

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 26, 2025

Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator Cameron Hamilton
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Acting Administrator Hamilton,

We are writing to express our concern that the National Fire Academy (NFA) has cancelled courses pending a review of agency programs. Firefighters and other stakeholders throughout New Hampshire have contacted us to express their disbelief that firefighters will not be able to receive the instruction and training they need to maintain and improve the skills they use to save lives. Cancelling or delaying classes at the NFA is contrary to Congressional intent and the Constitution and needlessly put lives in jeopardy.

The NFA has played a crucial role in ensuring that fire fighters improve their existing skills and acquire new skills for nearly 50 years. The landmark 1973 report of the National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control called for the establishment of the NFA. A range of stakeholders supported this recommendation, including the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the International Association of Fire Fighters. The Commission stated that an NFA be established to provide specialized training in areas important to the fire services and to assist State and local jurisdictions in their training programs” and to “function as the core of the Nation’s efforts in fire service education—feeding out model programs, curricula, and information...” Congress heeded this recommendation and established the NFA via the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-498).

Since its establishment, the NFA has offered training and related programs to generations of firefighters and other first responders. We have heard from New Hampshire firefighters and first responders that these are specialized courses the NFA provides for free that are not available elsewhere in the U.S. In its FY 2022 report, the Academy said it provides training to an average of 91,200 career and volunteer fire and EMS personnel, primarily through classes delivered in-person on its Emmitsburg, Maryland campus.

In light of the NFA’s vital role in training first responders, we read with dismay the March 8, 2025 CBS News report that FEMA announced that NFA courses were cancelled because the agency is in the “process of evaluating agency programs and spending to ensure alignment with Administration priorities.” Given that two federal courts have ordered the administration to stop withholding funds Congress has appropriated, we are especially concerned that FEMA is still holding back funding for a range of programs crucial for the safety and well-being of Americans. Denying or delaying crucial training for first responders, including firefighters, will put their lives at risk and the lives of the people across the U.S. who depend on firefighters to save their lives and livelihoods.

We urge FEMA to immediately direct the NFA to resume training and related activities. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Maggie Hassan

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Chris Pappas

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Maggie Goodlander

Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress