



April 30, 2025

President Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Secretary Kristi Noem  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear President Trump and Secretary Noem,

On behalf of the Western North Carolina Recovery and Resilience Partnership, thank you for your leadership to support ongoing recovery from the catastrophic destruction from Hurricane Helene. Made up of over 16 communities and their elected leaders, the Western North Carolina Recovery and Resilience Partnership is a locally-led effort to secure necessary resources and policy changes that aid in the region's recovery and long-term resilience needs in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

We appreciate your and other Administration officials' visits to the region to date, in addition to the White House's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs meeting with the Partnership on March 27. That discussion, related follow-up from staff, and the continued, timely dispersal of federal post-disaster resources have been much appreciated.

**We write today to urge you to maintain the funding associated with the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program for critical pre-disaster investments in resilience. In addition to maintaining BRIC funding, we support reforming the program to align with its intended purpose of empowering states and local communities to proactively reduce risks from natural disasters and extreme weather.**

As leaders of primarily small and rural communities, we support your efforts to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse at FEMA, and agree that BRIC would benefit from significant reform. In its current form, the program is overly complex and, as such, favors wealthy, coastal cities over rural communities like those in Western North Carolina. Additionally, BRIC fails to fully empower states by reserving the majority of its funding for a national competition, rather than awarding more dollars directly to states. Reducing BRIC's complexity and red tape, increasing flexibility, and directing the bulk of funds for states to allocate in partnership with local communities would ensure its integrity moving forward.

That said, halting BRIC funding altogether for current and future projects threatens Western North Carolina’s ability to recover from Hurricane Helene and to prepare for future disasters. Though BRIC needs to be reformed as outlined, the fact remains that it is the main source of pre-disaster funding for states and communities to proactively address vulnerabilities and harden infrastructure to withstand such storms as Hurricane Helene. Investing on the front end also makes good fiscal sense for communities and taxpayers alike, as research shows that every \$1 invested in pre-disaster mitigation saves up to \$11 in economic impacts and other costs post-event.<sup>1</sup>

Across Western North Carolina, our communities are investing significant local resources and leveraging state investment to rebuild while preparing for the next storm. But we cannot do it alone. To date, North Carolina has been selected for \$224 million in federal funding across 75 BRIC projects. This funding is for critical infrastructure projects such as relocating pump stations, replacing sewer lines, and elevating buildings, in communities across the state that otherwise would not have been able to undertake key projects.

Additionally, we are concerned by the potential loss of approximately \$9.6 million in unobligated BRIC funding for elevation, relocation, and protection of critical infrastructure across Western North Carolina. Cancelling these projects, many of which are already underway, would require local governments to reallocate limited resources from recovery to mitigation or forgo critical mitigation projects, slowing recovery across the region.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Under your leadership, we believe FEMA can deliver BRIC funding in a responsible manner and advance Western North Carolina’s continued recovery with greater resilience to future disasters. We stand ready to work with your Administration and Congress on necessary reforms as our collective efforts to rebuild and adapt continue.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions. We are also happy to provide an update on our communities’ progress toward recovery and host Administration leaders for a site visit.

Sincerely,

The Western North Carolina Recovery & Resilience Partnership

**Todd McNeill**  
Chairman, Ashe County

**Matt Wechtel**  
Chairman, Madison County

**Dennis Aldridge**  
Vice Chair, Avery County

**Peter O’Leary**  
Mayor, Town of Chimney Rock

**Carol Pritchett**  
Mayor, Town of Lake Lure

**Brenda Lyerly**  
Mayor, Town of Banner Elk

**Aaron Hayne**  
Mayor, Town of Marshall

**Archie Pertiller**  
Vice Mayor, Town of Black Mountain

**Heather Hockaday**  
Town Manager, Town of Burnsville

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Building Sciences & Fannie Mae. [“Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: 2019 Report.”](#)

**David DiOrio**  
Mayor Pro Tem, Town of Lake  
Lure

**Anthony Sutton**  
Councilmember, Town of  
Waynesville

**Esther Manheimer**  
Mayor, City of Asheville

**Drew Ball**  
Commissioner, Buncombe  
County

**Brandon Rogers**  
Vice Chairman, Haywood  
County

**Zeb Smathers**  
Mayor, Town of Canton

**Pam Snypes**  
Mayor, Town of Old Fort

**Wendy Stancil**  
Alderman, Town of Hot Springs

**Steven Orr**  
Town Manager, Town of Saluda

**Melissa Patton**  
Executive Director, Carolina  
Land and Lakes RC&D

CC:

FEMA Acting Administrator Cameron Hamilton

U.S. Senator Ted Budd

U.S. Senator Thom Tillis

U.S. Representative Chuck Edwards

U.S. Representative Virginia Foxx

U.S. Representative Tim Moore