May 12, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Mitigation Matters - The Critical Importance of Sustaining FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Programs

Dear President Trump,

The undersigned organizations are writing to raise awareness of the important role that the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) hazard mitigation programs—including the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) play in hazard mitigation, and the detrimental effects that eliminating or curtailing their efforts will have.

Hazard mitigation is a foundational function of FEMA's four-part mission: prepare, respond, recover, and mitigate. Of these, hazard mitigation remains the most cost-effective and lifesaving investment our country can make in reducing the escalating impacts of natural disasters. It is done both pre- and post-disaster giving communities, business owners, school districts, and homeowners the opportunity to mitigate their at-risk structures when they are ready, willing, and able. Undermining or eliminating pre-disaster mitigation support would not only reverse hard-won progress—it would leave vulnerable communities exposed and undo decades of bipartisan investment. Pre-disaster programs like BRIC and post-disaster programs like HMGP allow local governments to pursue forward-looking, community-driven solutions that reduce risk, lower long-term disaster costs, and ultimately improve public safety and national security.

As a coalition of non-profit, private sector, and academic organizations working to make our nation's communities more resilient to hazards, we see firsthand how mitigation works. Investments in hazard mitigation break the costly cycle of disaster-damage-repair-repeat. They empower communities to build stronger, smarter, and more sustainably to safeguard people, infrastructure, and the environment. These hazard mitigation approaches are not theoretical. They translate directly into wise community development projects that elevate homes, retrofit businesses, reinforce lifelines, and give communities a fighting chance to stop issues like repetitive flood losses. Further, hazard mitigation investments can reduce the cost of hazard insurance at a time when the nation is facing unprecedented increases in insurance costs and cuts to coverage in some of the nation's highest risk and most hazard prone areas.

The BRIC program, established with overwhelming bipartisan support under your prior Administration as part of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018, modernized and strengthened pre-disaster mitigation efforts by providing a stable, predictable source of funding to communities ready to lead. Its emphasis on forward-looking strategies—like the adoption of modern building codes, resilient infrastructure, and nature-based solutions—has become an essential pillar in reducing risk and enhancing resilience at the local and state levels.

The Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA) was established in 1994 and is the one program focused on mitigating insured, at-risk buildings from the hazard of flooding. It focuses on reducing the number of repetitive flood loss properties which, in turn, reduces claims to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), improving its overall financial solvency while helping homeowners be more resilient.

The oldest of FEMA's hazard mitigation programs, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) was established in the Stafford Act in 1988. It provides funding to states to fund priority hazard mitigation projects when people are most likely to mitigate–after they have been affected by a disaster. Further, HMGP is guided by state hazard mitigation priorities, and unlike FMA or BRIC, it is managed, at least partially, at the state level, which we understand is a priority of the Administration.

Investments in hazard mitigation programs make communities more resilient and can substantially reduce the economic costs of disasters. As noted, numerous studies, including those by the U.S. National Institute of Building Sciences and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce confirm that every dollar spent on hazard mitigation can yield up to $13 in future savings. These aren't just savings in the abstract—they represent homes that remain standing, businesses that remain open, communities that survive, and local governments that can recover more quickly and without financial collapse. Further, based on these cost-effectiveness calculations, should you, as President, choose not to grant HMGP as part of a Federal disaster declaration, you are eliminating the one program that has a return on investment that exceeds FEMA's disaster costs for that declaration.

Programs like BRIC, FMA, and HMGP are not luxuries; they are essential components of a resilient, secure, and prepared America. Suspending or diminishing these efforts at a time when disasters are increasing in frequency, intensity, and cost would not only place more lives and property at risk, it would burden future generations with greater costs and fewer options. Cutting FEMA hazard mitigation programs will increase costs to the federal government in the long-run as these unmitigated properties and infrastructure will be the basis for future disaster declarations and future taxpayer costs.

We urge the Department of Homeland Security and the Administration to reaffirm the importance of FEMA's mitigation mission. We remain eager to partner with FEMA and DHS to strengthen national resilience. Investments in resilience through hazard mitigation won't prevent losses but they can significantly reduce them. More importantly, it can reduce human suffering long term. Mitigation matters—and it must remain a central part of the nation's disaster strategy to ensure a safer future for all Americans. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and to support the Administration in continuing these vital programs.

Sincerely,

American Planning Association
American Rivers
American Shore and Beach Preservation Association
Appalachian Voices
Arizona Floodplain Management Association
Arkansas Floodplain Management Association
Association of Floodplain Managers of Mississippi
Association of Montana Floodplain Managers
Association of State Floodplain Managers
Buy-In Community Planning, Inc.
CH Consulting (Medford, MA)
Citizens' Committee for Flood Relief De Soto Missouri
Climigration Network
Coalition for Sustainable Flood Insurance
Colorado Association of Stormwater and Floodplain Managers
Coney Island Beautification Project, Inc.
Environmental Defense Fund
Flood Mitigation Industry Association
Headwaters Economics
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management
Iowa Floodplain and Stormwater Management Association
Kentucky Association of Mitigation Managers
Louisiana Floodplain Management Association
Maryland Association of Floodplain and Stormwater Managers
Massachusetts Association for Floodplain Management
Michigan Stormwater Floodplain Association
National Flood Association
National Hazard Mitigation Association
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Areas Conservancy
Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder
Nebraska Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association
New Jersey Association for Floodplain Management
New Mexico Floodplain Managers Association
New York State Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association
Nonprofit Staten Island
Northwest Regional Floodplain Management Association
Ohio Floodplain Management Association

Regional Plan Association
Resilient Red Hook
Riverkeeper
Smart Growth America
SmarterSafer Coalition
South Carolina Association for Hazard Mitigation
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southeast Queens Residents Environmental Justice Coalition
Staten Island Community Organizations Active in Disaster
Stormwater Infrastructure Matters (SWIM) Coalition
The Center for NYC Neighborhoods, Inc.
Union of Concerned Scientists
Virginia Floodplain Managers Association
Waterfront Alliance
We Are Southern Brooklyn
West Virginia Floodplain Management Association
Wetlands Watch

cc: Kristi Noem, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
Russell T. Vought, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Susie Wiles, Chief of Staff, Executive Office of the President
David Richardson, Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator
Cynthia Spishak, Associate Administrator, Office of Policy and Program Analysis