

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2003

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Office of the Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Naval Security Station
Washington, D.C. 20393

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to urge you to direct a significant share of the discretionary homeland security funding Congress recently approved – in HR 1559, Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations for FY 2003 – to the State of New Jersey. We have requested a meeting with you and expect to begin the discussions with Under Secretary Asa Hutchinson next week.

Frankly, we were stunned that none of the federal homeland security funds distributed this month through the Office of Domestic Preparedness (\$100 million from FY 2003) went to help protect and secure the more than 100 at risk sites in New Jersey including bridges, tunnels, airports, seaports, petroleum, chemical, nuclear and pharmaceutical plants, and military bases. With the nation at a level of high-alert domestic security status, the state expects to spend nearly \$107 million this year to train and deploy the personnel needed to protect these critical infrastructure sites and implement an effective domestic preparedness plan (see enclosure). We are very concerned that in determining where discretionary funds should go, key decision makers within your department disproportionately relied upon the boundaries of large cities while missing the credible threat to vulnerable assets that exist within our state.

Thankfully, Congress addressed this concern in the final language of the conference report to HR 1559. With regard to the \$700 million discretionary funding set-aside for high threat areas and the protection of critical infrastructure, the report states: "In making grants to state and local governments, the conferees further direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into consideration credible threat, vulnerability, and the presence of infrastructure of national importance, population and identified needs of public agencies. Grants may be made to single or multiple jurisdictions in the same urban area."

We are confident that you will agree that New Jersey meets this criteria. New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation. It is home to at least a dozen of the nation's sites that have already been placed on the FBI's "National Critical Infrastructure Site" list. New Jersey has an unparalleled collection of infrastructure of all types located within densely populated areas, including facilities (chemical plants and transportation nodes) that have been documented by intelligence gained from al Qaeda operatives as compelling targets. The Environmental Protection Agency has determined that our state has 11 separate sites where a chemical release could poison more than 1 million people.

Beyond this, New Jersey has long been a corridor for terrorist activity and critical threats remain. The plot to blow up the World Trade Center in 1993 was hatched in New Jersey by terrorists who lived here and purchased their lethal chemicals here. Islamic radicals who later targeted the Holland Tunnel, Lincoln Tunnel, Federal Plaza, and the United Nations resided in New Jersey and were busted (many now serving life sentences) by members of a New Jersey /New York joint terrorism task force.

Thirteen of the nineteen September 11th hijackers passed through New Jersey prior to the attacks. Members of the terrorist cell that hijacked American Airlines Flight #77 resided in New Jersey for several months before the attacks. According to the FBI, a number of the hijackers obtained identification documentation in New Jersey, had bank accounts here, and held their planning meetings in our state.

The anthrax attacks, which terrorized the nation, were launched in New Jersey. The state took the lead and deployed medical, scientific and law enforcement officials to respond to the attacks and mitigate the damage. Still, five people were killed. Two of the five were from Washington and one was in New York. Many New Jersey citizens still suffer side-effects from the strong antibiotics administered and our postal facilities have yet to be restored to normal operating procedures.

Obviously, the security and safety of New York City, New Jersey and the nation are inextricably intertwined. Our first responders (fire, EMT and police) have had a mutual aid pact with their counterparts in New York City since the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. They rely upon and support each other in ways large and small to protect the entire metropolitan region.

Parts of New Jersey are closer to Ground Zero than are some parts of the city itself. We are connected by roads, tunnels, bridges, ferries, trains, seaports, and airports. Overall there are 450,000 people who commute to lower Manhattan each day. Each year, 212 million vehicles traverse our states' tunnels, bridges and ferries which must be protected by both New Jersey and New York.

Of the three area airports, the busiest by far is Newark International Airport -- in New Jersey. Nearly 60 percent of all containerized maritime cargo handled by all North Atlantic ports goes through the Port of New York/New Jersey and the vast majority of the cargo flows through New Jersey's docks and onto our rails and roads.

As if these facts were not compelling enough, we must address the recent remarks by DHS spokeswoman Rachel Sunbarger. On Friday, April 11, Ms. Sunbarger was quoted in *The Star Ledger*, 2003 saying: "We actually had the discretion (to help new Jersey in addition to New York City) ...We wanted to keep it clean this round."

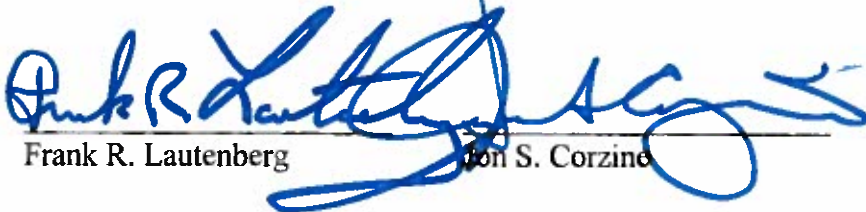
We take great exception to Ms. Sunbarger's analysis and hope you do too. The discretionary funds issued to the Department of Homeland Security are not meant to be limited to programs that are simple and tidy but rather those that are comprehensive, effective and designed to save lives and assets where they are most likely to be threatened. The federal government

must help local jurisdictions meet the dangers where they exist no matter how sophisticated, interwoven, overlapping or messy the threats and danger may be.

The State of New Jersey faces unique threats and burdens because of our close bond with and proximity to, the City of New York. Our law enforcement agencies have been effective in investigating, anticipating and preempting terrorist activity in the past but as the likelihood of attack has increased so too must the funding and resources available to help detect and disrupt terrorist activities.

Given the ongoing critical threat in our area, the federal government has a responsibility to help the state as it works to secure points of vulnerability. We look forward to working with you directly to ensure that New Jersey's state domestic preparedness plans receive the full federal support needed to protect our densely populated area and enhance national public safety.

Sincerely,

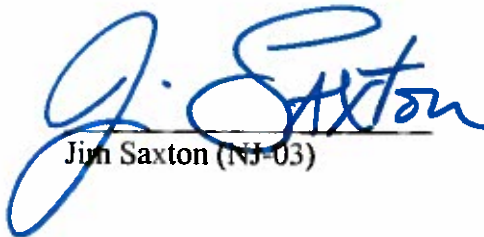


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