

United States Senate

July 13, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Robert J. Fenton, Jr.
Senior Official Performing the Duties of
FEMA Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Secretary Kennedy and Mr. Fenton:

I write today about the devastating effects of extreme heat across Nevada and urge you to take immediate actions that ensure communities have the resources they need to respond to extreme heat and protect the public health and safety of Nevadans. Extreme heat is the leading cause of weather-related fatalities in the United States, and in Nevada alone, more than 500 people died from heat-related deaths in 2024. As we enter the hottest months of the year, it is crucial that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) collaborate and conduct outreach to local communities to make certain that the public is fully prepared and equipped with the knowledge and resources they need to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

Extreme heat is a dangerous health hazard for all Nevadans and can be particularly dangerous for more vulnerable populations like seniors, children, people with underlying health conditions, and individuals working outside. Heat-related illnesses such as heatstroke, heat exhaustion, heat syncope, heat cramps, and heat rashes can lead to costly hospital visits that jeopardize a family's health and finances for something that can be largely prevented. In March 2026, Western states experienced their highest temperatures on record, and just recently, the National Weather Service (NWS) declared a Major and Extreme Heat Risk for the Las Vegas area with temperatures forecasted to soar above 105°F. These extremely high temperatures threaten the health and safety of Nevada families and require a coordinated approach across all levels of government, including making resources available at HHS and FEMA for mitigating the effects of extreme heat.

Sufficient preparation also includes having experts on staff at entities like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), so states can respond quickly and effectively to extreme heat emergencies. Reports that extreme heat experts have been laid off across federal agencies, including at the CDC, and that critical funding that supports heat-related alert systems and response efforts have been cancelled are incredibly concerning. If true, I urge you to reverse course and ensure key resources and qualified personnel are available to communities so they can make informed decisions about and respond to extreme heat events.

Lives are at risk, and it is our duty to ensure communities are prepared to protect their residents. I am therefore requesting you provide responses to the following questions no later than Monday, July 27, 2026.

1. How are your agencies currently working with communities to respond to extreme heat events and ensure they are safe?
2. How will your agencies collaborate with each other and with other federal entities to respond to extreme heat events that pose life-threatening risks to Nevadans?
3. What staffing changes have been made over the past 18 months related to those responsible for addressing, preparing for, mitigating, and responding to extreme heat? Are you considering reversing any prior staffing changes due to the likelihood of a historically hot summer across the United States?
4. What resources and funding opportunities have you made available to local governments to help them respond to extreme heat events?
5. To what extent have FEMA and HHS supported local government efforts to mitigate risks of extreme heat and increase resilience in communities?

We look forward to your swift response and working with HHS and FEMA to ensure the safety of all Nevadans from extreme heat. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator