

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3302

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

We write with grave concern regarding your recent comments expressing support for eliminating the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As you know, Western North Carolina was devastated in September 2024 by Hurricane Helene and FEMA's swift response was critical in providing relief to communities impacted by the storm. As representatives of a state that is regularly hit by destructive storms, we strongly believe your proposal to dismantle the agency is reckless and irresponsible, and will compromise the safety and well-being of disaster survivors, not only in North Carolina, but across the country.

In addition to assisting with search and rescue operations, distributing essential supplies, and providing direct assistance to individuals, FEMA plays an irreplaceable role in coordinating disaster response efforts across federal, state, and local agencies. Through the Incident Management and Coordination Centers and the Incident Command Structure (ICS) system, the agency ensures all responders operate under a single, organized framework with clear roles and responsibilities.

FEMA facilitates real-time communication among response agencies and affected communities via the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS), while also providing crucial technical and financial assistance to state and local governments navigating federal recovery programs. These are just a few examples highlighting the agency's responsibility as the primary emergency management entity for our nation.

No state or local government has the capacity to independently manage disaster response at this scale. Removing FEMA would unravel the network that brings federal, state, and local resources together, weakening our ability to respond effectively to disasters and leaving communities without the unified support they rely on in times of crisis.

Your threat to dismantle FEMA is not an abstract policy position – it is a real threat to the thousands of North Carolinians still living in temporary housing, relying on FEMA's Disaster Recovery Centers for guidance, and awaiting the delivery of federal support to clear debris and rebuild roads. Eliminating this agency now will strand communities in crisis.

Given the indispensable role that FEMA plays in disaster response and recovery, we urgently request that you clarify your proposal:

1. How do you intend to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) can still fulfill FEMA's core functions if the agency is eliminated?
2. Have you consulted with experts in emergency management, first responders, or state and local officials about the feasibility of your proposal?
3. What specific alternative systems are you proposing to manage large-scale disasters that cross state and local jurisdictions? How would you guarantee the same level of rapid coordination, funding distribution, and logistical support for affected communities?

By undermining the federal government's disaster response capabilities, the decision to eliminate FEMA could ultimately cost American lives. Again, given the grave implications of your proposal, we respectfully request your immediate attention to these questions.

Sincerely,



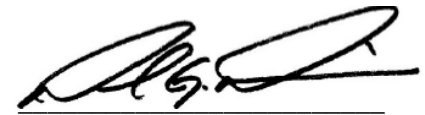
Deborah K. Ross
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Alma S. Adams, Ph. D.
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