

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 30, 2025

Dear Secretary Noem,

We write to express our strong objection to the Department of Homeland Security's decision to terminate funding for the *Exploiting Mesonets for Emergency Preparedness and Response to Weather Extremes* (EMPOWER) project. This action not only undermines years of progress in public safety and emergency preparedness, but it also puts lives at risk. **We ask you to reverse this decision and reinstate the \$3 million grant supporting this initiative without delay.**

Developed in partnership between DHS's Science and Technology Directorate and the University at Albany, EMPOWER is exactly the kind of forward-looking, science-based emergency management program our nation needs as extreme weather, and natural disasters grow more frequent, intense, and deadly. It provides emergency managers and first responders with real-time, localized data to improve decision-making and response times, giving communities a better chance to prepare for and withstand extreme weather events.

At the core of EMPOWER's success is the New York State Mesonet, a state-of-the-art network of 127 weather stations that supplements National Weather Service observations. The Mesonet fills gaps in our national monitoring infrastructure and provides the high-resolution, real-time data that emergency response systems increasingly depend on.

This is a moment that demands leadership and bold investment in resilience. In just the past few weeks, catastrophic flooding in Texas and record-setting heat across the country have underscored the urgency of strengthening our preparedness. **Cutting off funding for a proven emergency response program amid an escalating climate crisis is not just short-sighted, it is dangerous.**

For a modest federal investment, EMPOWER is delivering high-impact results. This administration has emphasized the importance of supporting state and local partners in disaster preparedness.¹ EMPOWER embodies that collaboration, demonstrating how strategic partnerships between federal science agencies, academia, and state governments can produce innovative, life-saving solutions.

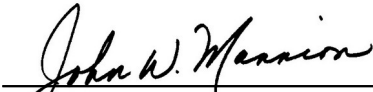
We urge you to reinstate full funding for the EMPOWER initiative and ensure that the University at Albany and its partners can continue advancing this critical work. The stakes are simply too high to abandon tools and technologies that can help save lives.

Sincerely,

¹ <https://www.kcra.com/article/changes-will-still-happen-president-trumps-fema-plans-loom-over-texas-flood-response/65384194>



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress