

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

May 14, 2026

REPLY TO:

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<https://pallone.house.gov/>

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

President Trump:

With hurricane season set to commence on June 1, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is dangerously unprepared to help Americans survive, recover, and rebuild. Your administration needs to undertake immediate and serious reforms before more communities facing disasters are left to pay the price.

FEMA has become a case study in bureaucratic dysfunction — slow to respond, unprepared for escalating disasters, and falling short of the responsibility Americans depend on in their darkest moments. Under your leadership, you have weakened FEMA's staffing and capacity, delayed and politicized disaster preparedness and recovery funding, and created uncertainty about FEMA's mission by floating proposals to shrink or eliminate the federal role in disaster response.

Since you took office, FEMA has been without a Senate-confirmed leader, cycled through three acting administrators, and top leadership positions in the agency remain vacant. Thousands of FEMA employees have been eliminated during your term and planning documents indicate an additional 11,500 are proposed to be cut from a workforce of 23,000. Last year, the agency made the short-sighted decision to reassign more than 100 key FEMA employees to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) during peak hurricane season. Now, FEMA is losing additional senior leadership and decades of institutional knowledge and rehiring a previously fired agency administrator just weeks before hurricane season begins.

During FEMA's failed response to last year's Texas floods that resulted in the deaths of more than 100 children, your administration's policies prevented search and rescue teams from being deployed for 72 hours and led to FEMA's call centers failing to answer thousands of calls from desperate Americans in need. FEMA withheld a billion dollars in funding Congress designed to help communities protect themselves against disasters and continues to withhold hundreds of millions of funding from blue states.

Suggestions to raise the threshold for states receiving federal aid and shrink the National Flood Insurance Program are incredibly alarming. States lack the capacity and financial resources to respond to the increasing frequency of extreme weather events alone. In New Jersey, communities are still rebuilding and preparing for the next major coastal storm more than a decade after Superstorm Sandy. In response to a major disaster, states depend on FEMA to surge assistance into impacted communities. Americans will pay the price for any decisions that undermine this agency's critical work.

Effective disaster response is not a wasteful luxury. It is essential for the safety and stability of communities across our nation. Rather than proposing additional short-sighted and dangerous restructurings, I strongly urge your administration to immediately fill the remaining FEMA's leadership vacancies, halt any further reassignment or reduction of critical emergency personnel, and reject proposals that would undermine FEMA's disaster response mission or reduce access to federal assistance.

In addition to a formal reply, I also request a briefing from FEMA within 14 days on the agency's hurricane preparedness, staffing levels, and operational readiness.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Pallone, Jr." in a cursive style.

FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
Member of Congress