

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 11, 2025

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

David Richardson  
Senior Official Performing the Duties of  
FEMA Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20427

Dear Secretary Noem and Mr. Richardson:

We are writing to express deep concern over Secretary Noem's policy directive requiring her personal approval for all purchases, grants, and contracts exceeding \$100,000.<sup>1</sup> This policy is impractical, dangerous, and has already reportedly delayed the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) response and recovery efforts to the catastrophic flooding that devastated Texas early last month.<sup>2</sup> This also raises serious concerns about how this will impact ongoing reconstruction projects in Puerto Rico. FEMA routinely handles major contracts and grants worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and imposing top-level sign-off on routine expenditures introduces unnecessary and disruptive bottlenecks. In disaster zones, even brief delays in recovery efforts or the deployment of life-saving resources can be fatal, and this directive risks causing exactly that.

The impact of this directive is especially severe in regions like Puerto Rico, where communities are still recovering from Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and timely access to federal funding is essential for progress. It puts hundreds of projects at risk of missing FEMA-approved completion deadlines, potentially triggering the de-obligation of critical federal funds. Local officials have also raised concerns that cash flow disruptions could delay phased construction payments and drive up costs for municipal governments. These delays will harm local economies by reducing employment, contractor activity, and construction excise tax revenue, further straining local budgets and hindering their ability to deliver vital services.

Although reports of this new policy directive have circulated, we have not received any formal notification from the Department of Homeland Security or FEMA outlining the directive, its implementation guidelines, or the procedural framework. Therefore, we ask that you provide the following documents and respond to the following questions by August 19, 2025:

1. Please provide a copy of the official announcement of this policy, along with any formal agency guidance regarding its implementation.
2. What specific criteria determine which purchases, grants, and contracts require Secretary Noem's approval? Are there any exceptions or thresholds based on disaster severity or urgency?


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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2025/07/10/fema-texas-flooding-dhs-search-rescue/>

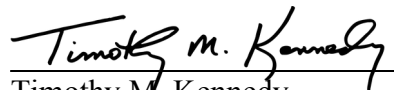
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2025/07/09/politics/fema-texas-flood-noem>


3. What is the expected duration of this directive? Is it temporary, or does DHS intend for it to be a permanent policy?
4. What is the average amount of time it currently takes for Secretary Noem to review and approve a request under this new policy? Please provide data on processing times since its implementation.
5. What measures are DHS and/or FEMA taking to mitigate the delays caused by this additional approval requirement?
6. How will DHS and/or FEMA ensure that local governments and grantees receive timely communication and support throughout this new approval process?
7. Is there a system or platform available for grantees to track the status of requests subject to this new approval process? If so, please provide detailed instructions on how grantees can access and use it.

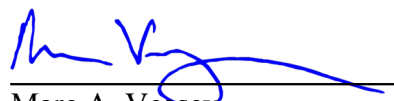
Sincerely,

  
Pablo José Hernández  
Member of Congress

  
Julie Johnson  
Member of Congress

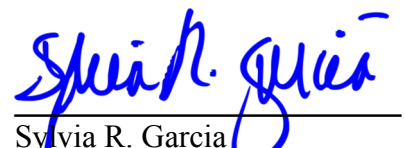
  
Timothy M. Kennedy  
Member of Congress

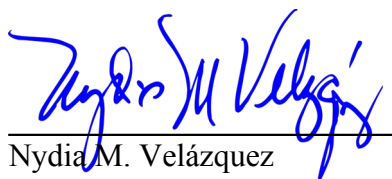
  
Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress

  
Marc A. Veasey  
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Nellie Pou  
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