

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 14, 2026

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

We urge you to immediately fire Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kristi Noem. The United States cannot weather another year of her misguided leadership of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Protecting our nation when disaster strikes and supporting Americans' recovery from personal and economic trauma is a profound responsibility. Instead, Secretary Noem has shown she is planning an illegal and systematic sabotage of FEMA's vital work.

Secretary Noem's first year at the helm of DHS has been its own kind of disaster. We have witnessed unforced errors and disturbing choices, including a pattern of decisions leaving FEMA less capable of fulfilling its obligation to American disaster survivors. This year of her tenure has been marked by unnecessary challenges that have hampered every stage of our National Preparedness Goal mission areas – prevention, protection, preparedness, response and recovery. And we saw the infuriating, and in some cases deadly, results experienced in Texas, New Mexico, California, North Carolina, Hawaii, Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, New Jersey, and most recently in Washington.

Her egregious choice to personally sign off on any spending over \$100,000 is a slap in the face to families in need. During the July 4th floods, her policy prevented search and rescue from being deployed until four days after the floods began and caused FEMA's call center contract to expire resulting in seventy percent of calls from survivors seeking aid to go unanswered.

In 2006, after the notorious mismanagement of Hurricane Katrina, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act (PKEMRA) to strengthen FEMA. PKEMRA held DHS leadership to a higher standard by putting an end to meddling by political appointees in organizational and workforce processes that are foundational to the work that keeps Americans' safe and secure. While every crisis offers a new opportunity for learning how to better handle disasters, for the last twenty years, Americans have benefited from the higher standards at FEMA set in place by Congress through PKEMRA.

Unfortunately, Secretary Noem has created chaos and brought troubling mismanagement back to FEMA. We condemn her latest decision to illegally subvert PKEMRA guardrails by firing FEMA employees at the end of December and her leaked plans to fire 11,500 workers – roughly half the agency's workforce. Recent reports indicate the Secretary plans to fire 1,000 disaster response staffers later this month. If you allow the Secretary to continue in her leadership

position, the nation is at risk of repeating mismanagement disasters reminiscent of the Hurricane Katrina tragedy and delays in helping families and communities rebuild.

As directed by the Stafford Act, FEMA's ability to carry out its mission to help communities in crisis is bolstered by thousands of federal employees and contractors stationed at headquarters and across the country. Their patriotic work is the difference between life and death, economic ruin and a new, more secure beginning. These illegal threats to their livelihoods will only endanger FEMA's core mission and the disaster survivors they serve.

If your Administration cares about the nation's emergency management system, instead of slashing FEMA's workforce, we strongly urge you to remove Secretary Noem and install a competent professional to be in charge. We applauded the resignation of FEMA's former Acting Administrator David Richardson after forceful public condemnation of his disastrous job performance and lives lost on his watch. Kristi Noem has proven herself no better suited for a leadership role, and we urge you to immediately remove her and submit qualified nominees to lead DHS and FEMA to the Senate as soon as possible. The American people deserve better.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic
Development, Public
Buildings and Emergency
Management



Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



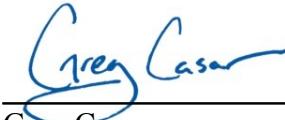
Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress