



# **EXTREME WEATHER & EXTREME CUTS:**

**The Trump Administration's Attack on Our Ability  
to Predict, Prepare for, and Recover from  
Extreme Weather Events**

**April 2025**

**A Report by the Office of  
Senator Edward J. Markey  
(D-Mass.)**

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## I. Summary

Whether it's coastal flooding in the East, wildfires in the West, or droughts in the heartland, extreme weather events are on the rise and are devastating communities across the nation. Yet, instead of taking steps to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of Americans living in the path of destruction fueled by climate change, the Trump administration is cutting and gutting our ability to predict, prepare for, and recover from these disasters.

This report highlights how the Trump administration has attacked and undermined our ability to respond to extreme weather events by halting federal funding, firing federal workers, and dismantling agency programs. In doing so, the Administration has put lives at risk and left communities uninformed, underinvested in, and unprepared for coming disasters.

The report is divided into two sections. The first provides a snapshot of recent extreme weather events and their impacts on communities across the country. The second section shows how this attack on disaster preparedness comes straight out of Project 2025, which gave the Trump administration a detailed roadmap for targeted attacks on agencies that support communities in critical times of need.

Key findings:

- Fueled by the climate crisis, extreme weather events are increasing in both frequency and severity.
- Extreme weather events are not just a price tag; they inflict real damage across the country.
- The Trump administration has undermined the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) mission of helping people before, during, and after disasters by freezing \$10 billion in disaster funding for nonprofits and eliminating \$882 million in federal climate resilience aid that helps communities build disaster-resilient infrastructure.
- The Trump administration has begun dismantling the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) by cutting federal personnel, terminating climate research contracts, undermining its climate and science mission, and directing the agency to promote fossil fuel development.

With climate change fueling more frequent and more intense extreme weather events, we should be investing in preparedness, response, and resilience measures. Instead, the climate-denying Trump administration is dismantling them. We must resist this attack, which threatens a livable future for all.

## II. Close to Home: A Snapshot of Recent Extreme Weather Events

Since 1980, more than 400 weather and climate disaster events have struck the United States, with losses exceeding \$1 billion each. These events include 32 droughts, 45 floods, 9 freeze events, 203 severe storms, 67 tropical cyclones, 23 wildfires, and 24 winter storms. Combined, these events resulted in nearly 17,000 deaths and \$3 trillion in economic damages.<sup>1</sup> Severe weather events such as these not only cause immediate fear, harm, and damage to communities, but also undermine the longer-term resilience of critical infrastructure, weaken local economies, and exacerbate the nation's mental health crisis.

### **Heat waves nationwide**

During the summer of 2024, the majority of the country was either experiencing a heat wave or under a heat advisory.<sup>2</sup> Heat waves are a critical threat to public health, wildlife, and the environment. Heat kills more people in the United States than any other form of extreme weather.<sup>3</sup> Not only can extreme heat lead to human illness, injury, and even death, it can cause mass animal deaths, threaten wildlife, increase the likelihood of wildfires, and lead to water shortages.<sup>4</sup> The 2024 U.S. summer heat waves caused more than 1,000 heat-related deaths.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to an increasing frequency of record-breaking, "once-in-a-generation" events such as heat waves, we are experiencing increasingly severe weather conditions in everyday life:

- NOAA reported that 2024 was the hottest year on record globally, and that the last ten years were the hottest in recorded history.<sup>6</sup>
- For the first time, the global average temperature surpassed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the tipping point recognized in the Paris Climate Agreement as a marker dangerous global warming.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Centers for Environmental Information, *Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters: United States Summary (2025)*, <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Gilbert, *A Heat Wave Not Seen in Decades is Helping to Send Temperatures Soaring for Most Americans*, CNN (June 18, 2024), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/17/weather/heat-wave-east-us-climate-monday/index.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Austyn Gaffney, *Heat Deaths Have Doubled in the U.S. in Recent Decades, Study Finds*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 27, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/27/climate/heat-deaths.html#:~:text=Heat%20kills%20more%20people%20in,deaths%20are%20hard%20to%20track>.

<sup>4</sup> *Over 150 Monkey Deaths Now Linked to Heat Wave in Mexico: 'There are Going to be a Lot of Casualties'*, CBS News (May 28, 2024), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/monkey-deaths-mexico-heat-dehydration/>.

<sup>5</sup> Claire Rush et al., *More Records Expected to Shatter as Long-Running Blanket of Heat Threatens 130 Million in U.S.*, AP (July 6, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/heat-wave-record-temperatures-2ca3046bf74ca596b24a2879d8dcf664>.

<sup>6</sup> *2024 Was the World's Warmest Year on Record*, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Jan. 10, 2025), <https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/temperatures-rising-nasa-confirms-2024-warmest-year-on-record/>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*



## Severe Storms in the Midwest

In the first week of April 2025, a “once-in-a-generation” storm wreaked havoc on communities from Texas to Ohio. The storm was classified as a “rare high risk,” – level 5 out of 5 – due to dangerous winds, torrential rain, and severe flooding.<sup>8</sup> The storm killed at least 19 people, including a 9-year-old boy in Kentucky and a firefighter in Missouri. An estimated one million households were under flood warnings, and in Arkansas, more than 100,000 households were left without power over the weekend.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the National Weather Service (NWS) confirmed nearly 140 tornadoes between April 2 and April 7 in 14 states in the South and Midwest, with 85 of those occurring between April 2 and 3.<sup>10</sup>

Federal programs and services were essential in preparing for and responding to these dangerous storms. NWS provided warnings and alerts to communities in flood zones. Emergency declarations were approved, allowing FEMA to provide resources and support to Arkansas, Kentucky, and Tennessee.<sup>11</sup> As of April 8, 2025, search and rescue efforts were still ongoing and FEMA was conducting damage assessments.

## Wildfires in Los Angeles

In January 2025, wildfires devastated large swaths of Los Angeles, resulting in 30 deaths, nearly 17,000 destroyed structures, and 40,000 burned acres.<sup>12</sup> Property and capital losses are estimated to be between \$76 billion and \$131 billion, with insurance covering only \$45 billion of those losses.<sup>13</sup>

More than 1,800 businesses, which employed 9,600 workers and generated \$1.4 billion in annual sales, were located in the fire zones. The Palisades and Eaton fires affected

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<sup>8</sup> Kenton Gewecke et al., *Once-in-a-generation Storm to Bring Tornadoes, Historic Flooding*, ABC News (Apr. 2, 2025), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/generation-extreme-weather-event-begin-wednesday-tornadoes-flooding/story?id=120404021>.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Erdman, *Early April Tornado Outbreak Spawned EF3s in Five States: Over 130 Twisters Confirmed In South, Midwest*, The Weather Channel (Apr. 11, 2025), <https://weather.com/storms/tornado/news/2025-04-08-tornado-outbreak-early-april-2025-recap-south-midwest>.

<sup>11</sup> *States Respond to Severe Flooding, FEMA Deploys Resources to Support State Efforts*, Federal Emergency Management Agency (Apr. 8, 2025), <https://www.fema.gov/blog/states-respond-severe-flooding-fema-deploys-resources-support-state-efforts>.

<sup>12</sup> *Death Toll from the Wildfires that Tore Through the Los Angeles Area Reaches 30*, AP News (Apr. 3, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/california-wildfires-los-angeles-deaths-75642a4e6cd66a34cbced64c10dd4f3b>; United States Census Bureau, *2025 Los Angeles Wildfires* (Jan. 7, 2025), <https://www.census.gov/topics/preparedness/events/wildfires/2025-los-angeles.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Zhiyun Li & William Yu, *Economic Impact of the Los Angeles Wildfires*, UCLA Anderson School of Management (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/about/centers/ucla-anderson-forecast/economic-impact-los-angeles-wildfires#:~:text=In%20summary%2C%20the%20total%20property,suppression%20efforts%2C%20and%20recovery%20costs>.

60 percent and 40 percent of businesses in those areas, respectively.<sup>14</sup> Business disruptions are estimated to cause up to \$8.9 billion in lost economic output over the next five years.<sup>15</sup>

Altadena, a historically Black neighborhood, faced immense destruction in the Eaton fire. But as of April 2025, authorities had not yet approved any home building permits for approximately 1,500 properties ready for reconstruction, leaving impacted homeowners and residents without clear support or direction.<sup>16</sup>

Under the Biden administration, FEMA provided assistance to individuals and local and state government entities to begin recovery and rebuilding efforts. President Trump, House Speaker Mike Johnson, and other congressional Republicans halted progress on increased disaster aid by politicizing FEMA assistance and suggesting that wildfire recovery funds should be conditioned on changes to California's water policies.<sup>17</sup>

### **Wildfires in Oklahoma**

In March 2025, Oklahoma experienced 130 fires in more than half of its counties, burning 170,000 acres and destroying nearly 300 structures.<sup>18</sup> The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management reported that the fires damaged more than 400 homes, and Oklahoma's health department said at least 200 individuals were injured and four people were killed, including a youth wrestling coach trying to save his son.<sup>19</sup>

In response to these fires, FEMA approved Oklahoma's request for 13 Fire Management Assistance Grants, which provided a lifeline to state and local governments, reimbursing 75 percent of costs and supporting first responders and volunteer fire departments.<sup>20</sup>

### **Hurricane Helene**

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<sup>14</sup> *Impact of 2025: Los Angeles Wildfires and Comparative Study*, Institute for Applied Economics (Feb. 2025), <https://laedc.org/wildfirereport/>.

<sup>15</sup> Sandra McDonald, *Report Estimates up to \$8.9 billion in Lost Economic Output from Palisades, Eaton Fires*, L.A. Times (Feb. 27, 2025), <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2025-02-27/laedc-estimates-up-to-8-9-billion-in-lost-economic-output-from-palisades-eaton-fires>.

<sup>16</sup> Lolita Lopez & Helen Jeong, *'Not Acceptable.' Not a Single Home Building Permit Finalized in Altadena Following Eaton Fire*, NBC Los Angeles (Apr. 7, 2025), <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/altadena-eaton-fire-building-permit-pacific-palisades-palisades-fire/3672886/>.

<sup>17</sup> *Trump Suggests Withholding Federal Aid for California Wildfire Recovery*, Environmental Health News (Jan. 24, 2025), <https://www.ehn.org/trump-suggests-withholding-federal-aid-for-california-wildfire-recovery>.

<sup>18</sup> Robby Korth et al, *Fires Ravage Oklahoma Leading to Disaster Declaration in 12 Counties, Hundreds of Homes Lost*, NPR (Mar. 15, 2025), <https://www.kosu.org/local-news/2025-03-15/fires-ravage-oklahoma-leading-to-disaster-declaration-in-12-counties-hundreds-of-homes-lost>.

<sup>19</sup> Minyvonne Burke, *4 Dead and At Least 200 Injured in Oklahoma Wildfires*, NBC News (Mar. 18, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/weather/wildfires/4-dead-least-200-injured-oklahoma-wildfires-rcna196860>.

<sup>20</sup> Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, *Wildfire Situation Update 3* (Mar. 16, 2025), <https://oklahoma.gov/oem/news/newsroom/wildfire-situation-update-3---march-16-2025.html>.

In September 2024, Hurricane Helene, a catastrophic tropical cyclone, ravaged Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Hurricane Helene killed more than 200 people in one of the costliest storms in U.S. history, with estimated property and infrastructure damages totaling up to \$20 billion.<sup>21</sup>

Between September 26 and 28, 2024, an estimated 16.2 million people lost power due to Hurricane Helene.<sup>22</sup> More than 5,785 National Guardsmen were deployed in southeastern states to assist in recovery efforts. This effort included people on the ground, as well as helicopters, drones, search and rescue teams, and high-water vehicles.<sup>23</sup>

North Carolina, one of the hardest-hit states, experienced more than \$44 billion in direct damage and \$9 billion in indirect damages.<sup>24</sup> Hurricane Helene damaged 73,000 homes, as well as roads and bridges, in more than 6,900 sites. Western North Carolina experienced particularly concentrated damage. Hurricane Helene affected 39 counties that make up 45 percent of the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and host 115,237 businesses eligible for FEMA Individual Assistance. Following Hurricane Helene, impacted counties struggled to recover. Unemployment in the region rose from an average of 3.3 percent in 2023 to 6 to 9 percent within one month of the hurricane.<sup>25</sup> Due to FEMA staffing shortages, the North Carolina Air National Guard was enlisted to deliver more than 100,000 pounds of FEMA supplies to help disaster victims.<sup>26</sup>

The Southeast region is now 2.5 times more likely to experience intense hurricanes than in the pre-climate change past, when one occurred an average of once every 130 years.<sup>27</sup> In addition to an increase in hurricane frequency, climate scientists found that climate change increased Hurricane Helene's intensity, where rainfall and wind strength

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<sup>21</sup> John Rafferty, *Hurricane Helene*, Britannica (Apr. 9, 2025), <https://www.britannica.com/event/Hurricane-Helene>.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Hagen et al., *National Hurricane Center Tropical Cyclone Report: Hurricane Helene*, National Hurricane Center (Apr. 8, 2025), [https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/data/tcr/AL092024\\_Helene.pdf](https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/data/tcr/AL092024_Helene.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Press Release, Statement From Pentagon Press Secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder on DOD Support to Hurricane Helene Response Efforts, Department of Defense (Sept. 30, 2024), <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3921723/statement-from-pentagon-press-secretary-maj-gen-pat-ryder-on-dod-support-to-hur/>.

<sup>24</sup> *Hurricane Helene Recovery*, Office of State Budget and Management (Dec. 13, 2024), <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/hurricane-helene-dna/open>.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> Jesse Ferrell, *Helene is 2nd-deadliest U.S. Hurricane in 50 years, Could Cost \$250 Billion*, Accuweather (Oct. 1, 2024), <https://www.accuweather.com/en/hurricane/helene-is-2nd-deadliest-u-s-hurricane-in-50-years-could-cost-250-billion/1698452>.

<sup>27</sup> Alexa St. John, *Climate Change Boosted Helene's deadly rain and wind and scientists say same is likely for Milton*, AP News (Oct. 9, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/climate-change-hurricane-helene-science-fatalities-8a0d4f072669fd1d0031a23d7fc4b29c>.

being approximately 10 percent stronger than a similar storm would have been in the pre-climate change past.<sup>28</sup>

## Floods in Massachusetts and Vermont

In recent years, Massachusetts and Vermont have experienced several devastating floods. Severe flood events in the region are expected to become more frequent and more intense due to climate change, exacerbating existing flood damage in the region.<sup>29</sup>

In July 2023, remnants of Hurricane Beryl struck Vermont with severe rain and flooding, creating more than \$1 billion in response, recovery, and social support costs.<sup>30</sup> Several rivers peaked at record levels, exceeding some set by Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.<sup>31</sup> There were two confirmed deaths from the flood, and more than 100 people rescued by swift-water.<sup>32</sup>

In September 2023, a devastating flash flood in Worcester County, Massachusetts resulted in \$39 million in public infrastructure damage. During the storm, the Barrett Park Dam breached, creating \$1.8 million in repair costs. Dozens of bridges and residential homes were also damaged. Between early July and mid-September 2023, Massachusetts was inundated with rainfall beyond the normal amount. According to the National Climate Assessment, in the Northeast, storms with extreme precipitation have increased about 60 percent since the 1950s.<sup>33</sup>

In December 2023, intense rain and wind blew through Massachusetts, killing an individual and leaving almost 300,000 homes and businesses across the state without power. Downed wires posed an electrical hazard to people touching electrified trees and

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<sup>28</sup> Raymond Zhong, *Global Warming Made Helene More Menacing, Researchers Say*, N.Y. Times (Oct. 9, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/09/climate/hurricane-helene-climate-change.html#:~:text=After%20analyzing%20Helene%2C%20an%20international,around%202.3%20degrees%20Fahrenheit%20warmer>.

<sup>29</sup> Peter D'auria, *Vermont's Flooding This Week is Historic. What Role Did Climate Change Play?*, Vermont Digger (July 12, 2023), <https://vtdigger.org/2023/07/12/vermonts-flooding-this-week-is-historic-what-role-did-climate-change-play/>.

<sup>30</sup> Press Release, Governor Phil Scott Announces Plan to Expedite Over \$100 Million in Available Mitigation Project Funding to Communities Impacted by 2023 Flooding (Feb. 21, 2024), <https://governor.vermont.gov/press-release/governor-phil-scott-announces-plan-expedite-over-100-million-available-mitigation#:~:text=The%20flooding%20that%20devastated%20Vermont,federal%20government%20following%20the%20storm>.

<sup>31</sup> *Vermont Flood of July 2023 Data*, United States Geological Survey, <https://www.sciencebase.gov/catalog/item/66168047d34e7eb9eb7d61c8> (last visited Apr. 10, 2025).

<sup>32</sup> *2 killed in Vermont Flooding Brought on by Beryl's Remnants*, CBS News (Jul. 11, 2024), <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/hurricane-beryl-remnants-vermont-flooding-deaths/>.

<sup>33</sup> Erin Douglas, *As Climate Change Soaks New England, Flash Flooding is Costing Cities*, Boston Globe (Feb. 26, 2024), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/02/26/science/financial-burden-weather-disasters-new-england/?event=event12>.



water. High winds led to more than 100 canceled and 375 delayed flights out of Logan International Airport, and the state grappled with flooded roads and school closures.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Rain and Wind Whip Through New England, Leaving 2 Dead and Hundreds of Thousands Without Power*, WBUR (Dec. 18, 2023), <https://www.wbur.org/news/2023/12/18/power-outages-massachusetts-storm-impacts>.

### III. Extreme Cuts: Trump's Dismantling of Disaster Aid

**It's easy to cut what you don't care about.** The Trump administration has made it clear that it does not care about the health and safety of the American people. It is taking a chainsaw to the lifesaving, resilience-building programs and services provided by FEMA, NOAA, and other agencies. Without sufficient federal resources or personnel in place, state and local governments will be left to fend for themselves when disaster strikes.

Cuts to disaster preparedness and relief funding and staffing have nothing to do with eliminating fraud, waste, or abuse. They have everything to do with destroying the systems that keep our families and communities healthy and safe in the face of extreme weather events turbocharged by climate change.

Donald Trump isn't working alone; he's following a script delivered to him by the wealthy, industry-backed architects of the Project 2025 agenda.

#### Project 2025: Trump's Playbook for Cuts and Chaos

Project 2025 is a product of conservative groups that outlines policy proposals to dismantle federal government programs and services in the name of cost-cutting and efficiency. Below are direct quotes from Project 2025 describing its goals and what communities should brace for during the second Trump administration.<sup>35</sup>

#### **FEMA**

- ☐ **Raise the per capita threshold for disaster damage to make it harder for communities to qualify for public assistance**

*"Under the Stafford Act, FEMA has the authority to adjust the per capita indicator for damages, which creates a threshold under which states and localities are not eligible for public assistance. FEMA should raise the threshold because the per capita indicator has not kept pace with inflation, and this over time has effectively lowered the threshold for public assistance and caused FEMA's resources to be stretched perilously thin."*

- ☐ **Reduce the percent the federal government pays for disasters**

*"Congress should change the cost-share arrangement so that the federal government covers 25 percent of the costs for small disasters with the cost share reaching a maximum of 75 percent for truly catastrophic disasters."*

- ☐ **Privatize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)**

*"The NFIP should be wound down and replaced with private insurance starting with the least risky areas currently identified by the program."*

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<sup>35</sup> *Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise*, Project 2025 (2023), [https://static.project2025.org/2025\\_MandateForLeadership\\_FULL.pdf](https://static.project2025.org/2025_MandateForLeadership_FULL.pdf).

❑ **Eliminate climate resiliency and disaster preparedness grants**

*“Since 2002, DHS/FEMA have provided more than \$56 billion in preparedness grants for state, local, tribal, and territorial governments. For FY 2023, President Biden requested more than \$3.5 billion for federal assistance grants...DHS should not be in the business of handing out federal tax dollars: These grants should be terminated.”*

❑ **Tie disaster funding to immigration**

*“The next Administration should take steps to restore lawfulness and integrity to the department’s massive regimen of federal grant programs, most of which are managed and distributed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Secretary should direct FEMA to ensure that all FEMA-issued grant funding for states, localities, and private organizations is going to recipients who are lawful actors, can demonstrate that they are in compliance with federal law, and can show that their mission and actions support the broader homeland security mission. All applicants and potential recipients of such grant funding should be required to meet certain preconditions for eligibility (except for receipt of post-disaster or nonhumanitarian funding) or should simply be considered ineligible for funding.”*

## **NOAA**

❑ **Dismantle NOAA**

*“The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) should be dismantled and many of its functions eliminated, sent to other agencies, privatized, or placed under the control of states and territories.”*

❑ **Privatize the National Weather Service**

*“The NWS provides data the private companies use and should focus on its data-gathering services. Because private companies rely on these data, the NWS should fully commercialize its forecasting operations...The NWS should be a candidate to become a Performance-Based Organization to better enforce organizational focus on core functions such as efficient delivery of accurate, timely, and unbiased data to the public and to the private sector.”*

❑ **Downsize NOAA’s Office of Atmospheric Research**

*“OAR provides theoretical science, as opposed to the applied science of the National Hurricane Center. OAR is, however, the source of much of NOAA’s climate alarmism. The preponderance of its climate-change research should be disbanded....[t]hese operations should be reviewed with an aim of consolidation and reduction of bloat.”*

## **Federal Emergency Management Agency**

FEMA is the nation's primary disaster relief agency, whose mission is to help people before, during, and after disasters. To reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards, it coordinates federal responses to disasters, provides assistance to individuals and communities, and makes resources available to state and local governments to improve mitigation and resilience planning for future severe weather events. Funding and assistance from FEMA fill critical gaps in state and local disaster planning, making FEMA particularly important to under-resourced communities that struggle to rebuild public infrastructure damaged by disasters.

### **Tying Disaster Funding to Immigration**

At the end of March 2025, FEMA halted \$10 billion in disaster aid to nonprofits so that it could review whether the funding supports undocumented migrants.<sup>36</sup> This freeze will delay the distribution of aid to disaster-stricken communities in recovery. Nonprofits play a critical role in ensuring that FEMA funding flows to communities and households; these organizations often fill gaps in under-resourced local governments. The blocked funding would have allowed nonprofits to rebuild their own facilities and provide services such as short-term housing to disaster survivors.<sup>37</sup>

### **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)**

FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) is one of its most effective and popular grant programs. The program is one of the few to employ a proactive approach to disaster preparedness by providing funding and technical assistance to projects that reduce hazard risks. Without it, as communities nationwide endure fires, floods, storms, and more year-round that are turbocharged by the climate crisis, communities will be less prepared for the next disaster.

On April 4, 2025, FEMA announced it would be ending the BRIC program and canceling all BRIC applications from Fiscal Years 2020-2023.<sup>38</sup> Approximately \$882 million in funding congressionally authorized for BRIC by the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* will be removed; it would have funded 656 BRIC sub-applications. More than 160 communities and tribes will also be losing access to non-financial, direct technical assistance that would have helped build local resilience.

Cancelled funding includes:

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<sup>36</sup> *FEMA freezes \$10 billion in disaster aid for nonprofits amid immigration review*, Environmental Health News (Apr. 1, 2025),

<https://www.ehn.org/fema-freezes-10-billion-in-disaster-aid-for-nonprofits-amid-immigration-review>.

<sup>37</sup> *Id.*

<sup>38</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency, *FEMA Ends Wasteful, Politicized Grant Program, Returning Agency to Core Mission of Helping Americans Recovering from Natural Disaster* (Apr. 4, 2025),

<https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20250404/fema-ends-wasteful-politicized-grant-program-returning-agency-core-mission>.

- \$55.7 million for 129 projects to adopt and enforce hazard-resistant building codes;
- \$395 million for 28 projects to eliminate or reduce flood damage; and
- \$237 million for 30 utility and infrastructure protection projects. Examples include projects that would elevate pumping stations, enhance power poles, strengthen water towers, and floodproof utility plants.<sup>39</sup>

*In Massachusetts, \$126 million in BRIC funds are at risk.*

These cuts do not save money; they force state and local governments to foot a bill they can't afford. These cuts abandon communities and leave them without federal dollars needed to invest in disaster-proof infrastructure.

### **Staff Cuts**

Since January 2025, more than 200 probationary FEMA employees have been fired, adding to the existing 35 percent shortage in necessary staffing reported in 2022.<sup>40</sup> This creates a higher probability of burnout and turnover among remaining employees. Further workforce cuts are anticipated. In early April 2025, the Department of Homeland Security released a memo offering to “buy out” employees that choose to resign or retire by mid-April.<sup>41</sup>

### **Additional Cuts**

The Trump administration has also taken the following actions:

- In January 2025, Trump issued an executive order to establish a National Review Council, which will ultimately gut FEMA and force states to shoulder a greater role in disaster response without providing additional resources to increase their capacity.<sup>42</sup>
- Disbanded FEMA's National Advisory Committee and Technical Mapping Advisory Council, reducing measures of accountability and the use of peer-reviewed science in agency decision-making.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Department of Homeland Security, *President Biden Announces \$1 Billion in Project Selections to Make Communities More Resilient to Climate Change and Natural Hazards Through His Investing in America Agenda* (July 2, 2024), <https://www.dhs.gov/archive/news/2024/07/02/president-biden-announces-1-billion-project-selections-make-communities-more>.

<sup>40</sup> Gabe Gutierrez & Susan Kroll, *How FEMA cuts are spreading far beyond Washington*, NBC News (Mar. 10, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/fema-cuts-are-spreading-far-washington-rcna195708>.

<sup>41</sup> Rebecca Santana, *New offers for buyouts and early retirement offered to Homeland Security staff*, AP (Apr. 8, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/homeland-security-voluntary-resignations-layoffs-workers-workforce-008a66a4a1f6d3d2976f647c0ed7124f>.

<sup>42</sup> The White House, *COUNCIL TO ASSESS THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY*, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/council-to-assess-the-federal-emergency-management-agency/>.

<sup>43</sup> *Rollback: FEMA Disbanded National Advisory Council*, Harvard Law School (Jan. 24, 2025), <https://eelp.law.harvard.edu/tracker/fema-announced-membership-of-the-national-advisory-council/>.



- Dismantled the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, which protects public buildings such as schools and libraries from flooding.<sup>44</sup>
- Ordered an unprompted and unjustified agency-wide freeze on federal grants, including funds for emergency preparedness and firefighting.<sup>45</sup>
- Illegally rescinded \$80 million in congressional-appropriated FEMA funding from New York City bank accounts.<sup>46</sup>
- Removed FEMA's Future Risk Index for its mention of "climate," which projected economic losses from severe weather events.<sup>47</sup>
- Ordered regional staff to halt implementation of the Public Assistance Mitigation Cost Share Incentives Policy, which directs additional cost share funding to states that invest in mitigation and building resilience post-disaster.<sup>48</sup>

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

NOAA provides critical services to American households, institutions, and industries. It conducts the research, observation, and data collection that enables reliable weather forecasting and fuels advances in our understanding of the Earth and its many ecosystems, facilitating our care and responsibility for the climate. NOAA has a unique mandate and set of tools that allow it to produce long-term atmospheric and oceanic scientific data for the public good.

NOAA houses the NWS, whose data is the foundation for all weather forecasts in the United States and is used by TV forecasters, private companies, emergency response organizations, and many others. Between 2010 and 2024, NWS issued extreme weather alerts that impacted all 3,144 counties nationwide a whopping 3.7 million times.

### **Dismantling NOAA**

On April 11, 2025, E&E News reported significant funding cuts and organizational changes to NOAA's structure through an Office of Management and Budget

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<sup>44</sup> Christopher Flavelle, *FEMA Quietly Eases Rules Meant to Protect Buildings in Flood Zones*, N.Y. Times (Feb. 14, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/14/climate/fema-quietly-eases-rules-meant-to-protect-buildings-in-flood-zones.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Johnathan Allen, *FEMA official ignores judge's latest order, demands freeze on grant funding*, NBC News (Feb. 11, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/fema-official-ignores-judge-order-freeze-grant-funding-rcna191674>.

<sup>46</sup> *Statement from NYC Comptroller Lander on the Trump Administration's Illegal Reversal of FEMA Funding*, Office of the New York City Comptroller (Feb. 12, 2025), <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/statement-from-nyc-comptroller-lander-on-the-trump-administrations-illegal-reversal-of-fema-funding/>.

<sup>47</sup> Kristin Toussaint, *Trump removed an online tool that predicts your climate risk. Rogue data scientists rebuilt it*, Fast Company (Mar. 11, 2025), <https://www.fastcompany.com/91294411/trump-removed-an-online-tool-that-predicts-your-climate-risk-rogue-data-scientists-rebuilt-it>.

<sup>48</sup> Ellen Gilmer & Kellie Lunney, *FEMA Freezes Disaster Resilience Policy as Agency Narrows Work*, Bloomberg (Apr. 9, 2025), <https://www.bgov.com/next/news/SUGO8BDWLU68?niReferrerLink=email>.

memorandum, dismantling the agency's core duties and functions.<sup>49</sup> It will force "significant reductions to education, grants, research, and climate-related programs within NOAA" and gut the agency's regulatory and administrative responsibilities. The memorandum's directives would weaken NOAA's climate and science mission and direct the agency to promote fossil fuel development.

The memorandum:

- Eliminates the Office of Atmospheric Research (OAR). OAR is NOAA's primary climate, weather, and oceans research arm. OAR is the scientific foundation for our understanding of Earth's complex systems. It enables accurate weather forecasting and disaster planning and informs environmental and climate policy decisions at every level of government and across every sector.
- Cuts NOAA's operations, research, and facilities budget by 38 percent.
- Transfers the National Marine Fisheries Service's regulatory duties to the Fish and Wildlife Service, which will weaken science-based regulation of endangered species and fishing activities.
- Guts NOAA's space weather mission and moves it to the Department of Homeland Security.
- Eliminates funding for coastal protection and management programs
- Eliminates funding for the National Sea Grant program, a popular and successful fellowship program that has built a workforce pipeline for ocean scientists to pursue careers in administration and policymaking.
- Orders a "major overhaul" to halve the life cycle costs and reduce the mission scope of NOAA's Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites, a program that provides space weather, atmospheric and ocean observation data to fuel weather, climate, and environmental research. The satellites also collect information on atmospheric pollution, which informs our understanding of climate change.
- Ends support for the Regional Climate Data and Information, Climate Competitive Research, and National Oceanic Partnership Programs.
- Shifts NOAA priorities towards fossil fuel production by ordering National Marine Fisheries Service to "prioritize permitting and consultation activities in order to support Administration priorities and unleash American energy" <sup>50</sup>
- Eliminates habitat conservation and restoration, species recovery efforts and interjurisdictional grants
- Eliminates "all funding for climate, weather and ocean laboratories and cooperative institutes housed primarily at major research universities."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Daniel Cusick et al., *White House outlines plan to gut NOAA, smother climate research*, E&E News (Apr. 11, 2025), <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2025/04/11/white-house-outlines-plan-to-gut-noaa-smother-climate-research-00286408>.

<sup>50</sup> *Id.*

<sup>51</sup> *Id.*

NOAA is the scientific powerhouse of the federal government. By gutting longstanding, successful programs and removing key regulatory and administrative duties, the Trump administration is eliminating science and fact from federal decision-making and policy. The dismantling of NOAA will also gut vital research programs across universities, research centers, and private industry that work in collaboration with the agency.

Efforts to eliminate the entirety of NOAA climate research have reportedly already begun. These actions further exemplify the administration's blatant dishonesty. During Commerce Secretary Lutnick's confirmation hearing, he pledged—under oath—not take steps to dismantle NOAA.

Russ Vought, Director of the OMB, authored the NOAA portion of Project 2025, which proposes breaking up NOAA and ending its work on climate.<sup>52</sup>

### **Intimidation, Attacks, and Chaos**

NOAA has been the target of illegal and chaotic attacks by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), leaving NOAA employees, contractors, and partners demoralized and uncertain about their futures.

In early February, DOGE staff entered NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland in an attempt to intimidate staff and gain access to agency data and IT systems.<sup>53</sup> These DOGE agents possessed little to no qualifications in any relevant field, and gained unvetted, unfettered access to NOAA data, including sensitive data held by NWS. This caused a serious cybersecurity breach and may have violated the U.S. Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

The Trump administration has also announced several actions, many of which were later cancelled or reversed, contributing to the existing uncertainty felt by NOAA employees.

### **Contract and Grant Reviews, Freezes, and Terminations**

On April 9, 2025, National Public Radio reported that the Secretary of Commerce will now personally review all NOAA actions for contracts worth more than \$100,000. This has created a significant backlog in contract reviews and has already led to lapses or near-lapses in contracts covering a wide range of essential services – from facility maintenance and contract personnel to emergency alert translation services and web hosting agreements for critical weather data.<sup>54</sup> Contract lapses for data servers and web hosting agreements present a particularly dire risk for the massive amounts of critical

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<sup>52</sup> *Id.*

<sup>53</sup> Eric Katz, *DOGE enters NOAA, accesses IT systems and removes the top HR official*, Government Executive (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/02/doge-enters-noaa-accesses-it-systems-and-removes-top-hr-official/402776/>.

<sup>54</sup> Alejandra Borunda, *NOAA contracts are being reviewed one by one. It's throwing the agency into chaos*, NPR (Apr. 9, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/04/09/nx-s1-5356166/noaa-contracts-reviewed-one-by-one>.

data collected, stored, and used for weather forecast modeling and longer-term climate, atmospheric, and oceanic research.

As of April 8, 2025, the Administration has terminated, partially terminated, or reviewed 39 NOAA contracts.<sup>55</sup> These include:

- A NWS contract for an organizational climate assessment.
- An OAR contract with the National Academy of Sciences for a study on drought and climate change.
- A contract to support NOAA's Nursing Mother Program.
- Multiple OAR contracts with universities and university consortiums, including University of Illinois, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and Columbia University.

NOAA's grants are also at significant risk for termination. On March 31, 2025, the Department of Commerce updated its Federal Financial Assistance Manual to justify the termination of grants that do not align with Administration priorities.<sup>56</sup> On April 8, 2025, the Department utilized this new justification for the first time, terminating over \$4 million in funding for climate and atmospheric modeling.<sup>57</sup>

## Office Closures

In March 2025, DOGE announced it would be cancelling 19 leases for NOAA offices and facilities. The status of lease cancellations remains unclear. The list of cancellations includes offices that support nationwide weather forecasting services and NOAA Fisheries offices.<sup>58</sup>

Regional NWS and NOAA Fisheries offices provide critical services to the communities in which they are located. Without these federal outposts, emergency response personnel and community members will be less prepared for severe weather events and local fishermen will no longer receive alerts about hazardous ocean conditions that present life-threatening risks.

## Cuts to Staff

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<sup>55</sup> *Savings*, Department of Government Efficiency, <https://doge.gov/savings> (last visited Apr. 10, 2025).

<sup>56</sup> Department of Commerce Federal Financial Assistance Manual, pg. 60 (Oct. 1, 2024, IC March 31, 2025), <https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Federal%20Financial%20Assistance%20Manual%202024%20C1%20dated%20March%2031%2C%202025.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Press Release, Department of Commerce, Ending Cooperative Agreements' Funding to Princeton University (Apr. 8, 2025), <https://www.commerce.gov/news/press-releases/2025/04/ending-cooperative-agreements-funding-princeton-university>.

<sup>58</sup> Adam Kemp, *As NOAA braces for more cuts, scientists say public safety is at risk*, PBS (Mar. 14, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/as-noaa-braces-for-more-cuts-scientists-say-public-safety-is-at-risk#:~:text=The%20Project%202025%20plan's%20four,radar%20center%2C%20will%20remain%20operational>.

In order to comply with the Trump administration's workforce reduction orders, NOAA plans to cut 20 percent of its total workforce. Some NOAA offices are already down 40 percent in personnel.

When the Trump administration plan to fire more than 1,000 NOAA employees leaked to the press in early March, it did not include reductions in NWS operations or maintenance support. Further developments saw the loss of more than 100 NWS employees despite the administration denying that these cuts would occur. Many of the initial terminations included individuals from the NWS "Pathways" program, whose positions were later reinstated. This added to the chaos caused by removing highly qualified early career professionals at an already understaffed agency.<sup>59</sup>

Also at risk are contractor personnel, who comprise around 25 percent of the NWS workforce.<sup>60</sup> The potential for contract lapses or terminations because of the Secretary of Commerce review plan will lead to further staff reductions with little to no notice or warning.<sup>61</sup>

Currently, nearly half of NWS forecast offices have 20 percent vacancy rates. Eight of these forecast offices are missing 35 percent of their staff, including offices in Arkansas and Kentucky where tornadoes and devastating storms have ravaged communities. According to experts, vacancy rates of 20 percent or higher are considered critical understaffing, and 55 of the 122 NOAA forecast offices meet that threshold.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to alarming vacancy rates, 23 forecast offices do not have a meteorologist-in-charge, and 16 do not have a crucial warning coordination meteorologist – an essential role responsible for ensuring that emergency officials and the public are prepared for imminent severe weather events.<sup>63</sup>

Widespread firings of NOAA staff also include:

- The sole air quality forecaster in the Environmental Modeling Center under NWS, which could cause complete suspension or termination of the program.

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<sup>59</sup> Joey Garrison, *NOAA layoffs today: 1,000 employees laid off; workforce shrinks by 20%*, USA Today (Mar. 12, 2025), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/03/12/noaa-layoffs-trump-federal-government-cuts/82305736007/>.

<sup>60</sup> Report to Congress Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives on Use of Contractors at the National Weather Service (June 23, 2022) <https://www.weather.gov/media/cfo/Weather-Act-Update-June23-2022.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> Alejandra Borunda, *NOAA contracts are being reviewed one by one. It's throwing the agency into chaos*, NPR (Apr. 9, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/04/09/nx-s1-5356166/noaa-contracts-reviewed-one-by-one>.

<sup>62</sup> Seth Borenstein, *Nearly half of National Weather Service offices are critically understaffed, experts warn*, PBS (Apr. 4, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/nearly-half-of-national-weather-service-offices-are-critically-understaffed-experts-warn>.

<sup>63</sup> *Id.*



- Probationary employees and forecasters at the Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC), who were fired without just cause. These firings will significantly degrade our ability to forecast disruptive and destructive weather events.

Former NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad warned of the dire consequences of drastic staff cuts at NWS, explaining that *“any reduction in staffing at a weather forecast office will result in either delays in the forecast being issued, and watches and warnings as well, or an erosion of quality. It wouldn’t surprise me at all if at the end of the season we’ve gone back by a few years – maybe a decade – in terms of capability.”*<sup>64</sup>

Since January, the Trump administration has also:

- Reduced weather balloon launches across six locations in the United States and temporarily suspended launches at two locations.<sup>65</sup> Weather balloons collect atmospheric data that contributes to short-term forecasting of weather events such as severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, and heavy snowfall. Reducing their use undermines the accuracy and reliability of weather forecasts.
- Paused NWS severe weather alerts in Spanish and other languages, putting non-English speaking populations – often including vulnerable groups such as migrants – at greater risk of missing life-saving warning about severe weather events.<sup>66</sup>
- Permanently suspended monthly calls that brief reporters, a long-standing practice that provided updates on changing climate conditions. These briefings had continued under previous administrations, including during the first Trump administration and the George W. Bush administration.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Mary Gilbert & Ella Nielsen, *4 ways forecasts are about to get worse*, CNN (Apr. 4, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/04/weather/forecasts-worse-trump-cuts/index.html>.

<sup>65</sup> Andrew Freedman, *NOAA cuts more key weather data gathering after layoffs*, Axios (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/03/21/nws-layoffs-cuts-weather-balloons-forecasts>.

<sup>66</sup> Adam Kemp, *National Weather Service pauses severe weather alerts in Spanish and other languages*, PBS (Apr. 24, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/national-weather-service-pauses-severe-weather-alerts-in-spanish-and-other-languages>.

<sup>67</sup> Andrew Freedman, *Scoop: NOAA monthly media calls on climate change suspended*, Axios (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/03/13/noaa-cancels-global-warming-briefings-cuts>.

## **Trump's Attacks on Other Agencies**

### **The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the government agency responsible for protecting and improving the health and well-being of Americans. This includes protecting and improving public health and civil rights in health care.

The climate crisis is also a health and safety crisis. The intersecting effects of the climate crisis, social and economic inequality, gaps in health care access, and lack of worker power are making people and the planet sick. Since 2024, 14 out of 18 declared public health emergencies were related to climate-related weather events, hurricanes, and wildfires.<sup>68</sup>

The Trump administration has taken deliberate steps to weaken HHS's ability to respond to climate change. In early February 2025, the Administration shuttered the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity (OCCHE), deleting its webpage and placing its staff on administrative leave. The Biden administration created OCCHE in 2021 to address greenhouse gas emissions from the health sector and to facilitate interagency coordination to address the impacts of climate change on public health.<sup>69</sup>

At the National Institutes of Health (NIH), staff received guidance that the NIH would no longer fund work on the health effects of climate change.<sup>70</sup> The Administration also terminated support for several key programs, including the Climate Change and Health Initiative, Climate Change and Health Research Coordinating Center, and the Climate Health Scholars Program.<sup>71</sup>

In the first week of April, the Trump administration effectively eliminated the Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice at the Centers for Disease Control by firing the entirety of its 200 person staff. The division was responsible for addressing air pollution, climate change, lead poisoning, and cancer clusters.<sup>72</sup> The Administration also cut 870 positions from National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) - more than half its workforce of 1,300. NIOSH oversees occupational health protections

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<sup>68</sup> Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response, *Declarations of a Public Health Emergency*, <https://aspr.hhs.gov/legal/PHE/pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>69</sup> Ariel Wittenberg, *Trump Administration Shuttters Climate Health Office*, Scientific American (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/trump-administration-closes-climate-health-office/>.

<sup>70</sup> Annie Waldman and Sharon Lerner, *NIH Ends Future Funding to Study the Health Effects of Climate Change*, ProPublica (March 24, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/nih-funding-climate-change-public-health>.

<sup>71</sup> David Corn, RFK Jr., *Onetime Environmentalist, Kills NIH Climate Change Programs*, Mother Jones (Feb. 19, 2025), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/02/robert-f-kennedy-jr-climate-change-health-national-institutes-of-health-ken-callahan/>.

<sup>72</sup> Rachel Frazin, *CDC cuts environmental health employees*, The Hill (Apr. 3, 2025), <https://thehill.com/newsletters/energy-environment/5231209-cdc-cuts-environmental-health-employees/>.

for workers, including firefighters facing an increasing number of blazes throughout the year.<sup>73</sup>

## **The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

HUD works to improve access to affordable housing, promotes fair housing practices, supports homeownership opportunities, and supports community development. HUD also invests in efforts that ensure safe, resilient housing. HUD provides assistance through incentives, credits, guarantees, and subsidies, and supports local and state housing agencies in building and maintaining affordable housing.

HUD is the nation's primary federal agency that oversees public housing, which is home for 1.7 million Americans. A majority of public housing residents are Black and brown renters and 24 percent of residents are disabled.<sup>74</sup>

Public housing in America is in a dire state—there is currently a \$26 billion nationwide backlog in deferred maintenance.<sup>75</sup> This backlog presents serious health and safety risks to individuals and families, who often face compounded structural burdens - especially as severe weather events become more frequent and intense due to climate change.

Many public housing residents also lack access to proper heating and cooling – essential, life-saving protections as extreme heat and cold grow more prolonged and severe each year. Many public housing facilities in the U.S. were built before central HVAC was common—as a result, residents are forced to purchase their own air conditioning units, which can be a financially crippling decision as units drive up energy bills.<sup>76</sup> Families should not have to sacrifice their pocketbook for health and comfort.

The Trump administration has reportedly proposed cutting at least half of HUD's workforce. The proposal includes:

- Half of staff in the HUD office that administers vouchers, public housing, and Native American housing programs. These programs help 7 million people afford housing;
- 44 percent of staff in the office the administers the project-based rental assistance program that serves 2 million people.

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<sup>73</sup> Meg Tirrell, 'A huge impact on worker safety': Protection for miners, firefighters in jeopardy after CDC cuts, CNN (Apr. 6, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/06/health/cdc-niosh-cuts-safety/index.html>.

<sup>74</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, *Assisted Housing: National and Local*, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/assthsg.html>.

<sup>75</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development Exchange, *Rental Assistance Demonstration*, <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/rad/>.

<sup>76</sup> Jennifer Ludden, *As heat waves intensify, more public housing residents may get help with AC bills*, NPR (July 4 2024), <https://www.npr.org/2024/07/04/nx-s1-5029544/hud-heat-waves-public-housing-residents-ac-bills>.

- 77 percent of staff that enforce fair housing laws.<sup>77</sup>

The Trump administration also plans to reduce the workforce of HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development by 84 percent. The Office administers the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program, which provides resources for communities to rebuild homes and recover after severe weather events.<sup>78</sup>

Staff cuts to HUD programs that provide life sustaining assistance and build housing resilience for Americans everywhere is an attack on public health and safety. When severe weather hits, families deserve to feel safe and secure in their homes.

### **The U.S. Forest Service (USFS)**

USFS manages more than 190 million acres of land — helping to facilitate the nearly 160 million visitors who use the national forests annually — while supporting local forestry agencies and conserving the land.<sup>79</sup> USFS also works closely with other federal and state agencies and local partners to handle wildfires.

In February 2025, the Forest Service fired approximately 3,400 probationary employees across the agency, including an employee from Louisiana who was helping restore land affected by recent hurricanes.<sup>80</sup> While frontline firefighters, law enforcement, or meteorologists were not included in the February terminations, the administration did fire 700 "red card" employees —staff certified to fight fire but whose full-time work is something else—on February 14.<sup>81</sup>

Recent reports indicate the Trump administration is expected to reorganize the USFS, consolidating nine regional offices into three offices<sup>82</sup> The administration is also expected to cut staff, including probationary employees who were just fired and reinstated.

USFS also oversees the Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program (UCFGP), which historically has provided up to \$40 million annually to support states and

<sup>77</sup> Will Fischer, *DOGE-Driven HUD Cuts Will Make It Harder for People to Afford Housing, Exit Homelessness*, Center on Budget Policy and Priorities (Mar. 11, 2025), <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/doge-driven-hud-cuts-will-make-it-harder-for-people-to-afford-housing-exit-homelessness>.

<sup>78</sup> Christopher Flavelle, *Trump Team Plans Deep Cuts at Office That Funds Recovery From Big Disasters*, N. Y. Times (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/20/climate/trump-cuts-hud-disaster-recovery.html>.

<sup>79</sup> *About the Agency*, United States Forest Service, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/meet-forest-service> (last visited Apr. 10, 2025).

<sup>80</sup> Andrew Hay, *U.S. Forest Service fires 3,400 workers, Park Service cuts 1,000*, Reuters (Feb. 14, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-forest-service-fires-3400-workers-park-service-cuts-1000-2025-02-14/>.

<sup>81</sup> Bill Hutchinson, *Fired US Forest Service and National Park Service workers say cuts will be felt on fire lines*, ABC News (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-forest-service-fires-3400-workers-park-service-cuts-1000-2025-02-14/>; Mark Olalde, *Trump Said Cuts Wouldn't Affect Public Safety. Then He Fired Hundreds of Workers Who Help Fight Wildfires*, ProPublica (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-doge-cuts-forest-service-firefighting>.

<sup>82</sup> Jordan Wolman & Marcia Brown, *Trump administration plans sharp cuts at Forest Service*, E&E News (Apr. 3, 2025), <https://www.eenews.net/articles/trump-administration-plans-sharp-cuts-at-forest-service/>.

organizations that work to improve and maintain urban and community trees, forests, and green spaces. These urban forests offer essential benefits: they reduce energy bills by mitigating extreme heat, raise property values, provide more than 500,000 good-paying jobs, improve mental health, offer shade, and help manage stormwater.

Despite Trump officials' support for replanting trees in the first Trump administration, this administration has terminated forestry grants for communities, including in New Orleans, where Hurricane Katrina decimated thousands of trees. In Oregon, the state forestry department had a \$58 million award under the UCFGP terminated, leaving \$40 million in grant reimbursements unpaid.<sup>83</sup> Other states affected by grant cancellations include Alaska, Florida, Maine, and Montana<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Elizabeth Castillo, *How Oregon's tree canopies are tied to federal funds*, OPB (Mar. 20, 2025), <https://www.opb.org/article/2025/03/20/think-out-loud-oregon-tree-canopies-federal-funding/>.

<sup>84</sup> Dorany Pineda, *\$75 million was awarded to plant trees in places that badly need them. In anti-DEI push, that's over*, AP (Mar. 1, 2025), <https://www.oregonlive.com/environment/2025/03/75-million-in-grants-to-help-plant-trees-canceled-in-trumps-anti-dei-push.html>; <https://apnews.com/article/trees-arbor-day-grants-cut-trump-heat-shade-environmental-justice-5909d4f102ac0de9cc5be313b4fbd399>.



#### **IV. Conclusion**

The climate crisis has made severe weather a clear and present danger for every community in the nation. Extreme heat and drought in the summer, torrential rains in the spring, and severe snowstorms in the winter will become more difficult to predict, prepare for, and recover from as the Trump administration guts the federal resources and workforce that support our weather forecasting and disaster response apparatus.

Communities will be blindsided by devastating weather events that leave critical infrastructure compromised or destroyed. Cuts to federal recovery resources will leave rebuilding efforts partially or completely unsupported. Underinvestment will have a ripple effect that can last generations and is known to disproportionately affect Black and brown populations.

These extreme cuts are more than just political attacks on science and our fight against climate change. They represent a willingness by the Administration to trade your health, safety, and peace of mind for corporate subsidies, tax breaks, and profit.

The Trump administration is siphoning money meant for weather forecasting, resilient infrastructure, and disaster response, and using it to fund handouts to the coal, oil, and gas industries that pollute our climate and turbocharge severe weather. Trump is taking salary “savings” from unjustly fired NOAA and FEMA staff to pay for new federal contracts that benefit his top donors.

We’re in a fight for our lives, and the battle is two-fold: we’re weathering year-round, record-breaking severe weather events, while defending our communities against an administration set on undermining our health, safety, and resilience. The road ahead may be difficult. But it is essential that we hold the line against illegal and unjust attacks on our collective vision for a just, sustainable, and affordable future.