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September 13, 2012

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senate
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Subject: Area Officials Seek Congressional Support for Inauguration Safety Expenses Incurred by the National Capital Region

Dear Senator Mikulski:

I am writing on behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors to ask the U.S. Congress to strongly support federal appropriations for the significant local, state and regional public safety-related expenses associated with the 2013 Presidential Inaugural.

This request has broad regional support. COG's Chief Administrative Officers Committee, which is comprised of area city and county managers, and the Senior Policy Group responsible for the National Capital Region Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant, requested the COG Board to convey this request to the Washington area Congressional delegation and House and Senate leadership.

Inauguration Preparations Are Already Underway

Planning by local, state, federal and regional partners for the 2013 Inauguration has been underway for some time. Area officials recognize that ensuring a successful and safe Inauguration is a shared federal and regional responsibility. That responsibility was underscored during the 2009 Presidential Inaugural, which experienced a record 1.8 million attendees for the swearing-in and parade and with more than 1.5 million Metro transit riders on January 20, 2009.

Although many events and activities occur within the District of Columbia, Inauguration preparation, coordination and response are also regional responsibilities. The Inauguration period places tremendous demands on law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, transportation and mass care for visitors, residents and commuters. This region has long understood, and the

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events of 9-11 only served to underscore, the importance of regional coordination in preparing for and responding to regional events. The Presidential Inaugural must be the one event we always get right, both for the country and for the world.

Funding Uncertainty May Jeopardize Preparation

Prior to the 2009 Presidential Inauguration, Congress made no special provision for National Capital Region costs associated with the Inauguration other than those included in an appropriation intended to cover all National Special Security Events (NSSEs) in the District of Columbia, which includes such events as the Global Nuclear Security Summit and the President's State of the Union Address to Congress.

In contrast to funding provided to host cities for the Presidential nominating conventions, the National Capital Region historically receives no similar allocation for the Inauguration, even though the scale of the multi-day and multi-location Inauguration event meets or exceeds that of the national political conventions and many other NSSEs.

Initially, Congress provided no supplemental funding to support local and state government and regional partner expenses for the 2009 Inauguration. Subsequent to the Inauguration and at the urging of local and state officials, Congress appropriated special funding for reimbursement of regional Inauguration expenses, although less than the \$76.6 million in costs incurred, according to the 2009 Inauguration After-Action Report.

2009 Inauguration After-Action Recommendations

It is the understanding of area officials that some provision has been made to-date in approved or pending appropriations legislation to support local, state and regional costs for the 2013 Inauguration. An independent, After-Action Report commissioned by area officials following the 2009 Inauguration raised concerns about the impact of funding uncertainty on advance planning and the commitment of personnel and public resources required for regional support for future Inaugurations.

The Report recommended local and state officials work with federal partners and Congress to provide greater funding certainty in advance of the 2013 Inauguration. The Report further recommended COG's Chief Administrative Officers Committee and the Senior Policy Group take the lead in securing federal funding prior to the Inauguration to ensure states and localities are able to conduct the planning, law enforcement, transportation, health and medical support necessary for the Inauguration.

Difficult Budgets Facing All Levels of Government

Local and state governments, which must balance their budgets each year, understand that federal resources are also limited. Safety and security requirements have only grown in the past four years and emergency managers project local, state and regional (such as WMATA) Inauguration expenses will meet and perhaps exceed the almost \$80 million expended in 2009.

The past four years have also witnessed some of the toughest local and state government budget cycles in recent memory in the National Capital Region. Residential and commercial assessments remain below the 2007-2008 pre-recession level for most area local governments, which also expect continued tight budgets in the coming year. As the 2009 Inauguration After-Action Report indicates, it is unrealistic to expect area governments that have had to reduce essential public services to their residents and businesses carry the burden of what should be a shared financial responsibility with the federal government for supporting a safe 2013 Inauguration.

Next Steps

Local, state and regional officials are in the process of finalizing estimates of 2013 Inauguration-related expenses. COG is asking the National Capital Region Congressional delegation and House and Senate leadership to identify the most suitable appropriations bill and to commit to partnering with area officials to support sufficient federal funding for the shared responsibilities associated with the 2013 Inauguration.

Thank you for your consideration of COG's request and we look forward to working with federal, state and local partners to host a successful and safe Presidential Inaugural in Washington, DC and the National Capital Region next year.

Please contact David Robertson, COG's Executive Director, at 202-962-3260 or drobotson@mwcog.org if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Principi
Chairman, COG Board of Directors
Supervisor, Prince William County, Virginia

cc:
National Capital Area Congressional Delegation
Congressional Leadership, House and Senate
COG Board of Directors
COG Chief Administrative Officers Committee
Senior Policy Group