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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

April 30, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

On April 4th, 2025, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced it was ending the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program and cancelling unspent BRIC applications from Fiscal Years (FY) 2020-2023 as a part of the Trump Administration's effort "to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse within the federal government." The decision to end the BRIC program will leave communities less prepared and less resilient to withstand natural disasters and will put American lives needlessly at risk.

In 2018, President Trump signed the law establishing the BRIC program to help address the growing threat of natural disasters across the United States. The average cost of disasters in the United States has grown exponentially since the 1980s, with billion-dollar disasters becoming more common. This disturbing trend led to the establishment of the BRIC program by Congress to help mitigate the cost of these disasters and take action to save property and human lives. In FY 2020, under President Trump, FEMA began its first round of funding, and since, FEMA has distributed \$5 billion in grants to state, local, tribal and territorial governments (SLTTs) across the country. The BRIC program was designed to provide a more proactive approach reducing risk to SLTTs through hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of mitigation projects, such as infrastructure upgrades. In 2024, there were 27 natural disaster events costing over \$1 billion each in the United States. Without the BRIC program and the ability to make communities and infrastructure more resilient, natural disasters will continue to be extremely costly and life-threatening.

While we agree the BRIC program can be improved, much of the feedback from SLTTs and stakeholders has been focused on more communities wanting the opportunity to receive funds to do pre-disaster mitigation work, especially in impoverished communities. In fact, the need for mitigation funding is so great, BRIC has been vastly oversubscribed, resulting in FEMA rejecting nearly 2,000 applicants seeking about \$13 billion in BRIC grants.

Your Department's cancellation of all BRIC applications from FY 2020-2023 has created confusion across the country and means that SLTTs will suddenly be responsible for funding these projects to completion as BRIC funding will not be disbursed. As you are well aware as a former governor, SLTTs already operate on a very strict budget, and many may be forced to abandon these projects. Natural hazard mitigation saves \$6 on average for every \$1 spent on federal mitigation grants,

so rather than save money, this undertaking will likely cost the federal government more money in the long run, as these communities will be left more vulnerable to natural disasters and more reliant on federal relief dollars after an event. We urge you to reconsider the cancellation of unspent FY 2020-2023 BRIC applications and to work with Congress on any changes to improve the program to ensure that SLTTs receive the support they desperately need from the federal government to build more resilient communities and keep Americans safe.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Andy Kim
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Disaster
Management, District of
Columbia, and Census