

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 30, 2025

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro,

We are writing to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct a review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) readiness for the 2025 hurricane season. Given the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, including hurricanes and wildfires, we have significant concerns about FEMA's capacity to effectively prepare for and respond to these events. The challenges observed in FEMA's response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024, as well as the January 2025 LA wildfires, underscore the urgency of this review to ensure that FEMA is adequately equipped to protect and support American communities in the face of future disasters.

The 2024 hurricane season, marked by the devastating impacts of Hurricanes Helene and Milton, exposed critical gaps in FEMA's preparedness and response capabilities. Hurricane Helene, which made landfall as a Category 4 storm in Florida and caused unprecedented flooding across the Southeast, resulted in over 230 deaths and widespread infrastructure damage, particularly in western North Carolina. Similarly, Hurricane Milton, striking Florida shortly thereafter, compounded the region's recovery challenges, with at least 17 fatalities and significant damage to homes and businesses. The LA wildfires, occurring concurrently, further strained federal resources, as FEMA was tasked with supporting response efforts across multiple disaster types in a short timeframe. These events highlighted several systemic issues that warrant thorough investigation.

We are particularly concerned about FEMA's staffing shortages and their impact on operational effectiveness. A 2022 GAO report already identified a 35% staffing gap at FEMA, contributing to burnout and retention issues. During the response to Hurricane Helene, FEMA deployed approximately 900 personnel, many working extensive overtime to meet overwhelming demand and the agency was critically low in certain important workforce cadres, such as individual assistance and disaster assistance survivor teams.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. Given its importance, we request that GAO strive to issue certain information prior to the end of hurricane season, as appropriate. Please direct any questions or correspondence regarding this request to [REDACTED]

[Redacted]

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andy Kim", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Andy Kim  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thom Tillis", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Thom Tillis  
United States Senator