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Trump Slams FEMA as a "Disaster," Proposes Ending Agency and Directing Funds to States

President Trump criticizes FEMA for inefficiency and slow disaster response, proposing to dismantle the agency and allocate disaster relief funds directly to state governments to streamline recovery efforts and improve efficiency.

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President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania visited North Carolina Friday to support recovery efforts after Hurricane Helene's September devastation.

President Donald Trump has recently expressed strong criticism of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, proposing significant changes to the agency's role in disaster response. Suggesting that FEMA has become inefficient and slow to act, the president said he is

contemplating shutting down the agency altogether. Instead, he has proposed sending disaster relief funds directly to state governments, allowing them to address crises more quickly and effectively.

This potential move could have significant implications for the U.S. Virgin Islands, whose recovery from the devastating Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 is heavily dependent on FEMA funding. Over [\\$15 billion has been allocated to the territory](#) for major recovery efforts, including school reconstruction and infrastructure rebuilding projects. The president's proposal raises questions about how disaster relief funding for the USVI would be administered if FEMA were eliminated.

Mr. Trump's criticism of FEMA is tied to its alleged inefficiencies, particularly in response to disasters like Hurricane Helene, which struck North Carolina. However, Mr. Trump has emphasized that his goal is not just to dismantle FEMA but to empower states to manage disaster funding directly.

“We want to bring [the funding] locally so that a state takes care of its problem and then they can bring it down to a local level like Samaritan's Purse,” he said during a press briefing, praising the Christian humanitarian organization for its effectiveness in disaster relief.

This approach, the president argued, would eliminate delays caused by FEMA and allow states to respond more effectively. “Frankly FEMA is not good; I think when you have a problem like this... you want to use your state to fix it and not waste time,” he stated. “Calling FEMA, then FEMA gets here and they don't know the area... FEMA's turned out to be a disaster.”

In his comments, Mr. Trump cited examples of past disasters, including those in Louisiana and Texas, where he believes FEMA's involvement complicated the response. “It turns out to be the state that ends up doing the work; it just complicates it. I think we're going to recommend that FEMA go away,” he said.

He further criticized the agency's cost and effectiveness, describing it as “a very expensive organization that really doesn't work out very well.” The president also reiterated his belief that decentralizing disaster relief would result in faster, more efficient responses. “If it was up to me I would end it right now and just let the state take care of the problem,” he said. “You're always going to have problems; if it's Florida, it's a hurricane, let Florida take care of it — they don't need FEMA to come in.”

Implications for the USVI

The USVI is among the territories that would be directly impacted by such a change. FEMA's ongoing role in the territory's recovery has been vital, particularly with billions of dollars earmarked for long-term rebuilding efforts. While Mr. Trump's plan to send funds directly to states and territories could streamline disaster relief, it also introduces uncertainty about how funding would be distributed and managed in the absence of a centralized federal agency. There is also concern that the extensive local efforts to secure the \$15 billion in funding could be reevaluated, potentially leading to a reduced allocation.