

January 4, 2005

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Ridge:

As the Department of Homeland Security determines its FY2005 awards to states under the Port Security Grant Program and the Transit Security Grant Program, we write to you to urge your careful consideration of Connecticut's strategic regional position and its enhanced security needs.

Connecticut's location, as the midpoint of the New York-to-Boston corridor and as the gateway to all of New England, means the state plays a role of special significance to the safety, vitality and security of more than 14 million people. The major interstate highways of I-84, I-91 and I-95 support much of the commercial activity northeast of New York State. Similarly, Connecticut's transit systems are integral to the region. On a daily basis over 100,000 commuters travel to New York on Connecticut's rail system. New Haven's train terminal is a hub for train travel and commerce in the Northeastern United States. Thousands of people commute daily along the Metro-North Commuter Rail Line from suburban New York and Southwestern Connecticut into the financial and business districts of New York City. Much of the passenger and cargo traffic carried by rail to New England must pass on Connecticut's coastal rail lines, and these lines form a critical link in the rail system connecting New York City to Providence and Boston.

Connecticut's role as a social and economic crossroads requires that the State expend substantial resources to protect both residents and nonresidents in their travels and to ensure the safe transport of valuable economic commodities. For these reasons, additional funding to protect the state's transit systems is essential and we hope that you will keep this in mind in allocating this year's upcoming transit grants.

Moreover, we urge you to take a more explicitly regional approach to transit funding in these awards than was done in FY2004. Last year, in cases in which a transit system extended into more than one state, the state in which the relevant transit agency was headquartered was the sole designated grant recipient. In the case of Metro-North, this meant that New York State was the grant recipient, although the Metro-North system operates in both New York and Connecticut. Although the grantee state was required to pass through 80% of the money to the relevant transit agency, there was no requirement that that state or the transit agency allocate any of the grant funds to protect those portions of the transit system that are located in any other state. We believe that the better and more equitable approach where there is a multistate transit system is to take steps to ensure the entire system is protected. If the Department continues its approach of

making grants to multi-state transit systems through only a single state, we believe that the Department needs to create a mechanism to ensure that appropriate funding is passed on to all states participating in the transit system and that the home state of the transit agency is not allocated a disproportionate share of the funds. Such an approach would better reflect the reality of interconnected transit systems in the Northeastern United States and the need to protect all parts of those systems. When the threat level has been raised for New York City, for example, the state of Connecticut has had to expend significant resources without reimbursement to increase security on the many trains running between Connecticut and New York, including, among other things, placing state troopers on trains and deploying additional canine units. In an interconnected transit system, if all of the system is not protected, then none of the system is.

Like its highways and transit systems, Connecticut's ports are also of substantial regional, and in some cases national, importance. New Haven's harbor is the home of the Regional Strategic Petroleum Reserve storage terminal, the second largest heating oil reserve in the Northeast, as well as the jet fuel pipeline that provides 2.7 million gallons of petroleum liquids per year to Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts and Bradley Airport. New Haven is the port of entry for energy products serving business, industry and residential home heating markets throughout New England. A disruption in the flow of petroleum products through New Haven Harbor during a frigid New England winter, even for a few days, could prove disastrous to many families throughout the Northeast. Groton and New London, home to a nuclear submarine base, significant shipbuilding facilities, weapons stockpiles and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, also have significant security needs, as does the Port of Bridgeport, which is a major center for the importation of perishable goods and a terminal for passenger ferry traffic. We therefore hope the Department will also give the state's considerable port security needs due consideration when port security grants are awarded later this year.

As you know, the Department of Homeland Security recently announced that it was not renewing the Urban Area Security Initiative grant for the New Haven region. We believe that decision was erroneous and vastly undervalued the significant public and private infrastructure that exists in New Haven and Connecticut and which is of immense strategic value to the entire New England region. As has been stated in previous correspondence to you, the termination of the UASI grant, coupled with the announced reductions in Connecticut's funding under the State Homeland Security Grant Program, will limit the State's plans to enhance the protection provided to the citizens of Connecticut, as well as each of the surrounding states. These cuts make Connecticut's need for funding under the Port Security Grants Program and the Transit Security Grants Program all the more urgent: inadequate funding under these programs could jeopardize the state's security enhancements at the Port of New Haven as well as its other ports and would further threaten Connecticut's ability to address security needs at critical transportation infrastructure facilities.

The United States' security depends on a comprehensive strategic view of the nation and its system needs. In the case of Connecticut, the state's role as a regional, commercial and cultural leader comes with significant responsibilities for security and protection.

We urge your careful consideration of Connecticut's significant responsibilities and potential vulnerabilities in providing enhanced homeland security for Connecticut's residents and the entire Northeastern Region of the United States as the Department prepares to allocate funding to states under the Transit System Security Grant Program and to solicit applications for the Port Security Grant Program. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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Governor

CHRISTOPHER J. DODD
Senator

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cc: C. Suzanne Mencer
Director, Office of Domestic Preparedness