



May 10, 2024

Dear Members of Congress:

The FY24 appropriations agreement for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will have lasting, deleterious effects to the first responder, homeland security, and emergency management communities. The nine percent reductions to all grant programs within the Federal Assistance Account at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) demonstrates a lack of understanding of how state, local, tribal, and territorial governments help augment federal preparedness efforts.

The associations endorsing this letter represent state and local elected officials, first responders, and those directly responsible for homeland security and emergency management across the country and in communities you represent. We each take our role in national preparedness seriously, and we urge Congress to do the same. The FY24 cuts in state and local funding will negatively impact our country for years to come. It will stymie states' and localities' efforts to protect their communities from cyber and other threats to our infrastructure, hobble first responders and state and local officials' efforts to respond to disasters and reduce assistance to tribes with their preparedness efforts. Programs that will be adversely affected are:

- The **State Homeland Security Grant Program** and **Urban Area Security Initiative** allow state and local governments to augment gaps in national preparedness and enhance terrorism prevention capabilities during a time when nationwide threats are at their greatest since September 11, 2001.
- The **Port Security Grants** and **Public Transportation Security Assistance** allow managers of critical infrastructure nodes to protect commerce and millions of Americans who utilize public transportation in the nation's largest metropolitan areas.
- The **Emergency Management Performance Grant** is a 50/50 grant supporting baseline emergency management capabilities when those professionals are stretched the thinnest managing events beyond natural hazards to include cyber-incidents, asylum seekers, and school safety.

- The **Assistance to Firefighters** and **Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response** grants provide critical matching grants to local fire departments for basic training, equipment, and staffing.
- The **Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Assessment Program** addresses the flood risk across the country and directly impacts the abilities for communities to manage their location within a floodplain and save the lives and property of millions of Americans.
- The **Regional Catastrophic Grant Program** is a one-of-a-kind program allowing communities and states to work across jurisdictional borders and coordinate their catastrophic planning efforts.
- The **Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program** just recently came into its own and allowed underserved tribal communities to bolster their local security posture for a range of preparedness efforts.

While each of these programs represents unique constituencies, partnerships, and capabilities, they also represent decades of post-September 11 efforts. Countless reports, testimonies, and anecdotes highlight the direct return on investment of these programs. The cuts made in the FY24 spending agreement for DHS will result in an inability to sustain response and recovery capabilities across the country and put critical infrastructure at risk. This comes during a time when nation-state actors, domestic and international extremists, and the hazards of our natural environment pose a tremendous threat. As you consider supplemental funding this summer and the FY25 budget, we urge Congress to restore these cuts and the trust established over decades of work between federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal stakeholders.

Sincerely,

American Public Works Association
Association of State Floodplain Managers
Big City Emergency Managers
Council of State Governments
International Association of Emergency Managers
International Association of Fire Chiefs
International City/County Management Association
Major Cities Chiefs Association
Major County Sheriffs of America
National Association of Counties
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Emergency Management Association
National League of Cities
National Fire Protection Association
National Fusion Center Association
National Sheriffs' Association
National Volunteer Fire Council
The United States Conference of Mayors