



March 5, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House

Dear President Bush:

The nation's mayors want to thank you for your recent statements expressing serious concern with the inadequate level of first responder funding in the Fiscal Year 2003 omnibus appropriations bill approved by Congress. We want to work with you and your Administration to find a solution to this continuing crisis. Therefore, we respectfully urge you to submit a supplemental appropriations request to Congress which includes significant, flexible funding for America's domestic troops: our police, fire and emergency response personnel.

Since September 11, 2001, local governments across this nation have spent billions of dollars to increase security and strengthen preparedness efforts, as well as respond to numerous federal alerts and changes in threat levels. As highlighted by the recent increase in the Homeland Security Advisory level, our nation remains in a domestic war against terrorism – and our first responders must be adequately equipped and trained to both prevent acts of terrorism and respond to any attacks on our cities and the nation. This need is even higher in that many experts predict that the likelihood of a domestic attack will increase in the event of war.

We strongly believe that a majority of the funding must be provided directly to cities and counties to avoid delays at the state level and ensure that our nation's front-line troops - which are predominantly at the local level - have immediate access to flexible resources. We also urge that new first responder funding not come at the expense of critically needed existing public safety partnership programs which have been highly successful in the ongoing fight against crime.

We thank you for your continued commitment to security for America's cities. Please know that we are totally committed to this effort, and will work closely with you to see that Congress approves the supplemental request.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston
President

Cc: The Honorable Tom Ridge
Ruben Barrales