



The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary, U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

March 6, 2025

Dear Secretary Noem,

The undersigned fire and emergency services organizations write today to express our strong support for critical programs that serve as essential resources for safeguarding public safety and strengthening national security. Specifically, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) programs, the United States Fire Administration (USFA), and the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams contribute to firefighter health and safety, operational capacity, and disaster response in every state. As the Administration considers measures to ensure responsible fiscal management, we respectfully urge you to preserve the integrity of these programs, which directly contribute to the safety and security of our nation.

The AFG and SAFER programs strengthen fire and emergency response capabilities in communities of all sizes by providing direct support to fire departments for critical operations. AFG supports the acquisition of lifesaving equipment, training, and apparatus, ensuring that fire departments are properly equipped to respond to fires, medical emergencies, and hazardous incidents. SAFER helps fire departments maintain adequate staffing levels, allowing them to provide timely and effective emergency response. These programs ensure that communities—both large and small—can effectively respond to fires, medical emergencies, and other disasters. Reducing support for these programs would place a significant strain on fire departments and could compromise their ability to protect lives and property.

The United States Fire Administration is the primary representative of the fire and emergency services in the federal government and plays a key role in providing research, training, and leadership to advance fire prevention, homeland security, and emergency preparedness nationwide. USFA's efforts in fire data collection and analysis, public education, and personnel development directly contribute to reducing fire-related deaths and injuries. Weakening USFA's ability to operate would negatively impact efforts to build a fire-resilient nation, especially at a time when fires have shown they are a continued threat across the country.

Urban Search and Rescue teams serve as frontline responders in times of large-scale disasters, terrorist attacks, and catastrophic events. These highly trained teams are essential components of our national security framework, providing life-saving search and rescue operations in the most challenging environments. Their expertise and readiness are fundamental to national security and emergency preparedness.

We understand the need for government to operate efficiently and be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars and we would request the opportunity to work with you to ensure that streamlining doesn't lead to longer emergency response times,



increased risks to first responders, and greater threats to communities nationwide.

We acknowledge and appreciate the Administration's decision to exempt public safety personnel from the ongoing personnel changes and would request that this definition include programs and personnel that directly support public safety operations, such as the AFG and SAFER programs, USFA, and USAR teams. The continued functionality of these initiatives is essential to maintaining firefighter health, safety, and overall operational effectiveness.

We are grateful for your leadership and dedication to ensuring the safety and security of the American people, including first responders. We look forward to working with you to maintain these vital programs and welcome any opportunity to discuss their importance.

Sincerely,

American Fire Sprinkler Association
Center for Campus Fire Safety
Center for Public Safety Excellence
Common Voices
Congressional Fire Services Institute
Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firefighters Association
Federation of Fire Chaplains
Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association
Fire and Emergency Manufacturers and Services Association
Fire Department Safety Officers Association
Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association - Government Relations Committee
Firehouse
FireRescue1
Institution of Fire Engineers – USA Branch
International Association of Arson Investigators
International Association of Fire Chiefs
International Association of Fire Fighters
International Association of Wildland Fire
International Code Council
International Fire Buff Associates, Inc.
International Fire Marshals Association
International Fire Service Training Association
International Society of Fire Service Instructors
National Association of State Fire Marshals
National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
National Fire Sprinkler Association
National Volunteer Fire Council
North American Fire Training Directors
SFPE Foundation
USA Sprinkler Fitters Association
Women in Fire

