

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 24, 2010

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

The Honorable George V. Voinovich
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Byrd and Ranking Member Voinovich:

We write to request an increase in funding for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program in the FY 2011 appropriation for the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the Department of Homeland Security. We respectfully request you fund the EMPG program at a minimum of \$530 million.

The EMPG program has existed since the 1950s, in acknowledgement of the federal interest in creating and maintaining a strong emergency management system at the state and local level. The EMPG program assists state and local governments in managing a variety of disasters and hazards, providing the only source of federal assistance to state and local governments for all-hazards emergency management capacity building.

Grantees utilize EMPG funds for personnel, planning, training, exercises, warning systems, public outreach, and other functions essential to effective preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. The EMPG program provides states the flexibility to prioritize spending according to the most urgent state and local emergency management needs. The federal funds are matched 50-50 by state and local funds, which increases accountability and supplements the impact of federal dollars. In addition, EMPG is a performance grant requiring deliverables and performance reviews.

According to the National Emergency Management Association 2010 Biennial Survey, the total need for EMPG funding next year is \$530 million. The total authorized amount for the program through the *Implementing the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007* (P.L. 110-53) is \$815 million for FY 2011. While we greatly appreciate the FY 2010 funding of \$340 million for this program, the difference represents the shortfall needed to fund existing jurisdictions and to establish emergency management programs in eligible jurisdictions not currently able to be included.

This year, the program is more important than ever as a critical resource for state and local governments facing fiscal uncertainty. States and localities are facing billions of dollars in shortfalls. Thus, federal investments assisting with preparedness activities are essential to preventing a disaster from escalating into a financial crisis for governments.

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While we recognize the current fiscal situation requires restraint in spending, it remains vital that Congress provide adequate funding for EMPG in order to meet the emergency management needs of state and local governments across the nation to maintain and build our capacity as a nation to respond to all disasters.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to fund the EMPG at a minimum of \$530 million for FY 2011.

Sincerely,




