



Local governments working together for a better metropolitan region

November 12, 2009

Senator Barbara Mikulski
United States Senate
503 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski:

nty The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors requests that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) suspend the application of its policy regarding the use of preparedness funds for sustainment purposes and revise its guidelines to ensure funds are available for critical homeland security and emergency management capabilities. The Board of Directors, echoing concerns expressed by the Governors of Maryland and Virginia, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the National Governor's Association, the National Emergency Management Association and thousands of regional first responders, is requesting that the National Capital Region Congressional Delegation lead the effort to reinstate the FEMA policy authorizing the use of grant funds for maintenance/sustainment.

v Without prior notice, the Grant Programs Directorate at FEMA informed states on September 22, 2009 of a policy change regarding the use of Homeland Security Program (HSGP) funds to sustain homeland security investments. The change indicated that grantees may only use grants funds to pay for "maintenance agreements, user fees, and other sustainment costs as long as the equipment was purchased with FEMA preparedness grant funding and the sustainment costs fall within the performance period of the grant that was used to purchase the equipment." This change places more extensive limitations on the use of these funds than did prior policy. The effect of this change is to abandon DHS's pragmatic approach to maintenance and sustainment that allowed urban areas and states to undertake more cost effective approaches to ensure that HSGP funds are applied to achieve core, priority capabilities.

This policy will make it more difficult for the National Capital Region (NCR) to build and sustain the capabilities needed to prepare for and respond to acts of terrorism and natural disasters. The Board of Directors respectfully requests that you take action that will result in the suspension of the FEMA policy prohibiting the use of preparedness grant funds for sustainment to insure these capabilities are not lost.

Please feel free to contact David Robertson, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments at [drobertson@mw cog.org](mailto:d Robertson@mw cog.org) or (202) 962-3260 for additional information or comment.

Sincerely,

Penelope Gross
Chair, COG Board of Directors

Cc: The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
The Honorable Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency,
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
The Honorable Peter Orszag, Director, Office of Management and Budget
John Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism