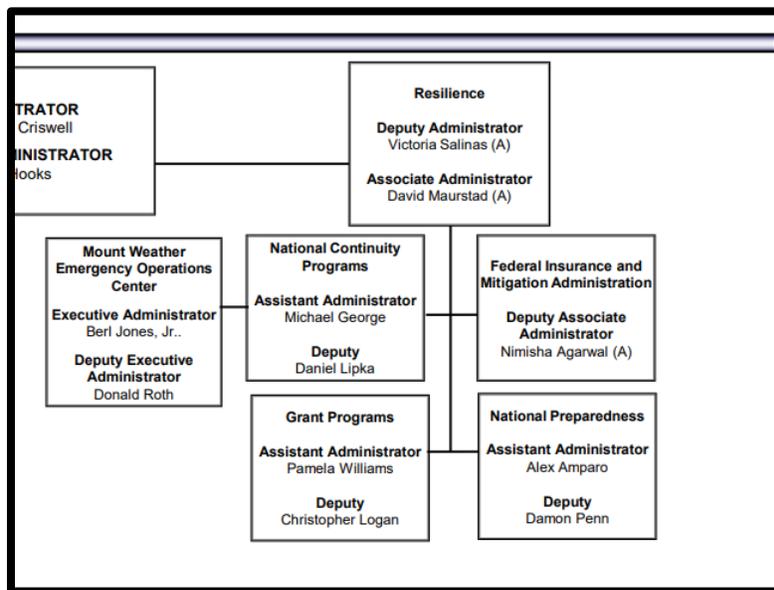


RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

To: Internal Research Memo
 From: American Accountability Foundation
 Date: May 18, 2022
 Re: Alice Hill Research

Joe Biden has nominated Alice Hill to be the Deputy Administrator for Resilience at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). If confirmed, Hill would oversee FEMA Resilience, an office tasked with building “a culture of preparedness through insurance, mitigation, continuity, preparedness programs and grants.” The Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration, Grant Programs Directorate, National Continuity Programs, and National Preparedness Directorate, as well as other offices, fall under FEMA Resilience’s umbrella.¹ FEMA’s organizational chart shows this below:²



PRO-HURRICANE COMMENTS

In a now-deleted tweet from February 21, 2020 archived by the Internet Archive WayBack Machine, Alice Hill praised the “good news” that “hurricanes fertilize mangrove forests, shaping the coastal landscape of the Florida Everglades”.³

¹ FEMA, Offices, [Resilience](#)

² FEMA, [Org Chart](#)

³ Internet Archive WayBack Machine, Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [February 21, 2020](#)





On May 11, 2022, Alice Hill again tweeted in support of hurricanes. Hill stated that “cleaner air leads to more Atlantic hurricanes” and – despite that fact – that “cutting air pollution should remain a goal.” Hill shared a link to an AP article that was published on Bloomberg.com that supported these claims:⁴

⁴ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [May 11, 2022](#)





The article that Hill shared stated that “a 50% decrease in pollution particles and droplets in Europe and the U.S. is linked to a 33% increase in Atlantic storm formation in the past couple decades,” while more air pollution in the Pacific region is leading to fewer Pacific typhoons:⁵

(AP) -- Cleaner air in United States and Europe is brewing more Atlantic hurricanes, a new U.S. government study found.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration study links changes in regionalized air pollution across the globe to storm activity going both up and down. A 50% decrease in pollution particles and droplets in Europe and the U.S. is linked to a 33% increase in Atlantic storm formation in the past couple decades, while the opposite is happening in the Pacific with more pollution and fewer typhoons, according to the study published in Wednesday's Science Advances...

Hill's assertion that “cutting air pollution should remain a goal” despite evidence suggesting that more air pollution helps to *reduce* Atlantic hurricanes raises

⁵ Bloomberg.com, “Study Finds Cleaner Air Leads to More Atlantic Hurricanes,” [May 11, 2022](#)



questions as to whether Alice Hill simply sees Hurricane-prone states like Florida, Louisiana, and Texas as collateral damage in her greater crusade against climate change – which would be troubling views for a senior FEMA official tasked with helping to prepare for (and mitigate the risk from) hurricanes.

To be clear, however, hurricane supporter Alice Hill does think that hurricanes do have some drawbacks. Rather than blaming weak immigration policies by the Biden Administration for surging illegal immigration at the southern border, Hill said that hurricanes are partially to blame for “migration from Central America” and that helping Central American countries “cope with #climate” is “core to stopping migrant flows”:⁶



ON CASH PAYMENTS AHEAD OF HURRICANES

⁶ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [February 4, 2021](#)



In a hearing held for the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness Response and Recovery on June 8, 2021, Alice Hill appeared as a witness to discuss issues relating to climate change. During this hearing, Rep. Payne (D-New Jersey) asked Hill about how “poor and disadvantaged communities” can minimize hazards related to climate change.

In her answer, Hill cited the issue of some poorer Americans not having the “ready cash” to evacuate ahead of incoming hurricanes. Hill suggested that “we need to make sure that we build plans so that Americans can seek...shelter immediately and have ready cash” and that “perhaps just send them cash immediately”:⁷

PAYNE: Thank you. And, you know, it's clear, we've seen that situation before so we can remember the faces of Katrina and what most of those folks looked like that were stuck in that terrible situation.

Let's see. Mr. Nye and Ms. Hill, vulnerable communities that were severely impacted by Coronavirus remain vulnerable to other types of hazards, such as those brought on by climate crisis. What--would you please share a few ways in which federal government can help poor and disadvantaged communities minimize those risks? Ms. Hill, and then, Mr. Nye.

HILL: Thank you. Federal government has a critical role to play in assisting disadvantaged communities. And one of the key ways is--let's look at first the emergency response. We need to have better early warning systems in the United States; we could have two adjoining communities that have very confusing system, and that would affect the ability of people to seek shelter in advance of event.

*We also know that unfortunately, many Americans don't have ready cash to evacuate easily, quickly from their communities. This was front and center with Katrina, **we need to make sure that we build plans so that Americans can seek shade--shelter immediately and have ready cash.***

***Perhaps just send them cash immediately,** so they're out and--out of their homes and headed towards safety. We also need to look at the cost benefit analysis of how to build infrastructure. Our infrastructure tends to favor wealthier communities than it does those who may be in the most need and who--for whom it is most meaningful to have protective infrastructure. So that's changing the cost-benefit analysis.*

PAYNE: Thank you.

Video of Alice Hill's above testimony can be viewed at this [C-Span link](#) at the 1:03:15 to 1:04:56 mark.

While Hill's suggestion is short on specifics, it can perhaps be used to further a narrative along the lines of “Alice Hill wants to send Joe Biden's FEMA agents to poor neighborhoods to hand out duffel bags full of cash to residents ahead of an oncoming

⁷ CQ Transcriptions, “House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness Response and Recovery Holds Hearing on Climate Change,” [June 8, 2021](#) (Page 15)



hurricane” This narrative raises questions about how FEMA would select which neighborhoods are (and aren’t) targeted for cash handouts and what protocols would be put in place (if any) to prevent waste, fraud and abuse.

ON “CLIMATE REFUGEES”

At the same June 8, 2021 House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness Response and Recovery hearing noted above, Alice Hill was questioned by Rep. Barragan (D-California) on how climate change is affecting migration.

In her answer, Hill noted that there is currently no national or international designation for “climate refugees,” but that perhaps such a designation is necessary. Hill said “we need to come up with a better system to address the flow of migration that will be driven by climate change” and that “we need a plan and we don’t have one yet”:⁸

BARRAGAN: Than--Thank you so much for that.

Ms. Hill, you spoke about how climate will drive increase in migration. On an international scale a climate--warming climate is impacting migration patterns, we have to think through humane solutions to accommodate migrants displaced by climate change.

Ms. Hill, there are many factors that contribute to immigration, but climate change isn't discussed enough. Upwards of 20 million people are displaced by weather related disasters each year. This is happening in our own backyard driving people from their homes and to our borders.

Could you describe--describe how extreme weather events worsened by climate change are causing displacement and migration that can undermine Homeland Security?

HILL: Yes, we are seeing the pressure right now at our southern border. We are seeing Central Americans come in unprecedented numbers. When I was at the Department of Homeland Security, I oversaw the first surge of unaccompanied alien children from those coun--countries.

We have examined the factors that are causing that drive in migration. There are many, as you've said, but one of them is new extremes that are affecting agriculture, drought, coffee rust, and then as livelihoods are affected, it gives opportunity for criminal gangs to expand their territory, becomes more dangerous for those and we see young people on the move headed north in search of a better life.

We do not have the legal framework internationally to accommodate what we call--commonly referred to as climate refugees. Under our international law, there is no

⁸ CQ Transcriptions, “House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness Response and Recovery Holds Hearing on Climate Change,” [June 8, 2021](#) (Page 23)



such thing as a climate refugee. So as you so importantly, point out, we need to come up with a better system to address the flow of migration that will be driven by climate change.

*We're already seeing unprecedented people on the move just this year, in terms of-- even in the midst of a pandemic, and three quarters of the approximately 40 million people on the move were driven by climate extremes, droughts, floods and other acute events that caused people to leave their homes. **We need a plan and we don't have one yet.***

BARRAGAN: Thank you. It's--

Video of Alice Hill's testimony regarding "climate refugees" can be seen at this [C-Span link](#) at 1:32:25 to 1:34:43.

SAID "ALL AMERICANS SHOULD TAKE ON" PROBLEM OF CLIMATE REFUGEES

Alice Hill is the David M. Rubenstein senior fellow for energy and the environment at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). At a CFR webinar hosted in April 2020 titled "Building Climate Resilience," Alice Hill again opined on the issue of climate refugees.

A questioner asked Hill if Hill saw "an important responsibility, possibly, of the United States in providing a haven for climate refugees...". Hill responded with a rhetorical question asking "where do these people go?" (referring to people from small countries affected by climate change) and answered that because the US is "the largest historic contributor to these emissions" that "very much this is a responsibility that all Americans should take on" – seemingly a suggestion that Americans should personally bear the responsibility for climate refugees:⁹

*Q: Hi. I wanted to ask about your stance on migration as a result of climate change. I feel that when we're talking about resilience and areas that we need to focus on when responding to climate change, the production of climate refugees might be a point of consideration. **So I wanted to ask if you see this as an important responsibility, possibly, of the United States in providing a haven for climate refugees, or if it's something that you deem as relevant in this discussion.***

HILL: Migration will be one of the most immediate effects of climate change. The U.N. has indicated that by 2050 forty million people will be on the move. We are already seeing significant migrations. I think we're probably going to see with COVID-19 some hint of how challenging this will be. The U.N. just said that there was a crisis unfolding. We have these locusts in parts of Africa that are large and eating a lot of crops. And there's a climate nexus there. But also just the disruptions in the supply chains right now as a result of COVID-19. Great risk of famine in Africa and other areas.

⁹ Council on Foreign Relations, Academic and Higher Education Webinars, "Building Climate Resilience, [April 22, 2020](#)



And of course, when we have human security threatened that means you're—you don't have security in where you live, access to fresh water, access to food—those that can, will move. And we saw just with Syria a 1,200-year drought, many other factors in play. Misuse—or, mismanagement of water. But we saw five million heading to Europe. We saw how difficult a situation that was for Europe to handle. This is probably the largest consequence we'll see. We do not have international agreement that can yet adjust to this. I think there's only one case in the world that has actually so far taken on the issue of climate refugee, out of New Zealand. It was concerning a man, I think, coming from Tuvalu who wanted to resettle in New Zealand. And a New Zealand court said, well, you can still—it's there, so you have to go back.

But what happens to these nations that disappear in the Pacific Ocean? Where do those people go? And we do not have the agreements in place. Very important. I think the United States needs to play a role here. We are the largest historic contributor to these emissions. These small countries and others have had little to do with this problem. So very much this is a responsibility that all Americans should take on. How are we going to help the others in the world that are suffering even more than we are as a result of carbon emissions? And that's not to say anyone really understood this until about forty years ago, and maybe even less than that. But it's important that we address it.

FASKIANOS: Thank you. Next question.

SUPPORTS ESTABLISHING A “DEPARTMENT OF RELOCATION”

On March 30, 2021, Alice Hill tweeted in support of establishing a Department of Relocation. The Urban Institute article Hill links to describes relocation of people within the United States:¹⁰

¹⁰ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [March 30, 2021](#)





In August 2020, Hill called for a “National Relocation Commission”:¹¹



¹¹ Twitter, [@Alice_C_Hill](#), Tweet from [August 6, 2020](#)



In her book, *Building a Resilient Tomorrow*, co-authored with Leonardo Martinez-Diaz, Hill calls for the establishment of a “National Relocation Commission.” Hill also suggests the need to identify “receiver communities”:¹²

PRESCRIPTIONS AND PROVOCATIONS

- The federal government should develop a national strategy to provide coordinated government services for transit and resettlement of displaced persons, which includes mechanisms to transfer health insurance, job training and placement assistance, cross-jurisdiction recognition of professional licenses, tax relief to cover relocation-related expenses, and seamless access to financial services.
- The federal government should plan for the creation of a National Relocation Commission to oversee policy development for relocation, coordinate relevant agency activities, and implement the national strategy.
- Governments, in partnership with academic institutions and other stakeholders, should identify potential receiver communities and develop plans to finance and make strategic investments in infrastructure and social services in those communities.

ON FLOOD INSURANCE

Alice Hill has tweeted several times in support of raising flood insurance rates – a policy likely to anger residents of coastal areas.

In July 2018, Alice Hill tweeted in support of FEMA charging homeowners the true cost of insurance, as doing so will cause fewer people to move into flood prone areas:¹³

¹² *Building a Resilient Tomorrow*, by Alice C. Hill and Leonardo Martinez-Diaz, Page 186 of Kindle Edition

¹³ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [July 31, 2018](#)





In March 2021, Hill specifically mentioned Florida flood zones and some Floridians “are underpaying for flood insurance by 379%.” Hill lamented “who’s paying the difference? Ultimately federal taxpayers.”:¹⁴

¹⁴ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [March 16, 2021](#)





In October 2020, Hill suggested that the state and local governments are purposefully failing to invest in risk reduction because they think the federal government will bail them out when a disaster does strike:¹⁵

¹⁵ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [October 29, 2020](#)





Hill called it “the definition of insanity” that federal taxpayers pay for flood damage “over and over again”:¹⁶

¹⁶ Twitter. @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [September 16, 2020](#)





In June 2017, Hill linked to a Wall Street Journal opinion piece on flood insurance. Hill said “The National Flood Insurance Program subsidizes the affluent and lulls people to live in harm’s way. It’s also broke”:¹⁷



In May 2017, Hill tweeted that flood insurance rates need to reflect the actual risks of flooding:¹⁸

¹⁷ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [June 25, 2017](#)

¹⁸ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [May 25, 2017](#)





In an article for Foreign Affairs, Hill said the federal government should phase out subsidies:¹⁹

...About 20 percent of the properties insured, typically those in risky floodplains, receive subsidized insurance, transferring the risk to the government and reducing incentives for homeowners to move to safer ground or to invest in retrofits to make their dwellings safer. The NFIP also continues to insure homes that have repeatedly flooded. Because its rates do not reflect actual risk, the program is now billions of dollars in debt.

Congress tried to fix the flood insurance system in 2012 by charging actuarially sound premiums, but a political backlash forced the proponents of the change into a swift retreat. The failed NFIP reform did not provide enough time and support for at-risk households to adjust to the increased costs. Congress must try again, but this time it should phase out the subsidies over a longer period of time and offer adequate assistance to affected homeowners, especially to low-income households...

ON NEW JERSEY COASTAL HOMEOWNERS

In August 2020, Hill tweeted the following regarding Jersey Shore homeowners:²⁰

¹⁹ Foreign Affairs, "Adapt or Perish," [January/February 2020](#)

²⁰ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [August 19, 2020](#)





In an article written for Foreign Affairs in February 2020, Hill said that “the federal government must phase out the insurance subsidies and federally backed mortgages that prop up communities knowingly built in risk-prone areas.”:²¹

...The government should also withdraw taxpayer dollars from new developments in risky areas. The problem is that the areas that are the fastest growing and most lucrative for developers are often also the most floodprone, since the most coveted places to live are typically next to water along rivers or coastlines. In New Jersey, for example, developers have built almost three times as much housing in coastal flood areas as in less risky areas since 2009. By 2100, if such trends continue, an estimated 3.4 million homes nationwide could face regular inundation. To avoid this, the federal government must phase out the insurance subsidies and federally backed mortgages that prop up communities knowingly built in risk-prone areas...

ON OIL, GAS, AND COAL

In a now-deleted tweet from October 2019 archived by the WayBack Machine, Alice Hill said that “A new poll finds that Americans would rather reduce oil and gas exploration that ‘drill, baby, drill.’ Does anyone in the Trump Administration care what most Americans want?”:²²

²¹ Foreign Affairs, “Adapt or Perish,” [January/February 2:020](#)

²² Twitter via WayBack Machine, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from October 25, 2019 Archived on [October 25, 2019](#)





In July 2021, Alice Hill tweeted that “Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan, which made public commitments to environmental sustainability, continue to back struggling coal and oil-and-gas producers”:²³

²³ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [July 30, 2021](#)





In October 2020, Alice Hill tweeted that it's a "win for earth" that the World Bank's IFC adopted new rules ending loans for coal projects in Africa and Asia.²⁴

²⁴ Twitter, @Alice_C_Hill, Tweet from [October 2, 2020](#)





“IN A COURT OF LAW, THERE IS NO QUESTION UNDER ANY STANDARD OF PROOF THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS HERE”

In a book launch event for Hill's book "The Fight for Climate After COVID-19" held by the Council on Foreign Relations in September 2021, Hill cited her bona fides as a former judge to say that "in a court of law, there is no question under any standard of proof that climate change is here":²⁵

LINDSAY: So, Alice, is there any doubt that human activity is responsible for climate change?

HILL: No. And let me be clear, there's a difference in our polling here, but 99 percent of scientists agree that climate change is occurring, and it is primarily human caused. Our polling shows that most Americans aren't so sure about this connection. It's time to get over that hurdle. It is human caused and it is here. I was formerly a judge. In a

²⁵ Council on Foreign Relations, "CFR Fellows' Book Launch Series Guest Event: "The Fight for Climate After COVID-19," [September 13, 2021](#)



**A M E R I C A N
A C C O U N T A B I L I T Y**
F O U N D A T I O N

court of law, there is no question under any standard of proof that climate change is here and humans are greatly responsible.

