

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 9, 2025

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

Cameron Hamilton
Acting Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Administrator Hamilton,

We urge you to reverse FEMA's April 4th decision to cancel all current and future awards under the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants, which are critical to ensuring that our communities can withstand the increasing threat of natural disasters. Every \$1 spent on preparedness and resilience saves communities \$13 in damages, cleanup costs, and economic impacts. Terminating the BRIC program, including the terminations of projects that are already underway, is not only wasteful and makes us less safe, but will make our communities bear a higher cost for repairs and recovery when disaster inevitably strikes. The Department should immediately restore this program.

The Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018, signed into law by President Trump during his first term, established the BRIC program, which was designed to enhance the resiliency of communities against natural disasters, including floods, tornadoes, and other severe weather events that are increasing in both frequency and severity. Since the first round of funding in 2020, BRIC has allocated over \$5 billion in funds which has been instrumental in reducing disaster damage and protecting vulnerable communities. The need for these funds surpasses currently authorized levels causing FEMA to reject nearly 2,000 applicants seeking an additional \$13 billion in grants.

The abrupt termination of this program is not only counterproductive to the goals of disaster risk reduction, but also undermines the commitment made by Congress to mitigate the devastating impacts of climate chaos. BRIC grants have funded hundreds of important projects across various states, localities, and Tribal communities. In Oregon, these funds have had an immense impact, particularly in rural communities. The City of Mapleton, Oregon, with a population of about 530 people, was preparing to buy a water storage tank to protect against flooding and improve drinking water supply for their city and the surrounding area.

These projects have already been selected based on their potential to reduce hazard risks, and many of them are already in progress. For example, Clatsop County's Columbia Memorial Hospital had begun work under a \$20 million award for upgrades to existing facilities and a hospital expansion to construct the North Coasts' only vertical evacuation shelter which would ensure that patients can continue to get care and over 1,900 people can seek refuge in the event of a disaster in this medically underserved area.

Furthermore, the cancellation of BRIC funding seems to be part of a broader and troubling trend of decisions made by this administration to undermine FEMA's effectiveness. Shifting disaster preparedness responsibilities solely to state and local governments without the proper federal


resources, as outlined in the recent March 19 Executive Order issued by the President, is not an adequate substitute for comprehensive and coordinated support at all levels of government, including at the federal level.

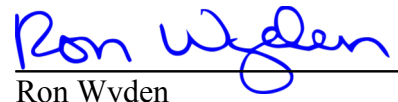
This action risks leaving already underserved communities without the necessary tools to mitigate the long-term impacts of climate change, particularly as the Trump administration appears to prioritize state-level efforts without sufficient federal backup. To cancel funding for projects mid-way will cause catastrophic setbacks for these communities, and place lives and property at unnecessary risk from increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters.


We urge FEMA to restore the BRIC program and funding for projects that are already in progress or have been fully approved. These communities have already made plans based on the expectation of federal funding, and it is essential that FEMA honors these commitments to ensure the success of these critical infrastructure projects. Given the broad support BRIC has garnered from Congress and local stakeholders and the growing risks posed by our changing climate and natural disasters, it is essential for FEMA to continue to support these efforts.

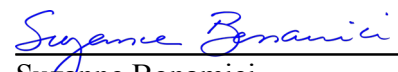
Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.


Sincerely,

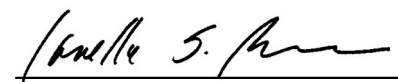

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

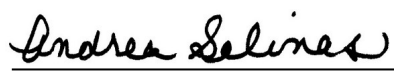

Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress


Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress


Val Hoyle
Member of Congress


Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress


Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress