

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

December 12, 2012

The Hon. Buck McKeon  
Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith:

As you conference with the Senate to reach an agreement on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2013, we urge you to retain provisions in the Senate passed bill to reauthorize funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER) and U.S. Fire Administration (USFA).

The AFG program, also known as the FIRE Act grant program, provides federal grants to local fire departments and Emergency Medical Services to help address a variety of equipment, training and other firefighter and emergency response needs. The SAFER program provides grants to fire departments for the purpose of increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

The Senate language authorizes funding for USFA and the two grant programs through the end of Fiscal Year 2017. In addition, the amendment makes several critical improvements to the AFG and SAFER grant programs, including raising current grant caps, reducing the local match under FIRE, significantly simplifying the local match under SAFER, and providing waivers for communities facing significant economic hardship.

These improvements are long overdue and passed the Senate by unanimous consent. We are confident they enjoy significant bipartisan support from our House colleagues and strongly urge you to support their inclusion in the final legislation.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Robert Andrews  
Chairman  
Congressional Fire Services Caucus



Steny Hoyer  
Co-Chair  
Congressional Fire Services Caucus



Peter King  
Co-Chair  
Congressional Fire Services Caucus



David Reichert  
Co-Chair  
Congressional Fire Services Caucus