



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2006

The Honorable Hal Rogers, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
B307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Martin Sabo, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
1116 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Sabo:

As you begin work on the fiscal year 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, we strongly urge you to provide increased funding for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters (SAFER) and Assistance to Firefighters Grant Programs. As you know, although these two programs are each authorized at approximately \$1 billion per year, the President's fiscal year 2007 budget requests only \$293 million for the Fire Grant Program while zeroing out the SAFER program.

The SAFER program, authorized in 2003, provides much-needed funding for career and volunteer fire departments across America to hire new firefighters and recruit and retain volunteer fire fighters. This program is critical to the thousands of fire stations across the country that are currently operating short of staff.

When adequately funded SAFER will bring our nation's fire departments to staffing levels that will improve the safety of our firefighters, and the communities they serve, as they respond to the scene of a fire, auto accident, or other natural or manmade disaster. Two-thirds of all career and volunteer fire departments in our nation, located in both large cities and small towns, do not have sufficient personnel to adequately protect the public.

Under the SAFER program, fire departments throughout the country are able to apply for federal grants to hire and pay new fire fighters for five years. The federal grant decreases annually on a sliding scale in order to promote complete local self-sufficiency after four years. In addition, grants have been awarded to state and local organizations to recruit and retain volunteer fire fighters.

The SAFER program complements the very successful Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, through which the federal government provides funds for training and equipment to fire

Rogers/Sabo
April 3, 2006
Page 2

stations throughout the country. Ensuring that career and volunteer departments have adequate numbers of fire fighters will allow departments to fully utilize the training and equipment money provided through the Fire Grant program.

We are particularly troubled by the trend in Fire Grant funding, which dipped to \$545 million in fiscal year 2006 after having been funded at \$750 million in fiscal years 2003 and 2004. The early level of funding demonstrated Congress' strong bipartisan support for the Fire Grant program, as well as its understanding of the contributions this program has made to our firefighters and the communities they serve.

Considering that nearly \$3 billion in applications were submitted for the current program year, a continued reduction of funds to train and equip our firefighters is simply not good policy. The fact is that this program has positively impacted public safety by providing more than \$3 billion since 2001 for infrared cameras, personal protective gear, hazmat detection devices, improved breathing apparatuses, advanced training and fitness programs, fire engines, prevention and education programs, and interoperable communication systems. This is the basic equipment our fire departments need to effectively respond to all hazards.

We ask far too many of our firefighters to risk their lives in our defense every day, too often with insufficient staffing, inadequate training and obsolete equipment, and we have an obligation to provide them the necessary resources to perform their jobs as safely and effectively as possible.

We urge you to help Congress meet that obligation by providing increased funding the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters (SAFER) Program in the fiscal year 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Steve Kagan [unclear] Paul E. Aker
Jerry Beehler Bill Roberly Bennie A. Thompson

Levi Capps Emanuel C.A. Petch Pepperberg

Franc Delotto Eddie Danice Johnson Sam

W. Henry Virgil Goode Ben Chandler

Rail M. Gjilve Henry Wells Tom Ullrich

Chris Van Hatten Ray D. Ralmon Emanuel

Ronald L. Goss Pie Dupler Loretha Sanchez

Mike Costle Bill Jenkins Joe Badley

Sam Clay J. Martin

Tiffy J. McAnutt Tom Allen

John B. Ruan Stephen P. Roberts Jr. Amy Baldoni

David W. Betty McAllen Todd R. Platts

Kendrick B. Meek John T. Dalyan Nick R. Coppen

John Roogna Michael D. Stepted Hilda L. Solis

D. Reichert Ellen D. Lawrence Norm Seeks

William Palahut

Stephen Paul Blumena

Corine Brown Steve R. Lawrence P. Pendergast

Carolee Foley Johannes J. Tin Halden

Tom Lantos Patricia Juio V. Gutierrez

Albert Hooty Bart Sypal Irene Kuen

L. B. Paul Angel Doris O. Matsui

Mayor R. Russo Anni Rahaj Bart Gordon

Sandra Laxi Ray T. Cuth Richard E. Neal

Ron L. DeLuca Melvin L. Watt Paul Saul

Wally Miller Edward F. Beron J. - Saxton

Cadyn McCarty James Langeron Rick Larsen

Ed Case John F. Tierney Mark Jolley

Jane Camp Ron Paul nna I show

Robert West Finza Jan Fata

Frank A. L. Bivich ~~James~~ John Smith

Mik Row Harold Ford Mike Thompson

Stephen Lynch John Lewis Tim Murphy

Ted Strickland ~~John~~ Chadell Duncan

Brad Shum JBund John Eweeef
David Scott F.F. Zi Frank Pallone Jr.
Jim Moran Ben Hise Alvin K. Gfr
L. K. Mich. Mich. Shelley Beckley
Melissa L. Beachler w Dent Steven A. Hannon
Jim Moran Elijah E. Jennings L. Davis
Thomas R. McHugh Ben Cardin The Hon.
George Miller Sue Kelly Peter DeFay

Am Jefferson Edward G. Minkley Carl E. K. Stedee

Stephanie Smith Carolyn B. Maloney Fidelina J. Kaudella

Zoe Loff Randy Kuhl

Erin L. Engel

Eric C. Hays

1. Rep. Steny Hoyer
2. Rep. Curt Weldon
3. Rep. Bill Pascrell
4. Rep. Sherwood Boehlert
5. Rep. Rob Andrews
6. Rep. Norm Dicks
7. Rep. Bill Delahunt
8. Rep. Steven LaTourette
9. Rep. Earl Blumenauer
10. Rep. Corrine Brown
11. Rep. Silvestre Reyes
12. Rep. Bennie Thompson
13. Rep. Maurice Hinchey
14. Rep. Darlene Hooley
15. Rep. John Conyers
16. Rep. Tim Holden
17. Rep. Tom Lantos
18. Rep. Roscoe Bartlett
19. Rep. Luis Gutierrez
20. Rep. Alcee Hastings
21. Rep. Bart Stupak
22. Rep. Gene Green
23. Rep. Sherrod Brown
24. Rep. Carolyn Maloney
25. Rep. John Dingell
26. Rep. Doris Matsui
27. Rep. Major Owens
28. Rep. Nick Rahall
29. Rep. Bart Gordon
30. Rep. Steven Rothman
31. Rep. Sander Levin
32. Rep. Jerry Costello
33. Rep. Richard Neal
34. Rep. Rosa Delauro
35. Rep. Jim Moran
36. Rep. Melvin Watt
37. Rep. Elijah Cummings
38. Rep. Bernie Sanders
39. Rep. Ed Towns
40. Rep. Marty Meehan
41. Rep. Howard Berman
42. Rep. Jim Saxton
43. Rep. Michael McNulty
44. Rep. Ben Cardin
45. Rep. Ike Skelton
46. Rep. George Miller
47. Rep. Sue Kelly
48. Rep. Eliot Engel
49. Rep. Peter Defazio
50. Rep. William Jefferson
51. Rep. Ed Markey
52. Rep. Dale Kildee
53. Rep. Hilda Solis
54. Rep. Lois Capps
55. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver
56. Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger
57. Rep. Bob Etheridge
58. Rep. John Salazar
59. Rep. Michael Capuano
60. Rep. Dianne Degette
61. Rep. Virgil Goode
62. Rep. John Boozman
63. Rep. Michael Fitzpatrick
64. Rep. Sam Graves
65. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson
66. Rep. Ben Chandler
67. Rep. Raul Grijalva
68. Rep. Leonard Boswell
69. Rep. Ray LaHood
70. Rep. Chris Van Hollen
71. Rep. Tom Udall
72. Rep. Henry Cuellar
73. Rep. Vic Snyder
74. Rep. Rahm Emanuel
75. Rep. Michael Castle
76. Rep. Lorretta Sanchez
77. Rep. Dave Reichert
78. Rep. Jim Matheson
79. Rep. Sam Farr
80. Rep. Jeb Bradley
81. Rep. Bill Jenkins
82. Rep. Tim Bishop
83. Rep. Tom Allen
84. Rep. Christopher Shays
85. Rep. Kendrick Meek
86. Rep. Jim McDermott
87. Rep. Ellen Tauscher
88. Rep. Todd Platts
89. Rep. Brad Sherman
90. Rep. Betty McCollum
91. Rep. David Wu
92. Rep. Tammy Baldwin

93. Rep. Stephanie Tubbs-Jones
94. Rep. John Larson
95. Rep. Melissa Bean
96. Rep. Charlie Dent
97. Rep. Shelley Berkley
98. Rep. Michael Michaud
99. Rep. Peter King
100. Rep. Albert Wynn
101. Rep. Brian Higgins
102. Rep. James McGovern
103. Rep. Madeleine Bordallo
104. Rep. Frank Palone
105. Rep. Rick Renzi
106. Rep. David Scott
107. Rep. John Sweeney
108. Rep. G.K. Butterfield
109. Rep. Lincoln Davis
110. Rep. Charlie Melancon
111. Rep. John Lewis
112. Rep. Ted Strickland
113. Rep. Stephanie Herseth
114. Rep. Harold Ford
115. Rep. Tim Murphy
116. Rep. Stephen Lynch
117. Rep. Mike Ross
118. Rep. Joe Crowley
119. Rep. Mike Thompson
120. Rep. Adam Smith
121. Rep. Frank Lobiondo
122. Rep. Tim Ryan
123. Rep. Jon Porter
124. Rep. Robert Wexler
125. Rep. Anna Eshoo
126. Rep. Ron Paul
127. Rep. Dave Camp
128. Rep. John Tierney
129. Rep. Ed Case
130. Rep. Jim Langevin
131. Rep. Rick Larsen
132. Rep. Carolyn McCarthy
133. Rep. Mark Foley
134. Rep. Zoe Lofgren
135. Robin Hayes
136. Rep. John Kuhl