



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Sam Graves
Chairman

Rick Larsen
Ranking Member

Jack Ruddy, Staff Director

Katherine W. Dedrick, Democratic Staff Director

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
United States Department of Homeland Security
500 C St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Criswell:

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (Committee) is aware of disturbing news reports detailing how a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) employee tasked with leading recovery efforts in and around Lake Placid, Florida, directed FEMA workers to avoid homes with Trump campaign signs.¹ These reports have surfaced while thousands of Americans continue to deal with the devastation and loss inflicted by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. As the FEMA Administrator, you are responsible for leading the Nation's efforts to prepare for, protect against, and respond to natural disasters.² The Committee is troubled that under your leadership FEMA failed to aid all Americans, regardless of party affiliation.

In reporting that first emerged from *The Daily Wire*, it was revealed that a FEMA supervisor sent a best practices message to FEMA workers canvassing the Florida area impacted by Hurricane Milton, which instructed the workers to "avoid homes advertising Trump."³ As a result, FEMA workers passed over homes with Trump campaign signs or flags, and reported that approximately 20 homes were skipped from the end of October and into November.⁴ In a system used by FEMA to track which homes were contacted, FEMA worker entries show that homes were skipped as a direct result of the guidance issued by FEMA leadership.⁵ Screenshots

¹ Leif Le Mahieu, *EXCLUSIVE: FEMA Official Ordered Relief Workers To Skip Houses With Trump Signs*, THE DAILY WIRE (Nov. 8, 2024), available at <https://www.dailywire.com/news/exclusive-fema-official-ordered-relief-workers-to-skip-houses-with-trump-signs> [hereinafter Daily Wire Article].

² 6 U.S.C. § 313.

³ Daily Wire Article, *supra* note 1.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

obtained by *The Daily Wire* show entries in the system which state “Trump sign, no contact per leadership.”⁶

You issued an official statement on November 9, 2024, asserting that the actions of the FEMA supervisor were a “clear violation of FEMA’s core value and principles”⁷ and that the employee had been terminated and the matter referred to the Office of Special Counsel.⁸ Yet, under the Biden Administration, FEMA’s number one strategic goal, per its Strategic Plan, is focused on equity, while preparedness and readiness were relegated to FEMA’s third goal, after climate change.⁹ In fact, the FEMA employee disputes the notion that her actions were out of line with direction from FEMA leadership and that as of November 11, 2024, she had not received anything in writing with respect to her termination.¹⁰ She further asserts a trend of avoidance by FEMA, not just in Florida but also in the Carolinas.¹¹

Your inability to ensure that FEMA provide relief to all Americans affected by disasters, free of discrimination, represents a substantial failure of leadership. The blatant disregard of President-elect Trump supporters directly contradicts FEMA’s core mission and values. This reporting follows previous media coverage, which found that residents in North Carolina felt they had been left to fend for themselves, and FEMA was too slow in providing relief, compounding the Committee’s concerns related to FEMA’s capacity to aid disaster victims.¹² It is clear that, under the Biden-Harris Administration, FEMA has been ill-prepared to provide assistance and relief to many Americans in need.

The Committee is continuing its oversight of FEMA’s ability to adequately respond to natural disasters. In order to assist the Committee with its investigation, please provide a briefing to Committee staff by December 2, 2024. At the briefing FEMA should be prepared to discuss concerns related to the agency’s failure to aid Americans regardless of party affiliation, including the steps FEMA has taken to assist unaided families, policies implemented to prevent future political discrimination, and the prevalence at which the agency fell derelict in its duty to assist victims. In addition, please provide the requested documents and information, as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on December 2, 2024:

1. Please provide all documents and communications sufficient to show when FEMA leadership became aware of the discriminatory guidance given to FEMA workers in Florida.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Press Release, FEMA, *Statement from FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell on Employee Misconduct*, (Nov. 9, 2024), available at <https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20241109/statement-fema-administrator-deanne-criswell-employee-misconduct>.

⁸ E-mail from FEMA Congressional Affairs Staff, to H. Comm. on Transp. and Infrastructure staff (Nov. 9, 2024, 1:48 PM EST) (on file with Comm.).

⁹ FEMA, 2022-2026 FEMA STRATEGIC PLAN: BUILDING THE FEMA OUR NATION NEEDS AND DESERVES 4–5 (2021), available at https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_2022-2026-strategic-plan.pdf.

¹⁰ @Blackstarnetwork, YouTube (Nov. 11, 2024), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BL3hibZebhA>.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Emily Cochrane, et al., *After Flooding, FEMA Aid is Arriving. But Some Are Still on Their Own.*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 2, 2024).

2. Please provide all documents and communications, if any, related to FEMA's efforts to contact and provide assistance to the Florida residences skipped as a result of the discriminatory guidance.
3. Please provide all documents and communications, if any, related to FEMA's effort to notify state and local officials of the discriminatory guidance.
4. Please provide all documents and communications, if any, related to FEMA's efforts to notify the skipped residences of Federal grants and assistance that may be available.
5. Please provide all documents and communications related to any actions taken to investigate whether homes in other communities and states were similarly impacted.
6. Please provide copies of any guidance documents and policies for field workers on canvassing in response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

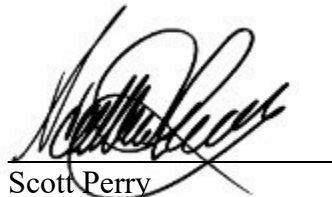
Pursuant to House Rule X, clause 1(r), the Committee has jurisdiction over these issues and shall conduct appropriate oversight of these actions. This request and any documents created as a result of this request will be deemed Congressional documents of the Committee. An attachment contains additional instructions for responding to this request. When producing documents to the Committee, please deliver production sets to the Majority Staff in Room 2165 of the Rayburn House Office Building and the Minority Staff in Room 2164 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Johanna Hardy, with the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management at [REDACTED]. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

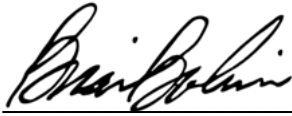
Sincerely,



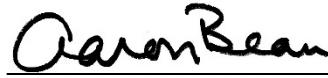
Sam Graves
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure



Scott Perry
Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic Development,
Public Buildings, and Emergency
Management



Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Aaron Bean
Member of Congress




Mike Bost
Member of Congress



Tim Burchett
Member of Congress



Eric Burlison
Member of Congress



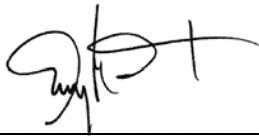
Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Member of Congress



Mike Collins
Member of Congress



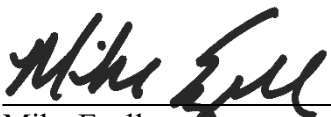
Eric A. "Rick" Crawford
Member of Congress



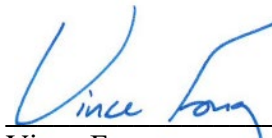
Anthony D'Esposito
Member of Congress



John S. Duarte
Member of Congress



Mike Ezell
Member of Congress




Vince Fong
Member of Congress



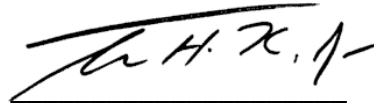
Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



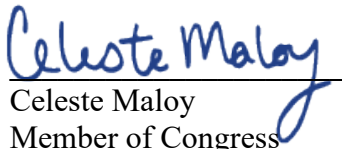
Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress



Kevin Kiley
Member of Congress



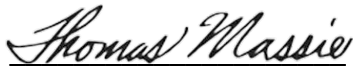
Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Celeste Maloy
Member of Congress



Tracey Mann
Member of Congress



Thomas Massie
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



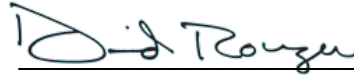
Marcus J. Molinaro
Member of Congress



Troy E. Nehls
Member of Congress




Burgess Owens
Member of Congress



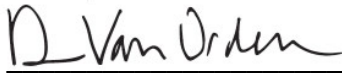
David Rouzer
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Jeff Van Drew
Member of Congress



Derrick Van Orden
Member of Congress



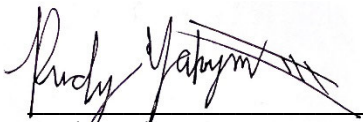
Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



Brandon Williams
Member of Congress



Rudy Yakym III
Member of Congress

Administrator Criswell

November 14, 2024

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cc: The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Dina Titus, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings,
and Emergency Management

Enclosure

Attachment A – Requirements for Responding to the House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure Records Requests in the 118th Congress