

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
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Bakersfield, California 93301
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September 2, 2026

The Honorable Alex Padilla
U.S. Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Schiff
U.S. Senate
SD-B40B, Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Vince Fong
U.S. House of Representatives
243 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20003

Re: Immediate Action Needed – Kern Valley Healthcare District FEMA BRIC grant application approval for seismic upgrades

Dear Congressional delegates,

California law requires all Acute Care Hospitals to meet seismic safety standards by 2030 or face closure. Kern Valley Healthcare District (KVHD) serves one of the most underprivileged and medically underserved areas in the state. If this hospital is forced to shut down due to seismic noncompliance, thousands of residents will lose access to the only local emergency and acute care facility they rely on.

For years, the KVHD has worked tirelessly to meet the 2030 mandate. Construction plans were completed and fully approved by the California Department of Health Care Access and Information on April 14, 2024, with extensions granted through April 14, 2027. The project is shovel-ready, professionally estimated at \$32 million, and waiting only for the funding needed to break ground.

KVHD, in coordination with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), submitted a FEMA BRIC grant application (BRIC 22 EMF-2022-BR-044-0020) to secure the needed funding. The grant application has already cleared FEMA regional review and was just two weeks from final document signing when a federal executive order abruptly halted all BRIC grants for that cycle. This left our community without any viable path forward and has placed the hospital at immediate risk.

We urgently need our elected officials to intervene.

The Washington, D.C. FEMA office and Administration must be pressed, without delay, to reopen and approve this already-vetted regional FEMA project. Lives, access to care, and the future stability of an entire rural region depend on swift action. It is our understanding that the KVHD grant is literally sitting on a desk in Washington D.C simply awaiting sign-off and final approval by FEMA leadership.

We respectfully request that you contact FEMA leadership immediately and advocate for reinstating and approving this critical seismic safety grant. The Kern River Valley cannot afford further delays, and the community cannot afford to lose its hospital. On behalf of the entire Board of Supervisors, we thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phillip Peters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Simon Kriech, Cal OES
Jacob Parsley, Cal OES
Concepcion Chavez, Cal OES
Amelia Muccio, Hagerty Consulting
Robert Easterday, Kern Valley Healthcare District
Ben Goldeen, Townsend Public Affairs