

JACK REED
RHODE ISLAND

COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS

ARMED SERVICES, RANKING MEMBER

BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

INTELLIGENCE, Ex OFFICIO

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3903

Washington, DC:

728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3903
(202) 224-4642

Rhode Island:

1000 Chapel View Boulevard, Suite 290
Cranston, RI 02920-3074
(401) 943-3100

One Exchange Terrace, Room 408
Providence, RI 02903-1744
(401) 528-5200

1 (800) 284-4200

TDD Relay Rhode Island
1 (800) 745-5555

<https://reed.senate.gov>

May 28, 2025

Mr. David Richardson
Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C St SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Mr. Richardson:

With the 2025 Atlantic hurricane season due to start on June 1, there is increasing doubt that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be able to meet the challenge due to the chaotic leadership of the agency during the first few months of the Trump Administration. To assure stakeholders and the public that FEMA is ready, I urge you to rehire key staff and provide a detailed plan showing how FEMA will operate during what the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts will be an “above normal” hurricane season.

As you know, the American people rely on FEMA for timely, coordinated support to prepare for, respond to, and recover from hurricanes and other major disasters. The agency provides direct financial relief to states, localities, and individuals after a disaster, but it also provides technical expertise and funding to help state and local governments prepare for and manage large scale disasters. Regrettably, because of the Trump Administration’s actions over the last several months, FEMA seems ill-prepared to carry out these responsibilities.

On May 21, *Reuters* reported that the Administration’s abrupt firing of Acting Administrator Cameron Hamilton and the departure of 16 senior FEMA executives have “disrupted the agency’s planning for hurricane season.” *CNN* reported on May 15 that a recent FEMA internal review found that the agency “is not ready” for the start of hurricane season. According to a May 9 *NPR* report, the Administration has fired more than 200 FEMA employees and hundreds more have indicated they are accepting the Administration’s resignation offers. And a May 23 *Washington Post* article notes that FEMA faces a backlog of unprocessed emergency declaration requests from prior storms. These reports inspire little confidence that FEMA is focused on its mission.

With hurricane season just days away, it is essential that FEMA shows that it is properly staffed and that key leadership positions are held by individuals who have had previous experience as emergency managers during major disasters. To that end, I urge you to reinstate the professional staff who have left the agency in recent months and provide a detailed plan showing how FEMA will assist states during major disasters. Additionally, I would caution against adopting any significant changes in FEMA’s processes for approving requests for disaster declarations and disaster assistance without consultation with states, stakeholders, and Congress. Any changes should be the result of a deliberative process, rather than impromptu actions.

Thank you for your attention in this matter, and I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jack Reed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jack" and last name "Reed" clearly distinguishable.

Jack Reed
United States Senator