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EDUCATION AND LABOR

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HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, LABOR, AND PENSION



Joe Courtney

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April 24, 2008

W. Ross Ashley
Assistant Administrator
DHS/FEMA/Grant Programs Directorate
Tech World Building - South Tower 9th Floor
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Mr. Ashley:

I write this letter in support of the Bungay Fire Brigade in Woodstock, Connecticut's Assistance to Firefighters grant proposal for the purchase of a new compressor fill station. In Bungay's AFG application, submitted to you on April 4, 2008, the Department detailed the benefits of funding a new compressor fill station to fill their SCBA bottles. I endorse the Department's findings and recommendations.

The current compressor system that Bungay uses is non NFPA compliant and home-made. The gravity-fill cascade system is time-consuming and unsafe. The filling bottles currently have no protective housing creating a danger for the operator. The brigade has tried to mitigate any threat by placing the bottles in buckets but this still creates a severe safety hazard.

If the Bungay Fire Brigade were to pay for this expense they would have to spend their entire municipal budget plus fundraising efforts for a year. The department is all volunteer and they raise about 20% of their annual budget through fundraising. Their town government has already informed the department that budget cuts are inevitable for next year. I ask that you give Bungay Fire Brigade's AFG request full consideration.

I thank the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for facilitating the Assistance to Firefighters Grant review process. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if I can be of any further assistance to the Bungay Fire Brigade's application. If you have any questions please contact Jenny Contois of my Norwich District Office at 860-886-0139.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Best Wishes,

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress