

Vote to overhaul FEMA canceled after leaked report

The FEMA Review Council was scheduled to approve its recommendations for overhauling the agency Thursday.



Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem is overseeing an overhaul of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. | Mark Schiefelbein/AP

By **THOMAS FRANK**

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An expert panel advising President Donald Trump about overhauling the Federal Emergency Management Agency canceled a meeting scheduled for 1 p.m. EST Thursday at which members were set to release a report recommending their changes to the disaster agency.

The move came after Trump officials were angered that CNN had obtained a copy of the FEMA Review Council's final report and [published an article on its website](#) Wednesday, according to two people who are close to the panel. One review council member told a person close to the panel that officials canceled the meeting to demonstrate that the leaked report has not been finalized and is subject to change.

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The Trump-appointed 13-member council, led by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, has been working for months on recommendations to streamline FEMA and speed up disaster aid.

The cancellation apparently occurred at the last minute.

Shortly after noon Thursday, Noem was testifying before the House Homeland Security Committee and left the hearing before it ended to attend the review council meeting.

"I have to actually leave this hearing early because the FEMA Review Council is giving their report today on suggestions for changes to FEMA, and I have to co-chair it," Noem told Rep. Josh Brecheen (R-Okla.), who had asked her a question.

"I will be leaving soon to have to go do that," Noem continued. "Those suggestions are Republicans and Democrats coming forward with how FEMA

should go forward in the future based on the president’s vision for making sure that states get the chance to manage it and that local emergency managers get the chance to go and help their communities in a much more efficient way.”

Just before saying she had to leave, Noem praised FEMA, which DHS oversees.

“FEMA today is deploying resources two times faster on average than in history, which means the dollars are going out twice as fast as they ever have before,” Noem said without providing documentation. “And the president, as soon as these disasters are happening, is deploying those resources, to Republican and Democrat states. New Mexico, Texas, Alaska — they’re all getting dollars immediately and we’re responding immediately to our people.”

Many governors and lawmakers of both parties have complained to Noem about the length of time Trump is taking to approve or deny requests for federal disaster aid.

In its [Daily Operations Brief](#) published Thursday morning, FEMA notes that no action has been taken on a request for disaster aid submitted by Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly of Kansas on Aug. 19, nearly four months ago.

The Department of Homeland Security did not immediately confirm the cancellation or respond to questions by POLITICO’s E&E News.

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