

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 5, 2026

Mr. Bob Fenton, Acting Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C St SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Acting Administrator Fenton,

We write to seek clarity regarding the status of pending Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) awards in western states, particularly California and Colorado.

Wildfires cause an average of \$1 billion in structural losses annually, and the 2025 Los Angeles-area fires alone caused over \$250 billion in economic damage.¹ Disaster preparedness and mitigation not only save lives but also save taxpayer dollars, with studies showing that every dollar invested in prevention saves \$13 in disaster response and economic impact.² While the Governor of California's budget calls for \$149.3 million for emergency response and disaster prevention, and Colorado's budget includes \$33.5 million for Wildland Fire Management Services, federal support remains essential to reduce the likelihood and cost of catastrophic wildfires whose costs are borne in large part by FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund.

For this reason, we are troubled by recent media reports that FEMA has withheld over \$1.68 billion in HMGP funds for California and Colorado, including \$45 million for Colorado.³ Among the projects awaiting approval are wildfire mitigation and home hardening programs in Plumas County, El Dorado County, and Shasta County.⁴

We recognize that several factors may have slowed FEMA's award review, including the lapse in appropriations and the previous Secretary of Homeland Security's personal review of awards over \$100,000. Yet while FEMA has awarded \$1.1 billion in HMGP awards this year, California has received only \$830,000 and Colorado none. By contrast, FEMA awarded \$239 million to

1 Hanna Buechi et al., *Long-Term Trends in Wildfire Damages in California* (Santa Barbara: Environmental Market Solutions Lab, University of California, Santa Barbara, n.d.), accessed May 20, 2026, <https://emlab.ucsb.edu/sites/default/files/documents/wildfire-brief.pdf>.

2 Lewis, Sydney. 2024. "Unpacking the ROI of Disaster Preparedness." *uschamberfoundation.org*. September 27, 2024. Accessed May 20, 2026 <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/disasters/unpacking-the-roi-of-disaster-preparedness>.

3 Brianna Sacks and Kevin Crowe, "These Blue States Aren't Getting Fire Prevention Money from Trump," *The Washington Post*, published May 8, 2026, accessed May 20, 2026. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2026/05/08/wildfire-fema-grants-delay/>

4 Lauren Sommer, "Communities Are Waiting on Billions in Disaster Funding from the Trump Administration," *NPR*, published April 10, 2026, accessed May 20, 2026. <https://www.npr.org/2026/04/10/nx-s1-5770433/delay-funding-fema-hurricanes-disasters-wildfires-floods>

Florida, \$131 million to Texas, and \$117 million to Louisiana.⁵ We know of no eligibility or statutory factors that justify California and Colorado—together home to roughly one in eight Americans—receiving less than one-tenth of one percent of HMGP awards this year. Moreover, California and Colorado are both donor states, contributing \$276 billion and \$10 billion more in taxes, respectively, than our states receive in federal spending.⁶

We remain concerned that the current administration may have withheld HMGP awards from certain states for reasons unrelated to their eligibility under the Stafford Act. We hope that the reports describing a June 2025 “Gov wide CA grant termination effort” within the Department of Homeland Security prove inaccurate, because such discussions would appear to prejudge California’s eligibility for HMGP assistance.

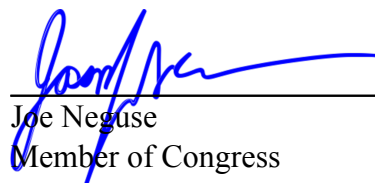
Millions of Californians and Coloradans living in high-risk wildfire areas rely on these mitigation funds to protect their homes, families, and neighbors—particularly rural communities that face higher wildfire risk. Strengthening these communities now will reduce future disaster losses and lower long-term costs for taxpayers and FEMA alike.

We trust that you agree that FEMA should not put Americans’ lives and livelihoods at unnecessary risk. Accordingly, we request your support in ensuring that our constituents receive the same full, fair, and prompt consideration of their FEMA awards requests as Americans in every other state, and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



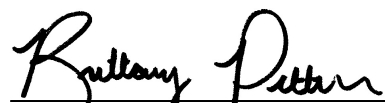
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⁵ Sacks and Crowe, “Blue States,” Washington Post

⁶ USAFacts, “Which states contribute the most and least to federal revenue?” November 3, 2025. Accessed May 22, 2026. <https://usafacts.org/articles/which-states-contribute-the-most-and-least-to-federal-revenue/>

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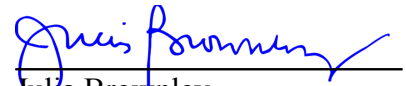
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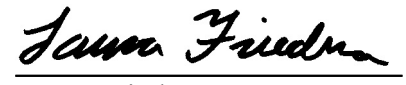

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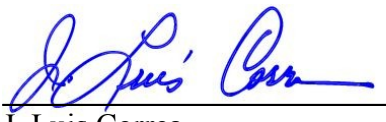

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