

United States Senate

August 26, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue Southeast
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

I first want to commend you for the excellent work you have done with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). From securing our nation's borders to coordinating response efforts to natural disasters, DHS's mandate is broad. But under your and President Trump's courageous leadership, DHS has excelled in every respect.

One component of DHS that has particularly shined is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Since you took over DHS, not only has FEMA responded to catastrophic natural disasters in North Carolina, Texas, California, and New Mexico, it has done so in a way that cuts through red tape and streamlines processes. This has allowed FEMA to deliver rapid, efficient, and mission-focused relief in record time.

While relief is often quickly dispatched to states and affected areas as needed, states and local governments often vary in how they manage these resources. For instance, after visiting the Palisades recently with Mr. Spencer Pratt, a wildfire victim who lost his family's home and has been displaced, I witnessed the destruction that the January 2025 wildfires left in their path. I was heartbroken by the wreckage, and I became concerned as people within the Palisades community shared their perspective on how much Los Angeles and California have mismanaged funds that were supposed to be directed to preventing and responding to these wildfires. It has been reported that California in general, and Los Angeles, in particular, have received seemingly endless flows of federal funds from FEMA and other federal agencies for wildfire management, repression, and response. Yet these funds do not appear to have been used wisely.

Natural disasters happen, regardless of state or political party. We should all rally around those who experience calamity through no fault of their own, and those in government have a duty to responsibly manage funds that have been calculated to prevent and respond to these disasters. That does not appear to have been the case in California.

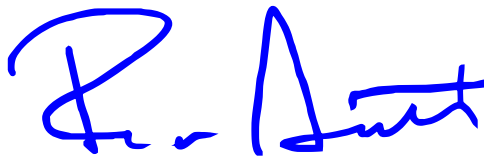
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Accordingly, I have been conducting oversight of the contributing causes of the Palisades fire and the adequacy of the response efforts. To advance that oversight, although I acknowledge your incredibly effective response to the Palisades fire, I write to request an update on the funding that has been allocated to California in the past ten years, starting on September 1, 2015. In particular, how much money has DHS given to California for wildfire response, prevention, and recovery? Are you aware of other sources of disaster-relief funding California has received, including from the United States Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, and other relevant federal agencies or private entities? Additionally, how much money did California receive in response to the Palisades wildfires?

President Trump's Executive Order 14180 established the FEMA Review Council to ensure that FEMA delivers fast, efficient, and targeted relief to those who need it most. You have been selected to spearhead that Council, and I know you share my concern that all taxpayer dollars are spent wisely, transparently, and in the public interest. DHS is, quite literally, a different agency since you took over from the failed leadership of Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and the Biden Administration. Not only has illegal immigration screeched to a halt under your watch, but you have also addressed multiple natural disasters with decisive action and poise. To assist you in your ongoing efforts, I hope that we can shed light on California's waste, mismanagement, and inefficiency in order to foster a more responsive and transparent use of funds by the states. The people of California deserve it, and the American people demand it.

I would be grateful if you could provide an answer to me by September 19, 2025. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", with a stylized, cursive script.

Rick Scott
United States Senator