

Mr. William B. "Brock" Long

ID: LFG-2018-0003

Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency

Office of the Administrator

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Washington, D.C. 20472

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Sent via: Electronic mail

January 22nd, 2018

Re: Opposition to new FEMA policy on disaster relief to houses of worship

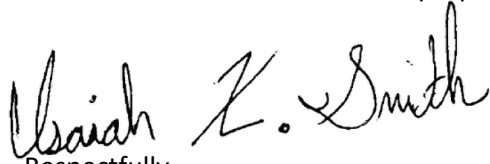
Mr. Long,

I am sending you this letter out of concern and in opposition to the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency issuing a directive that will provide disaster relief to houses of worship and the directive that has listed houses of worship as "community centers" that provide "essential government-type services to the general public." I do believe that there are some legal constitutional concerns with the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency categorizing churches as "community centers" that provide "essential government-type services to the general public." This new move by the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency will allow the federal agency to provide grants directly to churches that have been affected by natural disasters. However, it should be already noted that the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency, prior to the new directive, had already allowed churches to receive reimbursements for secular services provided in the wake of natural disasters. This new policy by your federal government agency will go much further by forcing taxpayers to finance the actual repairs of all houses of worship, including those that do not operate pursuant to a secular purpose.

I must again be in opposition to the new policy of the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency with respect as to this issue. This new directive in which was made possible by the Trump Administration does appear to me, as a reasonable person, to be the federal government of the United States is advancing, preferring, or promote religion in which the federal government of the United States is barred from doing so by the Constitution of the United States. As you may but should know, the Establishment Clause of the Constitution of the United States mandates that government of the United States may not advance, prefer, or promote religion. See *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577 (1992); *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38 (1985); and *Epperson v. Arkansas*, 393 U.S. 97 (1967); *McCreary Cnty., Ky. v. Am. Civil Liberties Union of K.*, 545 U.S. 844, 860 (2005). This includes the local, the state and the federal government of the United States.

In conclusion, I am hoping that the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency will not provide disaster relief to houses of worship that do not operate pursuant to secular purposes and that your governmental body will not categorize churches as "community centers" that provide "essential government-type services to the general public." As the United States is a constitutional republic, you may but should know that everything that the local, state and that the federal government

does have to be in compliance with all aspects of the law, including the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Even if the law is unpopular, I still believe that since we do live in a constitutional republic, that the law has to be followed. I am hoping that the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency will make sure that it's new policy will not be used to advance, prefer, or promote religion because already, as a reasonable person, I believe that this new directive was established for the purpose as to advancing, preferring, or promoting religion.



Respectfully,

Isaiah X. Smith¹

¹ www.isaiahxsmith.com