



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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April 8, 2025

U.S. Senator John Fetterman
U.S. Senator David McCormick
U.S. Representative Rob Bresnahan Jr.

RE: Urgent Support Needed Following Termination of FEMA BRIC Program – Impact on Scranton, PA

Dear members of Pennsylvania's Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the City of Scranton, I write to express our deep concern following the recent decision by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to terminate the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program and cancel all pending grant applications from Fiscal Years 2020 through 2023. This decision made public on April 4, 2025, will have a direct and detrimental impact on our city's ability to mitigate flood risks, modernize infrastructure, and protect residents in vulnerable neighborhoods.

Scranton has invested significant time and resources to develop competitive and impactful BRIC grant proposals in close coordination with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). In July 2024, two of Scranton's BRIC applications advanced past the initial federal review—an achievement that positioned our community for transformational investment:

1. **BRIC Acquisition Grant:** This project proposed the acquisition and demolition of 18 flood-prone residential properties and three vacant lots in neighborhoods with recurring stormwater damage. These parcels were to be repurposed for floodplain restoration and green infrastructure—vital strategies to reduce public safety risks and avoid future disaster recovery costs. The City applied for \$2,547,387.73 with a 25% cost share in City Capital Funds of up to \$849,129.25, for a total project cost of \$3,396,516.90.
2. **BRIC Building Code Plus Grant:** This initiative aimed to update the city's outdated building codes and provide staff training to better address natural hazards like flooding. These upgrades would improve structural resilience across our housing stock and support long-term disaster risk reduction.

FEMA's latest request for additional details for its, FY 2023 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities subgrant #EMP-2023-BR-003-0016 on March 11, 2025, from the City signaled continued progress in the review phase. We were hopeful and prepared to move forward. The abrupt cancellation of the BRIC program now threatens to erase years of planning, collaboration, and federal-state-local investment—all at a time when climate-related disasters are accelerating.

The proposed acquisitions, located along Jackson Street, Leggett Street, Mary Street, and North Merrifield Avenue, represent some of the most at-risk properties in Scranton. Residents in these areas have faced repeated flooding, property damage, and emotional distress. The BRIC grant would have enabled us to provide voluntary buyouts, relocate residents to safer housing, and restore natural stormwater buffers. Terminating this opportunity puts those families back at square one—with no pathway forward.

In light of this decision, we respectfully request the following:

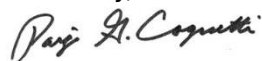
1. **Congressional Advocacy** – That your office advocate for the reinstatement or reauthorization of the BRIC program or an equivalent federal initiative focused on hazard mitigation and climate resilience.
2. **Preservation of Funding** – That unallocated BRIC funds, including those authorized through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, be reappropriated for continued local mitigation efforts—particularly for communities like Scranton that have already invested in project development and demonstrated readiness.
3. **Support for Alternative Resources** – That Congress work to ensure continuity in funding streams for local governments to address disaster preparedness and infrastructure modernization, including through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR), or newly proposed resilience programs.

Eliminating BRIC jeopardizes not just Scranton's plans but those of communities nationwide that face escalating risks from climate change. If our city cannot move forward with these critical flood mitigation efforts, the long-term cost in federal disaster aid, insurance claims, and human suffering will far exceed the investment BRIC would have provided.

We remain committed to working with FEMA, PEMA, and our federal partners to explore alternative solutions; however, immediate congressional leadership is essential to safeguard not only our city's long-term resilience but also the financial stability of our residents. Many of the individuals affected by repeated flooding are homeowners with limited resources who face ongoing property damage, escalating insurance premiums, and declining property values. The BRIC Acquisition Grant offered a lifeline—one that would have allowed families to transition out of harm's way with dignity and begin rebuilding their lives on stable financial ground. Without this support, these families remain vulnerable, both physically and economically, with no clear path forward.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Should you or your staff need additional information, we are available at your convenience to provide details on our applications, property conditions, or projected impacts.

Sincerely,



Paige G. Cagnetti, Mayor

City of Scranton

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