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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025  
<http://appropriations.senate.gov>

May 2, 2011

CHARLES J. HOUY, STAFF DIRECTOR  
BRUCE EVANS, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On February 18, 2011 and March 17, 2011, I wrote you urging that you request an emergency FY 2011 supplemental to address the shortfall in funding in the Department of Homeland Security Disaster Relief Fund. The \$1.2 billion shortfall for FY 2011 was largely the result of past Presidentially-designated catastrophic disasters, such as Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike, the Midwest floods of 2008, and the Tennessee floods of 2010. Regrettably, no request was submitted to the Congress. The recent tornados make this request all the more urgent demonstrating once again that natural disasters are indeed unpredictable, expensive, and require our compassionate and effective response.

In the absence of an emergency supplemental funding request, Congress had to make the difficult decision to cut the base budget for the Department of Homeland Security by \$1 billion to accommodate the shortfall in fiscal year 2011. The only other alternative was for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to stop making payments for past disaster recovery efforts when they were estimated to run out of money in July of 2011, the beginning of the hurricane season. Congress determined that it made no sense to compound the pain of communities devastated by past disasters by stopping the recovery process.

As Chairman of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, I am now drafting the FY 2012 Homeland Security Appropriations bill. We have scrutinized your \$43.6 billion request. With one glaring exception, I find the request to be balanced and responsive to the many threats that this Nation faces. Regrettably, as in FY 2011, the request does not include any funding to address what FEMA estimated before the most recent disaster to be a \$3 billion shortfall for the Disaster Relief Fund for FY 2012.

This past week, you told the victims of the tornados in Alabama that you would make sure that they were not forgotten. You made a similar promise in New Orleans on the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. These promises cannot be fulfilled without funding for the recovery effort, efforts that often take many years of sustained investment.

It is true that in these tough economic times, we must make disciplined funding decisions, but it makes no sense to strip agencies of the resources they need to deter, prepare for, and respond to future disasters in order to pay for the costs of past disasters. Yet without leadership from the Administration, we were forced, in the full-year continuing resolution, to cut funding

below your request for first responder equipment and training grants, cyber security, port security, transit security, and aviation security. Frankly, given the increased threat of homegrown terrorism that you eloquently spoke of in your State of the Union Address, and the evolving threat that Secretary Napolitano has testified to, these cuts were neither responsible nor cost-effective.

Your FY 2012 request of \$1.8 billion, which is based on a projection of the five-year average of disaster costs excluding catastrophic disasters, includes no funding for the known costs of past catastrophic disasters. As a candidate, you rightly criticized your predecessor for hiding known costs from his budget.

I urge you to seek emergency funding for the documented \$3 billion shortfall for FY 2012. As you know, it is consistent with past practice, by Democrats and Republicans alike, to fund Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) shortfalls with an emergency designation. Since 1992, \$110 billion out of \$131 billion appropriated to the DRF has been true emergency spending. You include in your budget an allowance for disaster costs, which is a responsible recognition of the potential costs of disasters. However, absent an emergency funding request, this allowance is nothing more than an unfilled promise to communities recovering from disasters.

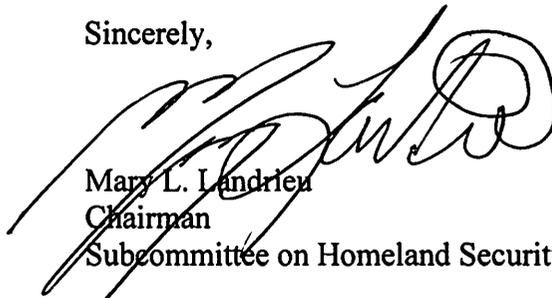
The Department of Homeland Security simply cannot absorb a \$3 billion shortfall in the proposed budget of \$43.6 billion for fiscal year 2012. Absent an emergency request, the priorities that you have identified in your request to secure the homeland will all regrettably be jeopardized.

Congress will begin drafting fiscal year 2012 appropriations bill this month. In the continued uncertainty of how the Administration will address the shortfall, I fear the House will make the same irresponsible cuts it proposed in H.R. 1, only deeper, including cuts in FEMA, the Transportation Security Administration, United States Coast Guard, United States Secret Service, cyber, port, and transit security, and grants to State and local governments to equip and train first responders. In light of the threats this Nation faces, such cuts make no sense.

I ask that you submit an emergency funding request for the estimated shortfall for fiscal year 2012 without delay. Disaster victims in 49 States, including the victims of the recent tornados that have crossed this Nation, would be impacted if FEMA were forced to stop disaster recovery payments next spring.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrien  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security