

# United States Senate

September 17, 2025

The Honorable Adam Telle  
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works  
Department of the Army, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

The Honorable Lieutenant General William H. Graham, Jr.  
Chief and Commanding Officer  
United States Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Assistant Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham,

We are deeply concerned about the capability of the New England District, in the United States Army Corps of Engineers, to carry out its mission following reductions in the federal workforce. The Army Corps oversees some of the most crucial water infrastructure in the United States and plays an important role in preparing for and responding to extreme weather events, including flooding and hurricanes. Due to the Trump administration's workforce policies, the Corps has faced a significant workforce reduction. To understand the implications of this workforce shortage on Massachusetts, we request detailed information about the New England District's staffing levels and any analysis on how potential staff reductions will affect the agency's ability to respond to future storms and disasters in Massachusetts.

The Army Corps of Engineers is on the front lines of protecting Massachusetts from extreme flooding, storms, and hurricanes. Since the 1980s, Massachusetts has been pummeled more than 27 times by flooding, tropical cyclones, or severe storms, each of which individually caused more than \$1 billion in damages.<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts has experienced these extreme storms 14 times in the last five years alone.<sup>2</sup> The Army Corps prepares for these storms by building infrastructure that protects communities from flooding and coastal erosion. The Corps also maintains water infrastructure such as navigable waterways and dams that can quickly turn into dangerous flood risks during a storm. When a storm strikes, the Corps jumps into action by clearing debris and setting up temporary housing and public facilities and supports search and rescue efforts.<sup>3</sup> In Massachusetts and across the nation, the Army Corps is critical to public safety.

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<sup>1</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association National Centers for Environmental Information, *Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters* (2025), <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/state-summary/MA>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, *Emergency Operation* (2025), <https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Emergency-Operations/>.

Assistant Secretary Telle  
Lt. General Graham Jr.  
September 17, 2025  
Page 2

At the same time as Massachusetts is experiencing an increase in the severity and number of major storms, the Trump administration is undermining the Army Corps' capacity to respond to such extreme weather events. Most importantly, despite its safety critical role, the Army Corps has been subject to the Administration's efforts to cut the federal workforce. Corps employees were eligible for the Administration's Deferred Resignation Program, which allowed federal employees to voluntarily resign and receive pay until September 30, 2025.<sup>4</sup> Contemporaneously, the White House imposed a government-wide hiring freeze that makes it impossible for the Corps and other agencies to fill positions left empty through normal attrition, such as employees retiring or leaving for the private sector.<sup>5</sup> These reckless policies have undoubtedly resulted in a reduction in the Army Corps' workforce — with direct implications for the preparedness and safety of the people of Massachusetts.

To better understand the staffing levels at the Army Corps' New England District and the potential impact on Massachusetts, please provide the following detailed information in writing by October 1, 2025:

1. How many employees does the New England District employ if all vacancies are filled?
2. How many employees did the New England District employ as of January 20, 2025 and as of September 17, 2025, respectively?
3. How many employees have left the District since January 20, 2025? Please provide the number of employees who (a) voluntarily resigned under the Deferred Resignation Program; (b) retired; and (c) left for other reasons.
4. How many of these vacant positions have been filled and how many vacancies does the New England District currently have?
5. Please share any analysis the Corps has conducted on the impact of these vacancies on its preparedness for past and future extreme weather events.

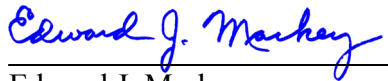
Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure the Army Corps has the resources to meet the needs of Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

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<sup>4</sup> Reuters, *US Army Corps of Engineers offers buyouts to 3% of civilian staff* (Mar. 12, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-army-corps-engineers-offers-buyouts-3-civilian-staff-2025-03-12/>.

<sup>5</sup> President Donald J. Trump, *Hiring Freeze* (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/hiring-freeze/>.



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



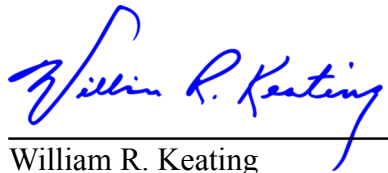
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan  
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