



HR0749

LRB104 21247 ECR 35895 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to congratulate Jim Opoka on the occasion of his retirement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); and

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WHEREAS, Jim Opoka has dedicated 38 years of exemplary service to FEMA and the United States, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to public safety and national resilience; and

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WHEREAS, Jim Opoka began his distinguished career with the American Red Cross, serving as a liaison on the planning team responsible for developing one of the City of Chicago's most comprehensive disaster preparedness and response plans; and

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WHEREAS, Jim Opoka honorably served within FEMA, Region 5, advancing through positions of increasing responsibility, including deputy division director and acting division director; and

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WHEREAS, Throughout his tenure, Jim Opoka provided critical leadership during numerous incidents and disasters of national significance, including Hurricane Katrina, where he assisted Admiral Thad Allen in developing a strategic staffing

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1 structure during a pivotal period of FEMA's operational  
2 transformation; and

3 WHEREAS, Jim Opoka was instrumental in the development of  
4 FEMA's Information and Planning Section, serving as both a  
5 principal contributor to its creation and as an instructor at  
6 the Emergency Management Institute, thereby shaping the next  
7 generation of emergency management professionals; and

8 WHEREAS, During the response to major flooding in Houston,  
9 Jim Opoka played a key leadership role in implementing the  
10 Information and Planning Section, enhancing coordination and  
11 operational effectiveness; and

12 WHEREAS, Jim Opoka led numerous regional initiatives and  
13 special projects at the request of senior leadership,  
14 consistently demonstrating strategic vision, innovation, and  
15 dedication to mission success; and

16 WHEREAS, Jim Opoka directed the Region 5 Recovery Grants  
17 Program for more than a decade, providing exceptional  
18 stewardship and leadership in support of disaster-impacted  
19 communities; and

20 WHEREAS, Jim Opoka further contributed to the advancement  
21 of the profession as an adjunct instructor at Northern

1 Illinois University, supporting the education and development  
2 of future leaders in emergency management; and

3 WHEREAS, Jim Opoka served with distinction in coordinating  
4 regional efforts for National Special Security Events,  
5 including his role as co-chair for both the Republican and  
6 Democratic National Conventions held in Milwaukee and Chicago,  
7 respectively, in 2024; and

8 WHEREAS, Jim Opoka has earned the deep respect and  
9 admiration of colleagues and senior leaders as well as  
10 federal, state, and local partners through his  
11 professionalism, integrity, and collaborative leadership; and

12 WHEREAS, Jim Opoka has exemplified the highest ideals of  
13 public service as a federal employee, leader, mentor, and  
14 colleague, consistently demonstrating respect, humility, and  
15 excellence in all endeavors; and

16 WHEREAS, Jim Opoka's enduring legacy is defined by  
17 compassion, fairness, integrity, and steadfast dedication to  
18 the mission and to the people he served; and

19 WHEREAS, As he enters retirement, Jim Opoka now turns to  
20 his most cherished role of grandfather, where his future  
21 accomplishments will include providing love, guidance, and

1 care to his grandchildren, Mackey, Lukey, Maddox, Lainey,  
2 Denny, and Baby Boy O, arriving in May 2026, faithfully  
3 executing these joyful duties as an ongoing, essential  
4 mission; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
6 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
7 we congratulate Jim Opoka on his retirement after providing 38  
8 years of distinguished service to the Federal Emergency  
9 Management Agency (FEMA) and the nation, and we express our  
10 profound gratitude for his contributions and wish him a  
11 fulfilling, well-earned, and meaningful retirement; and be it  
12 further

13 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
14 presented to Jim Opoka as a symbol of our esteem and respect.