

FEMA Katrina Declaration Signatories Placed on Administrative Leave

FEMA employees were placed on administrative leave in apparent retaliation for signing the Katrina Declaration.

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On August 26, 36 FEMA employees were placed on administrative leave and a number of FEMA staff were removed from active duty in the Kerr

County Texas flood response efforts. The decision— though "not punitive" according to the email received by signers—is in response to publicly signing the [Katrina Declaration](#), a letter to Congress sounding the alarm on the administrative gutting of FEMA's ability to respond to disasters and protect Americans. In the letter, 182 FEMA employees warned that the stripping of FEMA's statutory authorities places American communities in grave danger. Named in honor of the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, the Declaration serves as a warning: the Trump Administration's reduction of FEMA's capacity could lead to fatalities and devastation.

The FEMA signatories—current and former staff of the Agency—have already received widespread national media coverage and strong backing from Senators and Representatives, including Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Representative Greg Stanton (D-AZ), Ranking Member on the House Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Subcommittee. But Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FEMA acting leadership swiftly dismissed their warning, branding these dedicated public servants as entrenched bureaucrats whose actions contributed to unspecified historical inefficiencies.

[Stand Up For Science](#) commends the courageous FEMA staff who signed the Katrina Declaration. By speaking out, they fulfilled their duty as public servants and upheld their responsibility to protect the public. The administrative leave decision "underscores the many issues that FEMA staff described in their declaration and their braver in standing up for Americans in need" says Stand Up For Science Founder and Executive Director Colette Delawalla. "Once again, we are seeing the Trump Administration retaliate for whistleblowing—which is both illegal and a deep betrayal of the most dedicated among us. DHS said that these employees are simply 'afraid of



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change,' which is an insult to anyone working at FEMA, the agency directly responsive to rapidly intensifying and changing circumstances. Stand For Science is proud to have hosted the Katrina Declaration and we stand by the FEMA 36."

Delawalla and FEMA signatories are available for on the record press interviews and television appearances. For security reasons, we have not listed names in this release, but welcome interested parties to contact media@standupforscience.net.

Delawalla is also available to discuss the impact of this action on the broader effort to save science, call the public to action, and encourage other federal agency employees to do the same.

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About Stand Up for Science:

Stand Up for Science is a grassroots Washington, D.C. based 501(c)4 non-profit organization mobilizing the fight for science and democracy. We formed Stand Up for Science within days of executive orders breaking down federal science agencies. Weeks later, on March 7th, our first National Day of Action, we mobilized over 50,000 people at 170+ events across the world in support of science. Stand Up for Science has captured widespread national and international media attention, and federal scientists across multiple agencies (i.e., NIH, EPA and NASA) have chosen Stand Up for Science as the platform for their dissent against this Administration. An opinion piece written by our founding leadership team is also available in Nature Human Behavior: "Why we organized 'Stand Up for Science.'"

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