



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors

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August 14, 2025

The Honorable Alex Padilla
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: S. 1246, the FEMA Independence Act of 2025 – Support

Dear Senator Padilla:

On behalf of the County of Monterey board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our support for the FEMA Independence Act of 2025. The FEMA Independence Act of 2025 (S. 1246) seeks to remove the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and establish it as a cabinet-level independent agency in the executive branch.

Establishing FEMA as its own cabinet-level agency reporting directly to the president would reform emergency management and improve efficiency in federal emergency response efforts. In addition, the act would require that the appointed and Senate-confirmed leader of FEMA have “a demonstrated ability in and knowledge of emergency management and homeland security.” As it exists currently, FEMA is subject to the slow-moving bureaucracy of DHS which functions contrary to the quickness and flexibility needed to respond to an emergency.

As you know, the County of Monterey has repeatedly encountered the slow moving bureaucracy of FEMA, particularly in regard to the ongoing response to 2023 winter storm damage. Most recently, the County provided a response to a FEMA RFI in December 2024 and in March 2025 still had received no response from the agency, no resolution, and no discussion on the issue. With no response, the County was forced to place several important repair projects on hold, further deferring full recovery.

We support the approach the FEMA Independence Act of 2025 (S. 1246) is taking to remedy the bureaucratic challenges of the agency and to ensure that the agency’s leader has emergency management knowledge and ability. We appreciate your continued support for the County of Monterey, and on behalf of the Board of Supervisors, I thank you for your leadership on this important issue facing Monterey County residents.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Chris M. Lopez, Chair
Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Adam Schiff, U.S. Senator for California



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