



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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February 4, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chairman
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven, Chairman
The Honorable Jean Shaheen, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cochran, Mikulski, Hoeven, and Shaheen:

I write on behalf of the nation's mayors to urge you to expeditiously report out a "clean" bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security for the remainder of the current fiscal year. A fully functioning Department of Homeland Security is critical to the security of our nation, our cities, and our citizens. A Department operating on a short-term continuing resolution, despite its best efforts, faces uncertainty and delays and simply cannot be fully functioning.

Under its current short-term continuing resolution, DHS cannot undertake any new spending initiatives to respond to national needs, including those along the border, or release any grant funding for non-disaster programs. Among the non-disaster programs it funds are the State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Areas Security Initiative, which provide vital resources to our cities to help them prevent and prepare for the threat of a terrorist attack. The Urban Search and Rescue System is a national resource that provides lifesaving aid to disaster-stricken communities both at home and abroad. The Assistance to Firefighter Grant programs help local fire departments meet their baseline readiness needs. Emergency Management Performance Grants help to fund the emergency managers so critical to our preparedness to prevent and respond to disasters when events – manmade and natural – occur.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson recently listed just a few of the activities vital to public safety and security that the Department has funded, including new communications equipment for over 80 Los Angeles area public safety agencies, surveillance cameras and environmental sensors used by NYPD to detect in real time potential terrorist activity, upgraded oxygen masks and tanks for over 30 Denver area; and 150 firefighter jobs in Detroit.

The current threat environment is serious, given the terrorist attacks in Paris, Ottawa and Sydney and public calls by terrorist organizations for further attacks on the Western targets. It's vital that Congress provide stable funding for the remainder of the year to the agency charged with keeping all of us safe and secure, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Cochran".

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director