



Supporting Those Who Serve



February 22, 2016

The Honorable Harold Rogers, Chairman
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Carter, Chairman
The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard,
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Rogers, Ms. Lowey, Mr. Carter, and Ms. Roybal-Allard:

We write on behalf of local elected officials, emergency managers, port operators, transit operators, police chiefs, sheriffs, and the major fire service organizations to register our strong concern with the severe cuts to four key homeland security grant programs proposed in the President’s FY (Fiscal Year) 2017 budget. In all these programs would be cut by 44 percent below FY 2016 levels. The Urban Area Security Initiative Program would be cut by 45 percent, from \$600 million this year to \$330 million next year. The State Homeland Security Grant Program would be cut by 57 percent, from \$467 million this year to \$200 million next year. Public Transportation Security Assistance would be cut by 15 percent to \$85,000 next year, Port Security grants by 7 percent to \$93 million next year.

There is a certain irony to the proposed cuts. They come in the wake of terrorist attacks not just in cities abroad, but on our shores, in Chattanooga, San Bernardino and Philadelphia, for example. Further, the Department of Homeland Security’s Budget in Brief highlights the programs’ accomplishments, and offers no explanation for the cuts:

“Through a suite of homeland security grant programs, (DHS) provided critical support to the nation’s preparedness for acts of terrorism and other threats and hazards. In 2015, FEMA awarded more than 600 grants to support state, local, tribal and territorial governments, transit agencies, port

operators, non-profit organizations, and other partners in building and sustaining the 31 critical core capabilities described in the National Preparedness Goal. As a result of those grants, states and localities across the country reported capability increases in 12 of the 31 core capabilities compared to 2014. The federal investment in those capabilities pays off each day in communities across the country during incidents large and small. For example, much of the training and equipment used in response to the May 2015 AMTRAK derailment in Philadelphia, including lighting, tourniquets, and technical rescue capabilities, were paid for with grants provided by FEMA.”

As you begin development of FY 2017 appropriations legislation, we urge you to reject these proposed cuts and to fund these critical programs at least at FY 2016 funding levels. At a time of heightened concern about terrorism and violent extremism at home, increased funding for them would certainly be justified. They play a vital role in ensuring that state and local governments are prepared to respond to future terrorist attacks and have the necessary resources to protect their communities and their residents.

If we can provide further information or assistance, please contact us through the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Public Safety Director, Laura DeKoven Waxman, at (202) 489-7534 or lwaxman@usmayors.org, or the International Association of Fire Chiefs’ Director of Government Relations and Policy, Ken LaSala, at (703) 273-9815 x347 or KLaSala@iafc.org.

Sincerely,

American Association of Port Authorities
American Public Transportation Association
The Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies
Big City Emergency Managers
Congressional Fire Services Institute
International Association of Fire Chiefs
International Association of Fire Fighters
Major Cities Chiefs Association
Major County Sheriffs’ Association
National Association of Counties
National Fusion Center Association
National Homeland Security Coalition
National League of Cities
National Sheriffs’ Association
National Volunteer Fire Council
The United States Conference of Mayors
U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA)

CC: The Honorable Michael McCaul, Chairman, House Homeland Security Committee
The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member, House Homeland Security Committee
The Honorable Dan Donovan, Chairman, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communication, House Homeland Security Committee
The Honorable Donald M. Payne, Jr., Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, House Homeland Security Committee