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September 4, 2007

Mr. Corey Gruber  
Acting Assistant Secretary of Grants and Training  
Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, Building #410  
Washington, D. C. 20528

**SUBJECT: COLCHESTER HAYWARD VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY  
SAFER GRANT**

I am writing in strong support of the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company's recent application for funding from the U. S. Department of Homeland Security's SAFER Grant Program. Funding is being requested to assist in the retention and recruitment of volunteer firefighters.

The request of \$60,000 would be used to reimburse volunteers for participating in the mandatory training programs, augment their fuel compensation fee for emergency responses and initiate a paid on-call system.

The Colchester Hayward Fire Department consists of one career Chief and four career firefighters and over 100 volunteer firefighters. The increased requirements of mandatory training coupled with individuals' busy work schedules have made it increasingly difficult to retain volunteers, without whom they could not operate. This funding would be a valuable resource to Colchester and assist them in, not only, retaining their volunteers but recruiting new members as well.

As of this date, Colchester does not have a 2007-2008 budget and will be going for their fourth budget referendum soon. This has resulted in significant cuts to the Fire Department's budget making it impossible for them to secure this funding at the local level.

This grant is important for ensuring that the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department can adequately protect the residents and businesses of Colchester. This application has my complete support. I appreciate your consideration of this application and should you have any comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly, or my District Director, Jenny Contois, at (860)886-0139

Sincerely,

  
JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress