

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 18, 2007

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare your Fiscal Year 2009 Budget to Congress, we write to express our concern about reported cuts to important homeland security grant programs. Specifically, a November 26 document from the Office of Management and Budget indicates that the FY09 Budget will slash funds for domestic homeland security and eliminate grant programs that benefit port security, transit security and emergency management.

The Port Security Grant Program funds security improvements at our nation's ports. These grants are awarded through a competitive, risk-based process to address critical vulnerabilities, conduct training and exercises, and develop the ability of our ports to be full security partners with federal, state and local agencies. Our ports are hubs of our nation's economy but remain a vulnerable presence in many communities. As you know, the *SAFE Port Act* signed into law October 2006 authorized \$400 million for port security grants.

The Transit Security Grant Program helps secure high-risk/high-consequence transit, provide a deterrent presence, train key security personnel, and conduct public awareness campaigns. The bombings of commuter trains in Madrid and the transit system in London demonstrate that mass transit continues to be a prime target for terrorist attack. Millions of Americans use mass transit every day, and we should continue to provide the funds to keep them safe. As you know, transit security grants were authorized in the 9/11 Recommendations bill signed into law earlier this year.

The Emergency Performance Management Grant Program allows our communities to develop emergency management plans to respond to a disaster. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the collapse of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the California wildfires, and the recent storms in the Pacific Northwest highlight the critical importance of effective, pre-incident disaster planning in all of our communities. These emergency response plans are developed at the local level, by local officials who are most familiar with the capabilities and needs of their communities. As you know, the Emergency Performance Management Grant Program was also authorized in the 9/11 Recommendations bill.

These homeland security programs were all authorized by legislation this Administration supported and signed into law. Unfortunately, real security does not come cheap and cannot be achieved with mere words of support. At a time when this Administration asks for hundreds of billions of dollars to conduct its war in Iraq, it should also provide adequate support to protect Americans here at home and reject these misguided cuts to vital homeland security programs.

Sincerely,

Patty Murray

Harry Reid

Nam June Paik

Shirley

Robert A. Taft

Tom Carper

Dick Durbin

Chuck Schumer

Democratic Caucus

Frank R. Lautenberg

Robert Menendez
