the committed men and women of FEMA, our military, federal, state, and local Emergency Management and Public Safety partners, who work tirelessly to protect and lead recovery efforts from multiple hazards across our great nation. If confirmed, it would be my sincere privilege to again work alongside these resolute public safety professionals.

I spent over 30 years serving the state of North Carolina, first as a Special Agent and a senior leader with the State Bureau of Investigation for over 27 years. Then in January 2017, the Governor of North Carolina appointed me to serve as the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Advisor for North Carolina. Over the last four years in that role, I led North Carolina's disaster mitigation,

response and recovery efforts as the state navigated an increasing number of natural disasters.

I had the privilege to lead approximately 27,000 sworn and civilian public safety professionals as well as approximately 12,000 National Guard soldiers and airmen.

I provided cabinet level leadership to the NC Division of Emergency Management and its Homeland Security Section, The NC National Guard, The NC Office of Recovery and Resilience, The NC State Highway Patrol, The NC Alcohol Law Enforcement Division, the NC State Capitol Police, The Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, the Governor's Crime Commission, and support divisions within the Department of Public Safety.

I was ultimately responsible for leadership coordination of homeland security and emergency management functions to provide comprehensive and coordinated preparedness, mitigation, prevention, protection, response and recovery for emergencies, disasters, and acts or threats of terrorism.

As the leader of North Carolina's State Administrative Agency for Homeland Security Grant Funds, I administered federal funds to state, local and tribal entities across North Carolina. I also chaired the North Carolina State Emergency Response Commission and through a talented team of professionals, coordinated law enforcement counterterrorism prevention, preparedness and response training on a statewide basis resulting in a cohesive team response by both law enforcement and emergency first responders to acts of terrorism or a terrorist threat.

I recently served on the Executive Committee of the National Governors Homeland Security Advisors Council, and I am a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Today we face a multitude of challenges which must be successfully navigated through a proactive and collaborative effort to ensure FEMA can deliver needed critical services to the Nation. During my tenure as the North Carolina Secretary of Public Safety we responded to numerous disasters, including a number of state

declare disasters as well as presidentially declared disasters. My public service experience prepares me for the position of FEMA Deputy Administrator.

I believe for us to create and maintain a true culture of prevention, protection, and preparedness; we must work collaboratively across all levels of government and segments of society to ready our nation for the many hazards we face and to ensure our nation's resiliency from catastrophic events is at the highest level possible.

If confirmed, it would be my honor to serve our nation by helping all communities reduce the risks associated with future disasters, while assisting disaster survivors across the country. I am committed to work tirelessly and with a deep sense of purpose to ready the nation for catastrophic disasters, build a culture of preparedness, and reduce the complexity of FEMA.

With your consent, I would be honored to serve the American people. Thank you for your time and attention concerning my nomination and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.