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June 2, 2011

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Price, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Congressman Price:

On behalf of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), I wish to address some issues regarding funding for homeland security and emergency management grants in H.R. 2017 making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security in fiscal year 2012.

First, we wish to commend you and your staff for the recognition you afforded the Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG). Providing the full requested amount of \$350 million shows you recognize the importance of building and maintaining a true system of emergency management throughout the nation. NEMA has worked diligently with you to begin the process of measuring the successes of this program and will continue to provide updated information from our March 23, 2011, report, *Emergency Management Performance Grants: Providing Returns on a Nation's Investment*.

Measuring the success of EMPG, however, is only the beginning of the challenges facing our members. We now recognize the need to also provide comparable information to you in regard to the suite of homeland security grants. In addition to measurement, though, these grants also are due for reform and greater accountability. These are issues your Committee has addressed for some time, and we agree the time has come for reform.

This effort is large, but we are prepared to commit the resources of NEMA to provide results quickly. Within the next 60 days, NEMA will provide to you a report demonstrating the national-level impact of the suite of homeland security



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grants. Since fiscal year 2011 funds have not yet been awarded, we will discuss the uses of these grants throughout fiscal year 2010 and how those efforts have impacted national preparedness. The report will not solve every concern with these grants, but will begin answering your repeated question of “What are we getting for the investment?” This effort represents merely the beginning of our commitment to this effort.

Concurrently, NEMA is assembling a group of homeland security advisors, emergency management directors, and those representing both homeland security and emergency management responsibilities within their state. The charge of this group will be to provide you a comprehensive grants overhaul proposal to set “the bar” from which to measure future efforts; obtain cost savings to the nation; provide sustainability and predictability; and most importantly, promote national security. The discussion will be broad and the resulting recommendations to you bold.

During the discussion of the overhaul proposal, all possibilities will be on the table and opportunities will be identified for innovation at the state and local level to encourage bold ideas. Unfortunately, this effort is a large undertaking and will not be available for the fiscal year 2012 debate. We will, however, commit to providing you this proposal within the next 180 days in time for the 2013 discussion. In the meantime, we respectfully request you reconsider the current proposal in H.R. 2017 regarding homeland security grant funding.

These grants are the primary assistance program for states and localities providing support for developing and maintaining critical homeland security and emergency management capabilities. These funds enhance states’ abilities to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a natural disaster, terrorist attack, or other man-made event. H.R. 2017 would cut SHSGP funding by approximately 57 percent, severely inhibiting states’ ability to continue critical programs and meet national preparedness goals.

Through the fiscal year 2011 continuing resolution, states have already absorbed a cut of 21 percent to all these programs. Another dramatic cut such as what is proposed in H.R. 2017 could diminish these programs beyond the point of recovery. If you could temper the reductions for fiscal year 2012, rest assured a comprehensive solution to your concerns will be forthcoming in the very near future. If you could find the resources to reduce the amount of cuts to these programs in fiscal year 2012, an appropriate amount of time will be afforded for our effort to produce measureable results and the much needed reform and accountability you crave and demand for these programs.

We stand ready to provide any needed assistance in your efforts to complete the 2012 budget and as always offer the expertise of our membership to you. Please contact Matt Cowles, NEMA’s Director of Government Relations at 202-624-5459 or mcowles@csg.org should you require any further information on the efforts outlined.

Sincerely,



Jim Mullen
President, National Emergency Management Association
Director, Washington Military Department Emergency Management Division