

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

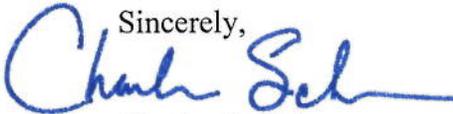
Dear Secretary Johnson:

I am pleased to write in support of the application submitted by the City of Newburgh Fire Department for funding under FEMA's *Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response* grant program. Such funding will enable the Newburgh Fire Department to avoid the layoffs of 12 firefighters.

The City of Newburgh contains critical infrastructure of local, regional and national significance. The Department's responsibilities include emergency response to the CSX railroad, Newburgh Beacon Ferry, Newburgh Beacon Bridge, Stewart International Airport, the Orange County Community College, Mount Saint Mary's College, the Hudson River and the Petroleum Port of Newburgh. Stewart International Airport is 5 miles west of the City of Newburgh, and West Point Military Academy is 15 miles to the south. NFD currently provides manpower and support to the West Point Fire Department, and is first due to Stewart Airport for all aircraft emergencies. The City also houses the region's largest tank farm for the distribution of gasoline and oil products. Additionally, millions of gallons of light crude oil are transported by river and rail each week through NFD's district.

In 2013 the City of Newburgh Fire Department was awarded a 2012 SAFER grant, enabling the City to hire 15 new firefighters to replace positions lost from 2000 through 2013. This return to previous staffing levels allowed the Department to meet NFPA 1710 standards and increase fire ground efficiency. The Department is statistically more effective and efficient as a direct result of this increased staffing. With funding, the Department will avoid the layoffs of twelve firefighters. Such cuts would reduce the Department to 2012 staffing levels, jeopardizing hard-earned increases in safety and efficiency and threatening NFPA compliance. Such staffing reductions would decrease initial response abilities, diminish the safety of the community, create more hazardous working conditions for firefighters, and increase long term costs for the city. Without SAFER funding, firefighters will lose their livelihoods. The community, city, area, county, visitors, and residents will be left at risk. I applaud the Newburgh Fire Department for its foresight, and sincerely hope the application meets with your approval.

Thank you for your consideration. For additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Grants Director, Marissa Emanuel, in my Washington office at 202-224-6542.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator