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JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4901

April 23, 2003

Assistance to Firefighters Grants Office
"R" Building, NETC
16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Dear Members of the Review Panel:

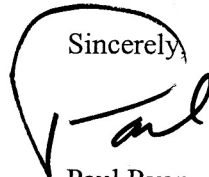
I am writing to express my support for the City of Racine Fire Department's grant proposal (application number: EMW-2003-FG-07555) for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, which was electronically submitted to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA).

The Racine Fire Department applied for the Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety category. One of the Department's responsibilities is to provide emergency Level A hazardous materials team response to four counties, which consist of 73 municipalities, 476,640 citizens and 2,414 square miles. Although the Department provides meritorious service, the Department currently has no way to determine what dangers are present from unknown biological or chemical solids or liquids, which can cause severe complications for firefighters. Often, the Department must identify specific hazards before other objectives (such as rescue and containment) can be effected. Therefore, it is imperative that the Department purchase one portable spectrometer in order to quickly identify unknown solids and liquids.

I am pleased that the spectrometer would serve as a first line of defense for the Department's responders to identify the hazards and to eliminate the potential of personal injury and property damage. In addition, the acquisition of this device will also benefit 53 separate fire departments and 40 police agencies through the mutual aid and hazardous materials response they will receive from the Racine Fire Department. I am confident that firefighter safety, citizen safety, and a heightened level of preparedness would result if the Assistance to Firefighters Grant is awarded to the Racine Fire Department.

I have reviewed the grant proposal that the Racine Fire Department has submitted, and I am confident that they would make effective use of the funds they would receive from FEMA. This grant would allow the department to respond instantaneously to disastrous or deadly situations.

Again, thank you for your careful consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,


Paul Ryan
Member of Congress

cc: Mr. R. David Paulison
USFA Administrator

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