

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 9, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

As peak disaster season approaches, we write with serious concern about the ongoing absence of a Senate-confirmed FEMA Administrator and steps your administration has taken to weaken and destabilize the agency.

To date, you have failed to nominate an Administrator or, in the absence of such an official, appoint someone who satisfies the qualifications specified for that role in statute.¹ The abrupt termination of Cameron Hamilton as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator last month injected further instability into an agency already struggling to navigate mass reductions in force.

Mr. Hamilton's termination came just one day after his appearance in front of the House Appropriations Committee, at which he testified, "I do not believe it is in the best interests of the American people to eliminate the Federal Emergency Management Agency."²

We share Mr. Hamilton's concerns. In recent months, your administration has reduced FEMA staff by roughly 30 percent, rescinded grant funding local communities rely on to recover from disasters, and significantly scaled back emergency management training for state officials.³ Taken together, these actions have impeded ongoing recovery efforts and undermined the national response to future natural disasters.

Mr. Hamilton's departure leaves a vacuum of leadership at FEMA. David Richardson—Mr. Hamilton's replacement as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator—told agency staff last week that he did not know the United States has a hurricane season.⁴ Mr. Richardson will head the federal response to any hurricanes that hit our shores this season.

¹ 6 U.S.C. § 313(c).

² *Leader of FEMA is Dismissed as Trump Administration Takes Aim at the Agency*, New York Times (May 8, 2025) (online at <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/05/08/fema-chief-fired-cameron-hamilton-00335840>).

³ *FEMA Cuts Emergency Management Training Under Trump as Hurricane Season Looms*, Reuters (May 11, 2025) (online at <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/fema-cuts-emergency-training-hurricane-season-looms-2025-05-11/>).

⁴ *Acting FEMA Chief Told Staff He Didn't Know About U.S. Hurricane Season*, New York Times (June 2, 2025) (online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/02/us/politics/fema-david-richardson-hurricane-season.html>).

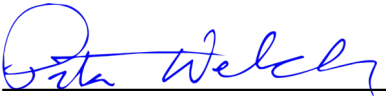
The Honorable Donald J. Trump

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We agree that FEMA can do better and needs reform. But dismantling the agency and weakening its leadership will only leave states and localities stranded when disaster strikes.⁵

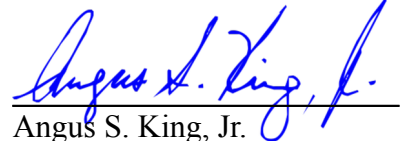
To preserve the long-term integrity of FEMA and ensure our nation's preparedness for future disasters, we urge you to nominate a qualified Administrator that will restore confidence in the agency as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Peter Welch

United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.

United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse

United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono

United States Senator



Jack Reed

United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal

United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen

United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan

United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security

cc: Mr. David Richardson
Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator

⁵ 6 U.S.C. § 313.