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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 11:59 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** A Message from Acting Secretary Chad F. Wolf



January 11, 2021

**A Message from Acting Secretary Chad F. Wolf**

Dear Colleagues,

Effective at 11:59 p.m. today, I am stepping down as your Acting Secretary. I am saddened to take this step, as it was my intention to serve the Department until the end of this Administration. Unfortunately, this action is warranted by recent events, including the ongoing and meritless court rulings regarding the validity of my authority as Acting Secretary. These events and concerns increasingly serve to divert attention and resources away from the important work of the Department in this critical time of a transition of power.

Once I step down, Pete Gaynor, FEMA Administrator, will be the Acting Secretary. Administrator Gaynor is a consummate professional and will lead the Department ably.

Serving the Department and leading the finest public servants in the federal government has been the honor of a lifetime. I did not seek this responsibility but answered the call to service as each of you have during your careers.

Working alongside you and supporting you is what motivated me every day. I have spent a considerable amount of my career within your ranks, and no one is a bigger advocate for all that you do to protect the Homeland. I went about making decisions with one simple question in mind: what is in the best interest of the Department? While that may sound elementary, it's true and sincere.

Decisions over the past several years have not been easy. Reforming broken systems or questioning long held beliefs is not for the faint of heart. But our job requires asking difficult questions and making the hard decisions. The American people deserve nothing less.

Together, we have strengthened border security, reformed our immigration system, stood up a world class cybersecurity agency, increased the worldwide aviation security baseline, enhanced US Coast Guard readiness, countered malign nation-state influence, responded to countless natural disasters, highlighted the vital work of the Federal Protective Service, supported the security of multiple federal and state elections, and continue to respond to a global pandemic. This Department is nothing short of amazing because of each of your contributions.

Be proud of what we have accomplished. The Homeland is safer and more secure because of your efforts.

I leave knowing that the Department has positioned itself for an orderly and smooth transition to President-elect Biden's DHS team. Welcome them, educate them, and learn from them. They are your leaders for the next four years – a time which undoubtedly will be full of challenges and opportunities to show the American public the value of DHS and why it is worth the investment.

You will remain an inspiration to me. And while I will be moving on, I look forward to staying involved in the issues we have spent our careers advancing.

Sincerely,

Chad F. Wolf  
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security

*With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.*