

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

April 8, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528-0525

Dear Secretary Noem:

I write to urge you to reverse your recent decision to cancel the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program. By cancelling this program, New York State will lose over \$325 million for projects that have not yet begun construction that would help mitigate or prevent flooding in local communities, helping to save lives and reduce the damages and costs of extreme weather. \$56 million in funding has already helped begin some resilience projects, although this decision now puts those dollars at risk. Funding to help states invest in preparedness and resilience not only saves lives and property, but also saves money for local, state, and the federal government in the long term. I implore you to revisit your decision to end the BRIC funding for states and restore the \$325 million investments in New York's resilience to extreme weather.

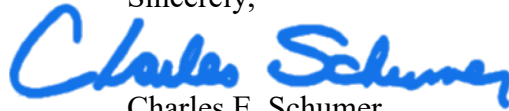
The BRIC program provides local, state, territorial and Tribal governments resources to reduce their hazard risk when extreme weather strikes. In recent years, New York has seen its fair share of disasters, including 23 federally declared disasters with New Yorkers receiving \$1,385 in federal aid per capita from disasters that occurred 2011 – 2024, the third highest cost per capita in the country. Just last year, New York saw tornadoes and flooding that left communities devastated. Hurricane Ida brought record-shattering rainfall and devastated New York City in 2021, drowning 11 people in their basement apartments, demonstrating the dire need for improved wastewater infrastructure to ensure no more lives are lost at the hand of extreme rainfall. Programs like BRIC that invest in resilience will help mitigate the impacts of these storms, preventing some or all of the most severe damages that these weather systems bring. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has stated that every \$1 invested in disaster preparedness saves communities \$13 in damages, cleanup, and recovery costs. The BRIC investments are not only a smart choice to save lives and property, but they also make economic sense.

Across New York City, 10 projects totaling over \$280 million were slated to help improve flooding resiliency. The NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has several projects to mitigate flooding impacts by reducing storm-related runoff and flooding from high intensity rainfall. These projects would improve and strengthen stormwater infrastructure across the city, including in the Historic South Street Seaport, Central Harlem, East Elmhurst, Corona East, at the NYCHA Polo Grounds Tower Development, and other areas of the city. In Upstate New York, three projects totaling over \$1 million are at risk because of this reckless decision to cancel the BRIC program. In Westchester, the Upper Minkel Dam Decommissioning and Riparian Corridor Restoration project would restore a stream and surrounding land to reduce

flood hazards, potentially eliminating any future flooding event at this site. The New York Power Authority was slated to address ice jams in Vischer Ferry along the NYS canal system, flushing ice from the Vischer Ferry impoundment to avoid jam flooding and the potential for ice dam formations. Lastly, the City of Buffalo was slated to utilize BRIC funds to improve building codes and invest in local workforce training and development, helping to improve energy use and the utilization of emerging technologies. All these projects, and more across the state, [detailed today by New York Governor Kathy Hochul](#), would help improve community safety and invest in local workforce development, but are unfortunately now at risk thanks to the administration's decision to cancel the BRIC program.

The BRIC program, along with FEMA's other disaster preparedness and resilience programs such as the Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FMA) and State Hazard Mitigation Revolving Loan Program, established by the Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation Act of 2020, or the STORM Act, provide critical support to communities that have been hit by disasters to help them prepare for the next major storm. I urge you to swiftly restore the BRIC program to ensure these dollars can continue doing this important work to create safer communities and save costs.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator