

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3808

April 9, 2025

Mr. Cameron Hamilton  
Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator  
500 C Street, SW,  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Acting Administrator Hamilton:

As the Congressman for Pennsylvania's Eighth Congressional District, I am writing to express my opposition to FEMA's recent announcement it would cancel the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program and cancel all applications from fiscal years 2020-2023. This decision is detrimental to my constituents, and I strongly urge you to reverse this decision.

The city of Scranton, PA was awaiting \$2.5 million for buyouts of 21 flood-prone properties (18 homes and 3 lots) that were destroyed by flash floods on September 9, 2023. The city had lined up its 25% match of \$849,000 to work with FEMA to purchase and remove these properties. City officials worked diligently with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and in July 2024, the city's BRIC application passed its initial Federal review. Now, the city is left holding the bag to come up with this \$2.5 million to buy out these properties to create floodplain restoration and infrastructure. City officials have said the buyout of these properties is important to city public safety and future cost savings.<sup>1</sup>

The BRIC program was established in 2018 during President Donald J. Trump's first administration. It was designed to support states, local, and territorial governments, and Tribal Nations as they work to reduce their hazard risk. FEMA's own website states that, "The BRIC program aims to categorically shift the federal focus away from reactive disaster spending and toward proactive investment in community resilience."<sup>2</sup>

This program is a hand-up, not a hand-out, to at-risk communities who have suffered catastrophic weather events. This includes my district and Northeastern Pennsylvania. The September 9, 2023 floods caused nearly \$25 million in damage and destroyed 459 residences. Unfortunately, FEMA denied Governor Josh Shapiro's request for an emergency disaster declaration<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Scranton Times-Tribune, "Scranton: FEMA funding cut erases \$2.5M for 21 flood buyouts in city," April 8, 2024, <https://www.thetimes-tribune.com/2025/04/08/scranton-fema-funding-cut-erases-2-5m-for-21-flood-buyouts-in-city/>

<sup>2</sup> FEMA, "Summary of FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Programs," May 29, 2024, <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/summary-fema-hazard-mitigation-assistance-hma-programs>

<sup>3</sup> Fox 56 WOLF, "FMA denies Pennsylvania's disaster appeal for September floods," March 21, 2024, <https://fox56.com/news/local/fema-denies-pennsylvanias-disaster-appeal-for-september-floods>

The median household income of my district \$61,000. Sadly, the tax base for a number of municipalities in my district is not always sufficient to complete buyout programs without Federal assistance. I strongly believe that disaster efforts are locally executed, state led, and federally coordinated. In cases where communities cannot bear the full cost of property purchases, programs like BRIC are not wasteful, but well within the purview of federal coordination of disaster relief efforts.

President Trump and his Administration have promised not to leave the forgotten men and women of America behind. My district and Northeastern Pennsylvania have been left behind for the last half century. The BRIC program has, and can continue to, support communities like those in my district. I urge you in the strongest possible manner to revive this program. I also reiterate the February 24, 2025 invitation I extended to you to visit my district and Northeastern Pennsylvania to see firsthand the importance of the BRIC program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert P. Bresnahan, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rob Bresnahan, Jr.  
Member of Congress