

August 20, 2026

The Honorable Cameron Hamilton
Administrator
The Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Administrator Hamilton,

Now that you have been confirmed as Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and in light of a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that revealed FEMA has recklessly slashed staff under the Trump administration, I write to ask your plans for dealing with the agency's current staffing challenges.

Since the start of President Trump's second term, FEMA has lost a staggering twenty percent of its staff.¹ A recent GAO report found that these staff cuts were made without an assessment of the agency's ability to fulfill its statutory requirements.² In other words, FEMA prioritized workforce reductions over ensuring that it had the staffing capacity to respond to current or future disasters. The report also revealed that most cuts disproportionately impacted regional offices, which are most closely connected to the communities they serve. Region 1, which serves Connecticut, lost 292 employees – 12% of its staff – just from workforce reduction programs.³ This drastic reduction in staff constitutes a loss of institutional knowledge and experience that cannot be replaced and has left the United States more vulnerable when the next disaster strikes.

I appreciated your acknowledgement during your confirmation hearing that “there are challenges and setbacks that impact [FEMA's] ability to respond,” in response to my question on the staff cuts that occurred at the agency in 2025.⁴ Now that you are confirmed, you are

¹ Thomas Frank, “FEMA Overhaul Now Likely as Agency Gets New Leader Backed by Congress,” *E&E News*, August 10, 2026, <https://www.eenews.net/articles/fema-overhaul-now-likely-as-agency-gets-new-leader-backed-by-congress/> (accessed August 12, 2026).

² U.S. Government Accountability Office, *FEMA Workforce: Staff Reductions and Lack of Planning May Impact Mission Readiness*, GAO-26-108427 (Washington, DC, 2026), <https://files.gao.gov/reports/GAO-26-108427/index.html> (accessed August 11, 2026).

³ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *FEMA Workforce*.

⁴ Scott Dance, “Trump's FEMA Nominee Calls Staff Cuts a ‘Challenge’ for Disaster Agency,” *The New York Times*, June 17, 2026, updated June 22, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/17/climate/trump-fema-calem-hamilton.html> (accessed August 12, 2026).

responsible for confronting those challenges. Please provide, in writing, your plan to address the staffing cuts agency-wide, and especially in Region 1, and how you plan to ensure FEMA is fully prepared to support Americans this hurricane season and beyond.

We owe it to the American people to ensure FEMA has the resources and staff necessary as it works with communities across the country to prepare for, and respond to, natural disasters. I look forward to your response on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard Blumenthal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being more prominent than the last name "Blumenthal".

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate