



Testimony
of

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before the

U.S. House of Representatives
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Homeland Security

on

The Fiscal Year 2027 Budget for the Federal Emergency Management Agency

April 16, 2026
Washington, DC

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Cuellar, and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget request for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

I am Karen Evans, currently serving as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Administrator, and I look forward to our conversation today.

Under new leadership, FEMA is taking active steps to refine its focus and mission. Our guiding principle is clear: states lead, local governments execute, and the Federal Government supports. This approach ensures that disaster response and recovery efforts are tailored to the unique needs of each community, while FEMA provides the resources and expertise necessary to promote resilience nationwide. Our FY 2027 budget request of \$38.5 billion is designed to uphold this model and advance our mission of supporting communities before, during, and after disasters.

Under the Trump Administration, FEMA serves the American people first and foremost while ensuring that our grant programs are designed to deliver assistance strictly aligned with our mission and legislative mandate. Our focus is on supporting Americans during disasters and making certain that taxpayer dollars are used as Congress intended: to help communities recover, rebuild, and prepare for future emergencies. Over the past year, FEMA worked to restore the Agency's original purpose and ensure that federal funds are directed according to statutory requirements.

Emergency management is critical to safeguarding lives, property, and infrastructure. FEMA acts capably and impartially to support State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial governments in all phases of their disaster recovery. The FY 2027 budget request reflects FEMA's commitment to meeting the needs of the public and our obligation to use taxpayer dollars responsibly.

FEMA's FY 2027 budget request will advance the Administration's priorities. FEMA will strengthen its mission and ensure effective support for communities nationwide through investments in disaster relief and recovery, critical infrastructure, and other essential programs.

In FY 2025, FEMA delivered substantial outcomes for survivors and communities, providing \$4.2 billion in disaster assistance to support survivors through the Individual Assistance program and \$14.1 billion for infrastructure repair and rebuilding after major disasters. Additionally, FEMA supported communities with essential resources, including 34.8 million meals, 43 million liters of water, and deployed responders for an average of 69 days.

FEMA supports State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial partners by helping them build disaster resilience, response and recovery capacity, and by providing resources and assistance when disasters exceed state and local capabilities. The FY 2027 budget request includes \$28.4 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which will sustain ongoing recovery and hazard-mitigation efforts for a range of disasters impacting dozens of states, including Hurricanes Helene and Maria, the Lahaina and California Wildfires, and more recent incidents such as the January Winter Storm and Typhoon Halong. This funding will also promote partnerships, improve programs, and leverage technology to supplement community needs. While states, tribes, and territories must develop more robust fiscal and operational capacity to enable their own

resilience, investments in the Disaster Relief Fund assist communities with immediate response, sustained recovery, and hazard mitigation. This approach advances our nation's ability to address disasters and rebuild stronger for the future.

In addition to our disaster relief and recovery efforts, FEMA's FY 2027 budget request continues to support non-disaster grant programs, with targeted reductions to funding levels in certain areas compared to prior years, notably the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) and the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). Examples of these grants include the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), and the Homeland Security Grant Programs (HSGP), which provide critical resources to emergency management agencies and the fire community nationwide. We remain committed to working with our partners to maximize the impact of available resources. These programs, together with funding from the Working Families Tax Cut Act, continue to play a vital role in building preparedness, enhancing response capabilities, and supporting community resilience. By sustaining these investments, FEMA ensures that state, local, tribal, and territorial partners have the tools needed to address evolving threats and enhance their capacity to protect lives and property.

FEMA's commitment to bolstering national preparedness also includes targeted investments in critical infrastructure and communications systems. FEMA's FY 2027 budget request includes \$55.4 million for the National Public Warning System. The funding will accelerate the modernization of infrastructure and equipment at national Primary Entry Point broadcast locations. This investment will replace aging generators and fuel systems, install backup radio transmitters and broadcast equipment, and upgrade network communications capabilities. These enhancements will advance the system's resilience and reliability, ensuring the President and other authorities can deliver nationwide emergency alerts and instructions before, during, and after catastrophic incidents.

In addition, FEMA requests \$42 million to implement new systems to enhance cybersecurity through our Financial Systems Modernization efforts. Currently, FEMA utilizes multiple finance systems. This funding will enable the agency to consolidate several tools into a stand-alone system and decommission outdated ones, improving our accounting and reporting mechanisms.

The FY 2027 budget request will enable FEMA to pursue innovative solutions to better respond to survivor needs and modernize our operations. Through the agency's financial and grants modernization efforts, FEMA will be able to process awards to communities faster and more efficiently. We must communicate quickly and clearly with survivors, cut red tape, and streamline processes to accelerate recovery so people can return to their homes and communities to rebuild. Updated information technology systems remain key to accomplishing this priority. Our personnel must remain ready and prepared to respond at any moment to any disaster, whether it be a hurricane, tornado, flood, or man-made. The American people are our highest priority, and we are committed to continually improving customer service.

Our FY 2027 budget request includes \$96.8 million to construct and modernize the Mount Weather Emergency Operations Center, a critical national security asset. Advanced technology

investments will ensure this facility remains secure and capable in the face of evolving threats. These enhancements will secure our communications, improve energy efficiency, and ensure FEMA is ready to support the nation. Not funding this vital asset could undermine our readiness for disasters, by disrupting critical preparedness and response activities.

In closing, hurricane season is fast approaching; and even before it arrives, communities across the country are already facing or recovering from wildfires, flooding, snowstorms, tornadoes, and other hazards. FEMA continues to prepare for and respond to these and other disasters, but success depends on State and local governments playing a more active and significant role in preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. Our FY 2027 budget request will reinforce our readiness posture and support long-term planning and coordination with our partners.

Emergency management is at a pivotal moment in our nation's history. As risks evolve and disasters become more complex, FEMA's core mission remains unchanged: to support states as they lead and local governments as they execute disaster response and recovery, with a competent, accessible, and efficient Federal Government providing supplementary resources and expertise. FEMA's FY 2027 budget request is designed to meet both current and future challenges, ensuring FEMA is prepared to serve the American people and deepen our partnerships nationwide.

Finally, as the longest shutdown in history continues, FEMA implores the House to pass the Senate DHS funding bill and work expeditiously to enact a second reconciliation measure by June 1st to provide sustained funding to ICE and Border Patrol.

I look forward to working with you to build a stronger, more effective FEMA and a more resilient nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.