

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 3, 2006

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
136 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
136 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Gregg and Ranking Member Byrd:

We are writing to request an increase in funding for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program in the FY07 appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security. We request that you fund the EMPG program at \$235 million.

The EMPG program was created to assist in developing an effective emergency response system at the state and local government level to handle disasters and emergencies of all types and sizes. It provides the only source of federal assistance to states and localities to develop and build their emergency management capabilities. The EMPG program gives the flexibility to allocate funds according to risk, thus addressing the most urgent state and local needs. The program is a pass through grant that is matched dollar for dollar by state and local governments.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the EMPG program has been used to increase state and local preparedness around the country. In August of last year, Hurricane Katrina dramatically demonstrated the increased need for every state and local government to have strong emergency management capability in preparation for all disasters. The EMPG program supports this need. Despite this need, the EMPG program has been historically underfunded. A 2004 survey conducted by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) concluded that the program faces a \$264 million shortfall. State and local governments cannot be expected to take on the ever growing homeland security mission without adequate resources to do the job. While we recognize the current fiscal situation and pressures to reduce spending, it is critical that we provide adequate funding for this program.


We would like to thank you for your attention to the EMPG program and the support for an increase of \$5 million in the Department of Homeland Security FY06 appropriations, for a total of \$185 million. We are pleased that you have set a precedent for increased funding of the EMPG program. Unfortunately, the President's budget request represents an approximately \$13 million cut to this vital program. Not only should this cut from FY06 be restored, but we request that you increase funding for the EMPG program an additional \$50 million for a total of \$235 million, to begin to address the shortfall identified by NEMA.

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Additionally, we request that your subcommittee maintain the EMPG program as a separate and distinct program.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to fund the EMPG program at \$235 million for FY2007. We look forward to working with you on this important program.

Sincerely,


George V. Voinovich
United States Senator


Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



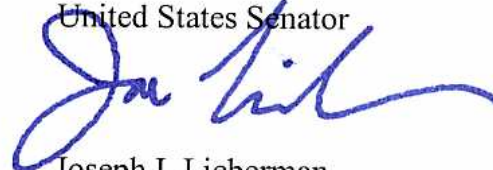








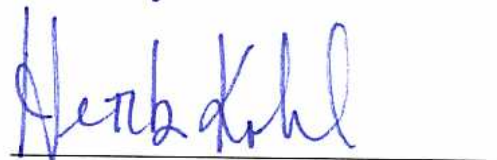
Daniel K. Akaka
United States Senator

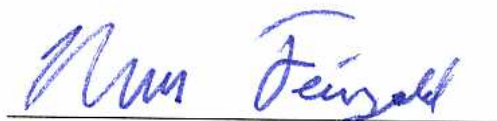

Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator











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