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PRESS RELEASE

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SAN DIEGO JOINS 28 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS NATIONWIDE TO SUE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION OVER UNLAWFUL AND EXTREME ATTACK ON EMERGENCY AND DISASTER FUNDING

More than \$350 million for fire departments, port security, counterterrorism and wildfire recovery are at risk.

SAN DIEGO — Today, the City of San Diego joined 28 other local governments nationwide in filing a lawsuit challenging the Trump administration’s attempt to impose unlawful and unrelated conditions on federal emergency and disaster preparedness funds. The conditions would force local governments to adopt the administration’s political agenda or risk losing critical funding.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in California, centers on over \$350 million in grants administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These funds help communities safeguard residents — more than 30 million people — through fire department staffing, port and transit security, counterterrorism, and hazard mitigation projects like wildfire and flood prevention. The lawsuit asks the court to stop DHS and FEMA from using life-saving funds as leverage for unrelated political agendas.

The administration is demanding that local governments participate in its immigration enforcement policies and abandon diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives as a condition of funding. The plaintiffs argue these conditions are unconstitutional and exceed the executive’s authority, falling far outside what Congress authorized.

“Here in San Diego, our residents face real risks from wildfires, flooding, earthquakes, and other disasters,” said **San Diego City Attorney Heather Ferbert**. “Federal preparedness funding is meant to save lives, not advance a political agenda. These unlawful conditions jeopardize our ability to keep San Diego families safe, and we are taking action to ensure our city continues to receive the resources needed to protect our communities.”

“The most important duty government has is to keep the public safe. The actions of the Trump Administration are not only wrong, but they will make us less safe,” said **San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria**. “These grant programs are critical resources for our police, fire, and emergency management teams to protect San Diegans. I appreciate City Attorney Ferbert joining this nationwide lawsuit and sending a clear message to Washington that partisan politics should stay out of public safety.”

“For almost 75 years, Congress has been clear that one of the Federal Government’s core functions is to provide resources and support to state and local governments to ensure that they are prepared to respond to emergencies and disasters,” said **Santa Clara County Counsel Tony LoPresti**. “This Federal Administration is now unlawfully changing course, imposing unconstitutional conditions on critical grant funding that helps local governments hire first responders, fund search and rescue operations, retrofit facilities, and train employees in disaster response. Governments shouldn’t have to pass a political litmus test to be able to care for their communities.”

“Emergency management is the backbone of safe and resilient communities, and threatening its funding puts real lives at risk,” said **San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu**. “This funding means faster emergency response times, stronger regional coordination, and better protection for our residents during disasters and terrorist attacks. The federal government’s politically motivated grant conditions demonstrate both a disregard for our Constitution and the well-being of our residents.”

“The Trump administration is trying to force governments to abandon policies that keep people safe,” said **Jill Habig, founder and CEO of Public Rights Project**. “Tying federal safety and security funding to these demands is both coercive and dangerous. These funds are life-saving resources that communities rely on to prepare for and recover from wildfires, earthquakes, terrorism and other crises.”

The stakes are high in communities across the country: in Marin County, Calif., roughly 4,000 residents face greater flood risk without the \$23 million the county is counting on for mitigation; in Los Angeles, Calif., \$140 million in federal grants is earmarked for wildfire recovery — rebuilding communities, strengthening water infrastructure, and launching a mobile early warning system for evacuations; in Petaluma, Calif., federal funds are critical for protecting seniors in mobile home parks along the Petaluma River, ensuring vulnerable elders aren’t left in floodwaters or wildfire danger. In Santa Clara County, \$3.6 million — nearly 43% of the County’s emergency management budget — is at risk, threatening preparedness for terrorism, disasters, and upcoming global events like Super Bowl LX and the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Without these funds, communities will be forced to divert scarce resources from other essential services, delay projects, or cancel them entirely.

The County of Santa Clara and the City and County of San Francisco are the lead plaintiffs. Public Rights Project is representing the additional plaintiffs: Alameda, CA; Bellingham, WA; Berkeley, CA; Culver City, CA; King County, WA; Los Angeles, CA; Los Angeles County, CA; Los Angeles County Consolidated Fire Protection District, CA; Marin County, CA; Oakland, CA; Palo Alto, CA; Pasadena, CA; Petaluma, CA; Pierce County, WA; Sacramento, CA; San Diego, CA; San Diego County, CA; San Jose, CA; San Mateo County, CA; Santa Monica, CA; Santa Rosa, CA; Snohomish County, WA; Sonoma County, CA; Sonoma County Community Development Commission, CA; Sonoma County Water Agency, CA; Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, CA; and Tucson, AZ.

The case is County of Santa Clara v. Noem (Case No. 3:25-cv-8330) and the complaint is attached.

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