**County of Siskiyou**

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**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

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**August 6, 2025**

**The Honorable Kristi Noem**   
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C.

**Subject:** Formal Opposition to the Withholding of DHS Funds from Sanctuary Jurisdictions

Secretary Noem,

I am writing to express my formal opposition to the decision to withhold critical Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funds from sanctuary jurisdictions. This action poses immediate and significant risks to public safety. It imposes severe fiscal burdens on rural communities such as ours, where emergency management and law enforcement resources are already at their capacity.

For Siskiyou County and other rural jurisdictions, federal and state homeland security funds are not a luxury—they are a critical lifeline. These funds directly support wildfire preparedness, emergency management coordination, interoperable communications, community policing initiatives, and disaster response operations. Withholding them jeopardizes our ability to:

* Maintain adequate wildfire Warning and Alerts, impacting evacuation readiness in high-risk regions and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)
* Support police departments in safeguarding rural communities where response times are already extended due to geography and limited staffing by severely reducing Special Response Team (SRT) training and equipment
* Ensure the continuity of emergency management operations, particularly during overlapping crises such as wildfire season, flooding, or public health emergencies.

The decision to tie these lifesaving funds to immigration enforcement policies—over which many rural jurisdictions rejected or have limited authority—punishes local governments and residents by creating critical gaps in essential services. This withholding not only increases the risk of loss of life and property from wildfires and other disasters but also erodes trust between communities and their public safety agencies, undermining long-term security and resilience.

As the Emergency Manager and facilitator of public safety within our rural jurisdiction, I urge DHS to reconsider this withholding of funds immediately. As a Board of Supervisors-approved non-sanctuary County within California, Siskiyou's sole purpose is to protect the safety of our communities and ensure a coordinated response to disasters, which must remain a nonpartisan and nonpolitical priority. Federal and state homeland security grants exist to reduce risk, build capacity, and save lives. To repurpose them as leverage in unrelated policy debates is both dangerous and irresponsible.

I respectfully request a complete restoration of funds to the local Siskiyou County jurisdiction, to prevent further erosion of our emergency preparedness and public safety capacity. The residents of rural America should not be made collateral in this dispute.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I stand ready to provide further information on the immediate impacts this decision will have on our jurisdiction and to work collaboratively toward solutions that uphold both public safety and fiscal responsibility.

Very respectfully,

**Bryan Schenone, Director**

**Siskiyou County Office of Emergency Services**

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