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REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FIRE GRANT PROGRAMS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

JULY 8, 2009

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REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FIRE GRANT PROGRAMS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2009

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in Room 2318 of the Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ben Ray Luján [Vice Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

BART GORDON, TENNESSEE
CHAIRMAN

RALPH M. HALL, TEXAS
RANKING MEMBER

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Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation's

Hearing on

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FIRE GRANT PROGRAMS

Wednesday, July 8, 2009
10:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Witness List

Panel I

The Honorable Bill Pascrell
Congressman
New Jersey – 8th District

Panel II

The Honorable Timothy Manning
Deputy Administrator of the National Preparedness Directorate, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Chief Jeffrey D. Johnson
First Vice President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and Chief, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue

Chief Jack Carriger
Stayton, Oregon Fire District First Vice Chairman of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)

Mr. Kevin O'Connor
Assistant to the General President, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)

Chief Curt Varone
Division Manager of the Public Fire Protection Division, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Mr. Ed Carlin
Training Officer, Spalding Rural Volunteer Fire Department, Spalding, Nebraska

HEARING CHARTER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Reauthorization of the Fire Grant Programs

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2009
10:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M.
2318 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

I. Purpose

On Wednesday, July 8, the Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation of the Committee on Science and Technology will hold a hearing to examine the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant programs, together referred to as the FIRE grants, in preparation for their reauthorization. The current authorization for AFG will expire at the end of this fiscal year; the authorization for SAFER will expire at the end of FY 2010.

II. Witnesses

Panel I

Congressman Bill Pascrell is the Representative from New Jersey–8th District.

Panel II

Mr. Timothy Manning is the Deputy Administrator of the National Preparedness Directorate at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Chief Jeffrey D. Johnson is the First Vice President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the Chief of the Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue.

Chief Jack Carriger is the Stayton, Oregon Fire District First Vice Chairman of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC).

Mr. Kevin O'Connor is the Assistant to the General President of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF).

Chief Curt Varone is the Division Manager of the Public Fire Protection Division for the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Mr. Ed Carlin is the Training Officer of the Spalding Rural Volunteer Fire Department in Spalding, Nebraska.

III. Hearing Issues

Congress created AFG and SAFER to increase the safety of the public and firefighting personnel, from fire and related hazards. This hearing will examine how well FEMA has met this challenge in awarding grants to fire departments across the country, with respect to balancing the needs of career, volunteer, and combination fire departments, along with national emergency response funding priorities. In addition, the hearing will examine progress toward decreasing the number of fire fatalities, injuries, and related property loss, in both civilian and firefighter populations.

IV. Background

The AFG Program competitively awards funds to local fire departments to purchase emergency response equipment and training. SAFER, also competitively awarded, funds the hiring, recruitment, and retention of firefighting personnel. Both programs are administered by FEMA, within DHS, through the Office of Grants and Training. Since AFG began in 2001, fire departments across the country have over subscribed for the grants. For FY 2008 alone, FEMA received 21,022 applications for AFG funds, with requests totaling $3,137,121,053 and 1,314 applications for

SAFER funds, with requests totaling $583,953,578. A total of $454,403,597 in grants was awarded for AFG in FY 2008 and $152,847,595 was awarded for SAFER in FY 2008. In addition to the grants that go for equipment and personnel, FEMA also provides funding for fire prevention and safety, as well as grants to emergency medical service (EMS) providers unaffiliated with fire departments.

History of FIRE Grants

Congress created the AFG program in 2000 in response to concerns over local budget shortfalls at a time of increasing responsibilities for fire departments. Introduced as H.R. 1168, the *Firefighter Investment and Response Act,* the program was enacted into law in the FY 2001 *National Defense Authorization Act* (P.L. 398, Title XVII). Congress reauthorized AFG in the FY 2005 *National Defense Authorization Act* (P.L. 108–375, Title XXXVI) with funds authorized through FY 2009.

Congress created the SAFER program amidst concern that local fire departments needed assistance in hiring, or recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters, in order to meet national consensus standards for minimum staffing levels. The program was introduced in H.R. 3992, and later enacted in section 1057 of the FY 2004 *National Defense Authorization Act* (P.L. 108–136). This authorization will expire in FY 2010.

Current Activity for the AFG Program

Support from AFG may be used for a number of different activities. Under the existing authorization, grants may fund the purchase of firefighting equipment, protective gear, and vehicles. Permissible training activity under the grants includes terrorism incident response, arson prevention and detection, hazardous material response, and fire inspector certification. The grants may also be used for firefighter health and safety programs and to modify fire stations to improve firefighter health and safety. FEMA must annually convene a panel of fire service organization representatives to advise the agency on priorities and grant making criteria for the following fiscal year. The program guidance from FEMA notes that "The AFG program is an important part of the Administration's larger, coordinated effort to strengthen homeland security preparedness," and as such, reflects the priorities of the *National Preparedness Guidelines.* DHS issued these guidelines in 2007 to coordinate and increase the level of preparedness at all levels of government to respond to catastrophic events, and terrorist attacks in particular. To help governments plan, the *Guidelines* established the *Target Capabilities List* and the *Universal Task List*.[1] Similar to previous years, FY 2009 AFG priorities are first responder safety, enhancing national capabilities, addressing risk, and promoting inter-operability.[2]

The grants are peer-reviewed. Peer reviewers score the applications according to the clarity of the proposed project/purchase and accompanying budget, the organization's financial need, the cost-benefit of the proposed project/purchase, and the degree to which the proposed project/purchase enhances daily operations or the department's ability to protect life and property. The authorizing legislation requires that FEMA take into account the cost-to-benefit ratio when considering applications and making awards. The FEMA grant guidance to fire departments notes that "DHS will provide a higher level of consideration to departments with significant levels of incidents and to departments that protect large populations relative to other applicants, regardless of the type of community served." Therefore lower call volumes and smaller communities receive lower priority. The authorizing legislation requires that volunteer departments, which typically serve rural areas, receive funding in proportion to the percentage of the U.S. population they serve (approximately 55 percent). There is no other specific guidance on geographic distribution of the funds, other than a directive that they be dispersed to a diverse mix of type (volunteer, career, or combination), geographic location, and composition of community served (urban, suburban, or rural).

In addition to the FEMA guidance for the program, departments must also meet certain legislative requirements. Local fire departments applying for a grant must provide matching funds in accordance with the population of the community they serve (see Table 1). Other restrictions in the program include a cap per fiscal year relative to the size of the community (see Table 2), a 25 percent cap on total appropriated funds available for fire vehicles, and a 3.5 percent floor on funds that must be used for EMS training and equipment.

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[1] *Department of Homeland Security National Preparedness Guidelines,* September 2007 (*http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/National_Preparedness_Guidelines.pdf*)

[2] *Fiscal Year 2009 Assistance to Firefighters Grants Guidance and Application Kit,* April 2009 (*http://www.firegrantsupport.com/docs/2009AFGguidance.pdf*).

Table 1: Matching Funds in relation to size of population

Size of Population	Size of Matching Funds
Less than 20,000	5%
Between 20,000 and 50,000	10%
More than 50,000	20%

Table 2: Cap restrictions in relation to size of population

Size of Population	Size of Cap per fiscal year
Less than 500,000	$1,000,000
Between 500,000 and 1,000,000	$1,750,000
More than 1,000,000	$2,750,000

Current Activity for the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants Program

Under current statute, a minimum of five percent of AFG funding must be used for Fire Safety and Prevention (FP&S) Grants. In the 1970's, the President's National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control released America Burning, which cited the death rate from fires in the U.S. at 12,000 people per year. The NFPA reports that the current average is 3,760 deaths per year, and at least $10 billion per year in total property damage. While the number of deaths has decreased significantly since the 1970s, a report by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) notes that the decline in fire fatality rate slowed or ended in the late 1990s. The report also notes that fatality rates vary dramatically across demographic groups: African-Americans are three times more likely than whites to die in residential fires; males are 78 percent more likely to die in fires than females; and those with less than a high school education are five times as likely as those with some college education to die in residential fires.

FP&S grants fund fire prevention programs at both local fire departments and other related community organizations. The authorization sets aside a minimum of five percent of AFG funds for FP&S grants, and sets a cap of $1,000,000 per grant per fiscal year. FEMA guidance for FP&S supports activities in two categories: "(1) activities designed to reach high-risk target groups and mitigate incidences of deaths and injuries caused by fire and related hazards; and (2) research and development activities aimed at improvements of firefighter safety." For 2006 and 2007, the two years for which the breakout for research and prevention grants were reported by FEMA, 33 and 38 percent, respectively, went toward firefighter safety research. Most research was performed at universities.

Current Activity for the SAFER Program

SAFER grants may be used to hire new personnel and to provide funding for recruitment and retention of firefighters for volunteer and combination departments. Ten percent of the total SAFER funding is reserved for recruitment and retention. The majority of funds assist local departments in paying the salaries of new firefighters, hired to bring local departments into compliance with safe staffing minimums established in national voluntary consensus standards. The original legislative requirement includes an escalating local match, with the department providing 10 percent of the salary and related costs of the firefighter for the first year of the grant, 20 percent the second year, 50 percent the third, and 70 percent in the fourth. The department is also required to retain the firefighter for at least one more year following the fourth year of the grant. Regardless of matching funds, the current law sets a cap (adjusted annually for inflation, starting from $100,000 in 2005, set at $108,380 for 2008) on the total amount of money the grant can pay over the four year span for each firefighter. Ten percent of the hiring funds must go to volunteer, or mostly volunteer departments (mostly volunteer departments are defined as those where 50 percent of the personnel do not receive financial compensation for their services).

In response to concerns that current economic conditions would hinder the ability of communities to provide matching funds, and thus discourage departments from applying for existing SAFER funds, the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (P.L. 111–5) included a provision waiving the matching requirements for SAFER grants awarded in FY 2009. The waiver was similarly permitted for FY 2010. Amidst further concerns that grant requirements prevented struggling communities from applying for funds, the *Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2009* (P.L.

111–32) included a provision allowing the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive the following requirements: that the grants be used only to hire new firefighters, that they not supplant local funding, that the department commit to at least one additional year of funding beyond the term of the grant, and that the federal funding shall not exceed the cap set in statute.

Like AFG funding, SAFER awards are also made via a peer-review process. FEMA also convenes a panel of fire service organization representatives to offer recommendations on the program criteria for each grant year. FEMA's FY 2008 program guidance for SAFER (FY 2009 is not yet available) states that, "As a result of the enhanced staffing, a SAFER grantee's response time should be sufficiently reduced with an appropriate number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene." FEMA accords higher consideration to departments with higher call volumes and serving large populations in making staffing award decisions. For the recruitment and retention grants, volunteer, or mostly volunteer departments, receive higher consideration.

Funding Levels for the Grant Programs

AFG: In total, since FY 2001, $5.2 billion[3] has been appropriated for the AFG program. The table on the next page shows the authorized and appropriated levels for the AFG program since FY 2006.

Table 3: AFG Authorized and Appropriated Funding

FY	Authorized	Appropriated
2006	$950 million	$539 million
2007	$1 billion	$547 million
2008	$1 billion	$560 million
2009	$1 billion	$565 million*, **
2010	$0	$380 million***

*FY2009 estimated

**The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided an additional $210,000,000

***House passed H.R.2892, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2010

SAFER: In total, since FY 2005, $1.1 billion has been appropriated for the SAFER program.[4] The table below shows the authorized and appropriated levels for the SAFER program since FY 2006.

Table 4: SAFER Authorized and Appropriated Funding

FY	Authorized	Appropriated
2006	$1,061 million	$109 million
2007	$1,093 million	$115 million
2008	$1,126 million	$190 million
2009	$1,159 million	$210 million*
2010	$1,194 million	$420 million**

*FY2009 estimated

** House passed H.R.2892, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2010

The grants are given out to all-volunteer departments, all-career departments, and combination volunteer/career departments in an approximate proportion to the amount of grant requests they receive from these types of departments. In FY 2008, 48 percent of AFG money went to all-volunteer fire departments, 27 percent went to combination volunteer/career fire departments, and 19 percent went to all-career departments. The remaining six percent went to paid on-call departments. Career firefighters are more common in urban areas and volunteer firefighters are more common in rural areas; however, there is a differential in the correlation. Sixty-seven percent of AFG money went to rural departments in FY 2008 while 20 percent went to suburban departments and 13 percent went to urban departments. More than 60 percent of all applications are for fire trucks and engines, only 25 percent

[3] This does not include appropriations from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.*

[4] SAFER was not appropriated in FY 2004.

of the appropriated funds may be used for that purpose. Firefighting equipment and personal protective gear are also heavily requested.

In FY 2007, two percent of FP&S money went to all-volunteer fire departments, five percent went to career departments, five percent went to combination departments, and 88 percent went to other community organizations. In FY 2007, FEMA received 2,561 applications for FP&S funds, with requests totaling $330,719,746. A total of $33,887,071 was awarded.[5]

In FY 2008, 32.4 percent of SAFER applications came from all-volunteer fire departments, 48.0 percent came from combination volunteer/career fire departments, and 17.4 percent came from all-career fire departments. The remaining 2.1 percent came from Statewide and Local Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations.[6]

Review of AFG

In 2007, at the request of the Department of Homeland Security, NAPA reviewed the performance of the AFG program and offered recommendations for its improvement.[7] The report recommends that AFG should convert from primarily funding basic firefighting and EMS needs to prioritizing grant applications that would more likely increase preparedness for catastrophic events. The report also recommends the program should prioritize applications that fund mitigation capabilities, including public education, and applications that target places and people at greatest risk from fire. The report further recommends that the program should work with DHS to build a national network of response capabilities that can be deployed quickly where needed.

[5] FY 2008 award numbers are not available.

[6] *http://www.firegrantsupport.com/docs/2008SAFERApps.pdf*

[7] National Academy of Public Administration, Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program: Assessing Performance, April 2007.

Mr. LUJÁN. The hearing will come to order.

Good morning. Today's hearing addresses a key program in increasing public safety and protecting the safety of first responders. The FIRE grants help fire departments across the country increase their capabilities to fight fires, respond to medical emergencies, handle disasters and better confront all that is asked of the modern fire service.

The authorizations for the Assistance for Firefighter Grant (AFG) program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire Emergency Response, or the SAFER program, are both facing expiration. These grant programs provide funding for local fire departments, ones in every state and every district, to obtain equipment and training and to increase their ranks of firefighters.

The FIRE grants were created to help local communities keep up with the needed manpower and equipment to handle the increasing array of tasks falling to local fire departments. The growing duties include emergency medical services, fighting fires at the wildland-urban interface and serving as first responders to terrorist attacks and natural disasters.

In this economy, maintaining equipment, training and personnel to safely respond to all calls is increasingly difficult, or impossible, in many jurisdictions. Fire departments around the country have been forced to lay off firefighters and forego needed equipment and training. Therefore, the over $6 billion of grants that have gone to fire departments since 2000 have been integral to maintaining public safety in many communities. This year and last year, fire departments in my district in New Mexico have benefited from a half a million dollars of this funding.

Fire remains a serious problem in the United States. More people die in fires in the United States than from all other natural disasters combined. On average, 3,700 citizens die in structure fires each year and over 100 firefighters are killed in the line of duty. In addition to these fatalities, there are thousands of injuries and over $10 billion in property losses each year. Fires are often a surprise to their victims but the statistics tell us that fire fatalities and injuries are not random. Demographics shape who is most likely to die in fires. Vulnerable populations like the poor and the elderly suffer the most. Males are more likely to die than females, as are minorities and those without a high school education. I hope that the witnesses today will offer insight on why fires disproportionately affect these individuals and how these trends can be changed.

I would also like to learn today how we can improve upon the contribution FIRE grants make to public safety and the safety of first responders. I hope the witnesses will offer insight on the best balance to serve the needs of fire departments and the populations they protect, and I hope to learn how any proposed changes would affect the fire.

I want to thank our witnesses for appearing before us today.

I now would like to recognize Representative Smith for his opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Luján follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VICE CHAIR BEN LUJÁN

Good morning. Today's hearing addresses a key program in increasing public safety and protecting the safety of first responders. The FIRE Grants help fire departments across the country increase their capabilities to fight fires, respond to medical emergencies, handle disasters, and better confront all that is asked of the modern fire service.

The authorizations for the Assistance for Firefighters Grant Program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response—or SAFER program—are both facing expirations. These grant programs provide funding for local fire departments, ones in every state and every district, to obtain equipment and training, and to increase their ranks of firefighters.

The FIRE grants were created to help local communities keep up with the needed manpower and equipment to handle the increasing array of tasks falling to local fire departments. The growing duties include emergency medical services, fighting fires at the wildland-urban interface, and serving as first responders to terrorist attacks and natural disasters.

In this economy, maintaining the equipment, training, and personnel to safely and swiftly respond to all calls is increasingly difficult, or impossible, in many jurisdictions. Fire departments around the country have been forced to lay-off firefighters and forego needed equipment and training. Therefore, the over $6 billion of grants that have gone to fire departments since 2000 has been integral to maintaining public safety in many communities. This year and last, fire departments in my district in New Mexico have benefited from a half a million dollars of this funding.

Fire remains a serious problem in the U.S. More people die in fires in the U.S. than from all other natural disasters combined. On average, 3,700 citizens die in structure fires each year, and over 100 firefighters are killed in the line of duty. In addition to these fatalities, there are thousands of injuries and over $10 billion dollars in property lost each year. Fires are often a surprise to their victims but the statistics tell us that fire fatalities and injuries are not random. Demographics shape who is most likely to die in fires; vulnerable populations, like the poor or the elderly suffer the most. Males are more likely to die than females, as are minorities, and those without a high school education. I hope the witnesses today will offer insight on why fires disproportionately affect these individuals and how these trends can be changed.

I would also like to learn today how we can improve upon the contribution FIRE grants make to public safety and the safety of first responders. I hope the witnesses will also offer insight on the best balance to serve the needs of fire departments and the populations they protect. And, I hope to learn how any proposed changes would affect the fire service.

I will now recognize Ranking Member Smith for his opening statement.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for holding the hearing today to discuss reauthorization of the Department of Homeland Security's firefighter grants program. I want to welcome all of our witnesses and thank you for coming here today to testify on these essential programs. I especially want to thank Mr. Ed Carlin for coming all the way from rural Nebraska, the Spalding Rural Volunteer Fire Department, obviously located in the 3rd District of Nebraska, and I appreciate your willingness to share and certainly for your service to our community, our state and certainly our nation.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response, the acronym SAFER, programs both provide much-needed assistance to fire departments across our country. In rural areas, many communities rely upon all-volunteer departments to respond to fires and other emergencies. The equipment needed to fight fires and save lives and properties is costly and requires departments to have certain minimum response capabilities regardless of whether they are protecting a community of a few thousand people or a large city of a few hundred thousand people. Acquiring these capabilities are par-

ticularly difficult in many small communities that do not possess the financial resources necessary to provide adequate support to these departments. As such, firefighter grants have proven absolutely vital for rural and volunteer fire departments that have small taxes bases and the least stability to acquire such equipment.

In numerous discussions with fire chiefs and firefighters in my district, the AFG program is frequently cited as a lifesaver and the only means by which their department can attempt to purchase up-to-date equipment which requires a significant portion of their budget for their volunteers. Because of the volunteer departments' reliance upon the AFG program and because of the AFG program's proven track record of successfully awarding grants through an open, competitive process based on need, I am concerned about the United Fire Service's proposal to transition away from this model to one where statutory set-asides limit program flexibility based on department type. I fear this redistribution of AFG funds will put many rural and all-volunteer departments at a severe disadvantage when it comes to obtaining the necessary equipment.

Similarly, also worrisome to me is a proposal to provide priority to applicants with higher call volume and population. Volunteer departments serving predominantly rural areas benefit tremendously from firefighter assistance programs because, unlike many other agency programs, the grants are distributed on need rather than population. Population and call volume isn't the only determinate of need, and we must be cognizant of the unique role the volunteer firefighters play in serving their communities and not limit an extremely critical source of funding for their departments.

I am extremely appreciative of the services all brave firefighters provide on behalf of our nation's citizens and I look forward to hearing from the witnesses on this very essential program.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE ADRIAN SMITH

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing today to discuss reauthorization of the Department of Homeland Security's Firefighters grants programs.

I want to welcome our all of our witnesses and thank you for coming here today to testify on these essential programs. I especially want to offer a warm welcome to Mr. Ed Carlin from Spalding Rural Volunteer Fire Department, which is located in the Third District of Nebraska. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to appear before the Subcommittee today to discuss these important issues and am grateful for your service to your community and nation.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program both provide much-needed assistance to fire departments across our nation. In rural areas, many communities rely upon all-volunteer departments to respond to fires and other emergencies. The equipment needed to fight fires and save lives and property is costly, and requires departments to have certain minimum response capabilities regardless of whether they are protecting a community of a few thousand people or a large city of a few *hundred* thousand people. Acquiring these capabilities are particularly difficult in many small communities that do not possess the financial resources necessary to provide adequate support to these departments. As such, Firefighter grants have proven absolutely vital for rural and volunteer fire departments that have small tax bases and the least ability to acquire such equipment.

In numerous discussions with fire chiefs and firefighters in my District, the AFG program is frequently cited as a "lifesaver," and the only means by which their department can attempt to purchase up-to-date equipment—which requires a significant portion of their budget—for their volunteers. Because of volunteer departments' reliance upon the AFG program, and because of the AFG programs' proven track record of successfully awarding grants through a fully competitive process, I am con-

cerned about the Unified Fire Service's proposal to replace the program's current need-based focus with one where statutory set-asides limit program flexibility based on department type. I fear this redistribution of AFG funds will put many rural and all-volunteer departments at a severe disadvantage when it comes to obtaining the necessary equipment.

Similarly, also worrisome to me is a proposal to provide priority to applicants with higher call volume and population. Volunteer departments serving predominantly rural areas benefit tremendously from firefighter assistance programs because—unlike many other agency programs—the grants are distributed on need rather than population. Population and call volume isn't the only determinant of need, and we must be cognizant of the unique role our volunteer firefighters play in serving their communities and not limit an extremely critical source of funding for their departments.

I am extremely appreciative of the services all brave firefighters provide on behalf of our nation's citizens and I look forward to hearing from the witnesses today on this essential program.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Mr. Smith.

If there are Members who wish to submit additional opening statements, your statements will be added to the record at this point.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Wu follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DAVID WU

Good morning. I would like to welcome everybody to this morning's hearing on the reauthorization of the Assistance to Firefighter Grant program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, known collectively as the FIRE Grant programs. Supporting our nation's first responders is critical; historically the Science and Technology Committee has been one the strongest backers of the fire service. In the last Congress, the Science Committee reauthorized the U.S. Fire Administration, which delivers vital training and provides national leadership to the fire service. Today, we are looking at the FIRE Grant programs, which help raise the capabilities of fire departments to tackle fires and other emergencies.

Since fiscal year 2001, the AFG program has provided over $4.8 billion to local fire departments to purchase equipment, vehicles, and training. The program, created by Congress in 2000 because of concerns that local budgets were unable to handle the mounting responsibilities being assigned to the fire service, continues to be a critical asset to community safety in this tough economy. Congress created the SAFER program in 2004 to help fire departments hire firefighting personnel and meet voluntary consensus standards on safe minimum staffing levels. Through SAFER, $689 million in grants have gone to help fire departments respond quickly and safely to all emergencies.

Fire is a serious problem in the United States, killing over 3,000 people a year—a rate higher than all other industrialized countries. In addition, approximately 20,000 people are injured, and $10 billion in property is lost each year due to fire. Statistics show that minorities and low-income Americans are disproportionately the victims of fires. The AFG program also supports grants for fire prevention and safety. I hope to learn today about the types of activities the fire prevention and safety grants currently fund and how they may be improved to combat these high numbers of death, injury, and loss.

I am pleased to have a panel of first-hand experts with us who can offer their recommendations on how to improve the FIRE Grant programs to meet the growing challenges our first responders face. From responding to emergency medical calls to fighting wildfires that encroach into adjacent communities, fire departments must be ready for any type of emergency. The Nation's 30,000 fire departments serve a variety of communities, from the largest to the smallest. Many of those who serve as firefighters do so on a volunteer basis. As cities and towns of all sizes struggle to provide services in this economy, the FIRE Grant programs are a key resource for protecting the safety of the public and firefighters.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mitchell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE HARRY E. MITCHELL

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today we will examine and evaluate the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant programs.

Firefighters are often the first—and the last—to leave an emergency scene. Whether it's putting out a house or an apartment fire—or responding to a wildfire or a car accident—we depend on firefighters every day.

As you know, Congress created the AFG program in 2000 to help local fire departments accommodate increasing responsibilities. SAFER was created to assist local fire departments with hiring, or recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters, in order to meet national consensus standards for minimum staffing levels.

I look forward to hearing more from our witnesses on how the AFG and SAFER programs have increased the safety of the public and firefighting personnel, from fire and related hazards.

I yield back.

Panel I:

Mr. LUJÁN. It is my pleasure to introduce our first witness panel. Our friend, Congressman Bill Pascrell, is a U.S. Representative from the 8th District of New Jersey. Mr. Pascrell, you have five minutes for your spoken testimony, and your written testimony will be included in the record for the hearing. Congressman Pascrell, please begin.

STATEMENT OF HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, 8TH DISTRICT

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, my friend from New Mexico and the Ranking Member, Mr. Smith. I want to thank also, of course, our Chairman, David Wu, and Bart Gordon, the Full Committee Chair.

It seems like a lifetime but this legislation—I had introduced this legislation in the 106th Congress. That is when it passed. It passed before 9/11 and it passed because so many firefighters, both career and volunteer, came to Washington knowing that this legislation was a bottom-up piece of legislation, unheard of before, with two or three signatures on it for a year and a half and then probably more signatures when it passed than any other bill that term, and it was passed in 2000. Billions of dollars of course have been competitively bid for.

By every estimation, this is either the first or second best federal program in the whole government, and I think it is important because the peers—the firefighters themselves make the judgment—bureaucrats are not involved, and I think this is why the program has been so successful, Mr. Chairman, and it really was the inspiration for the second piece of legislation, which is not before you today which I ask also that you reauthorize, and that is the SAFER bill. When I teamed up with Congressman Boehlert from Cooperstown, New York, who is no longer with us—retired, and we passed the SAFER bill, which helps the personnel in many of our fire departments, particularly at a time when our economy is feeling a tremendous amount of pressure and communities cannot respond as they should.

Now, when we looked at this in the later 1990s, it was quite obvious from the firefighters that I assembled, volunteer, career, and retired, it became very obvious that there was a tremendous amount of need out there, and who better could define those needs but firefighters? Gee, that was something new on Capitol Hill. Let

us go to the source of the problem, let us go to those folks who have to deal with the situation every day, and when you look at the federal responsibility and response to the very needs, you would see that that was a part of public safety that was tremendously neglected. The Federal Government had relatively little input into helping communities respond to their fire needs. That is why the FIRE Act was passed.

These brave firefighters are on duty every day. We saw what happened on 9/11 when so many lost their lives responding. They are our first responders. They respond faster and quicker than the Federal Government. They are in our communities all throughout the United States, yet we knew that there were communities in this country where they have to push the apparatus to the fires. We were very careful when we shaped this legislation that it not become top heavy in any area, that rural areas, suburban areas and urban areas, we would balance whatever the legislation would be, and I think those firefighters who have acted in reviewing and analyzing 3,000 applications that come in every year and finally making the decision as to which departments show the greatest need, we have extended—and I want to compliment FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) for helping put together sessions throughout the country so that firefighters and those who do the grant writing can come to these sessions and learn how to fill out a grant because that is three-quarters of the battle, and I really—they have done a terrific job. They have really done a sensational job.

So the FIRE Act was passed and officially established through title 17 and actually became part of the *National Defense Authorization Act.* So since 2001, the program has responded to the needs such as infrared cameras, personal protective gear, hazmat detection devices, and fitness programs, which have saved firefighters' lives. Many of these firefighters never went through a physical or hadn't taken periodic physicals. Saved lives. My own District, I could give you specific examples. That is important. We want healthy people going online. We want people that are able to do the physical work that is necessary to protect us to be able to do that, and of course, inter-operable communication systems.

So we know that this competitive grant process has worked. I would put it against any such competitive process in the entire Federal Government, not just in Homeland Security, but in the entire Federal Government. Together, as I said, with the FIRE and SAFER, make up what we commonly refer to as the FIRE grant programs.

I want to make the point again, Mr. Chairman, that the FIRE grant programs are vital and are vital and necessary today as the day we passed them. In fact, when you look at the applications that are coming to FEMA and when you see what the needs are, you will see things haven't changed dramatically really in those 10 years. They haven't really changed that dramatically, even after 9/11.

Today, in the midst of a terrible economic recession, localities throughout America are being forced to cut budgets and unfortunately public safety is the first to go. Sixty percent of fire departments do not have enough self-contained breathing apparatus to

equip all firefighters on a shift. Forty-eight percent of fire departments do not have enough personnel alert safety system devices to equip all emergency responders on a shift. Sixty-five percent of fire departments do not have enough portable radios to equip all emergency responders on shift. Eight years after 9/11, that is not acceptable. It is just not acceptable. Less than 20 percent of the fire departments in the United States are able to cover the cost of apparatus replacement through their normal budget. I mean, how many pancake breakfasts do you need to have to buy a $600,000, $700,000 piece of equipment? It doesn't work. It doesn't work. The same can be said for the SAFER grants.

I come here today to state that there is one thing we do agree upon and that is, it is essential that we reauthorize both the FIRE and SAFER grants in the 111th Congress. Clearly, adjustments must be made to both programs in the next reauthorization based on the lessons we have learned. We made some adjustments in the past by changing and minimizing the amount of matching money from the local communities, and I think it has been particularly helpful to a lot of communities who couldn't make the match.

So I want to thank you for allowing me to testify. This is in my bone marrow. I am available for questions, and if you want to ask any questions, ask them.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pascrell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE BILL PASCRELL, JR.

I want to thank Full Committee Chairman Bart Gordon, Subcommittee Chairman David Wu and Ranking Member Adrian Smith for holding this important hearing and allowing me to testify before this subcommittee about the need to reauthorize the fire grants, an issue which has been very near and dear to me.

I am very proud to say that in the 106th Congress I authored the original FIRE Act and helped lead the effort with many of my colleagues in Congress to get this vital grant program started. At that time we in Congress began to realize that our national public security could not be ensured if we simply left it to states and localities to provide the equipment and resources necessary for our firefighters. It was a great sight to behold so many of our nation's finest and bravest firefighters come to the halls of Congress and lobby their Members on the need to pass the FIRE Act. I think it's especially noteworthy that all the fire service organizations—volunteers and career—truly joined together and worked hand-in-hand to help get the FIRE Act up and running.

In the end the FIRE Act was passed and the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program was officially established through Title XVII (17) of the FY 2001 *National Defense Authorization Act.* After the terrible attacks we witnessed on 9/11 few could argue against the critical need for these fire grants. On that fateful day 343 firefighters lost their lives while bravely trying to save others. The lesson was clear—we needed to provide those firefighters with the equipment and training necessary to match their bravery and strength. With those men and women as our inspiration, we fought on a bipartisan basis to establish funding for fire grants and protect those grants against repeated annual cuts in the President's budget.

Since 2001, this program has positively impacted public safety by providing more than $3 billion for infrared cameras, personal protective gear, hazmat detection devices, improved breathing apparatuses, advanced training and fitness programs, fire engines, prevention and education programs, and inter-operable communication systems. A number of independent evaluations of the program have demonstrated its success:

- On May 13, 2003, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) released the first independent evaluation of the Assistance to Firefighters Program and concluded overall that the program was *"highly effective in improving the readiness and capabilities of firefighters across the Nation."*
- Another evaluation was released by the DHS Office of Inspector General in September 2003, which concluded that the program *"succeeded in achieving a balanced distribution of funding through a competitive grant process."*

- Finally, in the FY 2008 DHS Program Assessment Rating Tool report issued in May, the FIRE Act grant program received the second highest rating of any program in DHS scoring only one percentage point lower than the U.S. Secret Service Domestic Protectees program.

After the success of the FIRE Act, we again worked with all the fire services groups in the 108th Congress to address concerns that our nation's firehouses were not being adequately staffed. In response we passed the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Act—the SAFER Act, which authorized grants to career, volunteer and combination local fire departments for the purpose of increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide sufficient protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

Together FIRE and SAFER make up what we commonly refer to as the fire grant programs and while I could go on for days relating the countless stories of lives that were saved or disasters that were averted throughout our nation due to these grants, the point I want to make here is that the fire grant programs are as vital and necessary today as the day we passed them. Today, in the midst of a terrible economic recession, localities throughout America are being forced to cut budgets and unfortunately public safety funds are too often the target. Sadly while public safety budgets can increase and decrease from year to year, the threat of fire and natural disaster are constant—these threats in no way accommodate for our economic condition.

Furthermore, the need for FIRE grants is made clear by the statistics, according to the 2006 DHS report *Four Years Later—A Second Needs Assessment of the U.S. Fire Service:*

- 60 percent of fire departments do not have enough self-contained breathing apparatus to equip all firefighters on a shift;
- 48 percent of fire departments do not have enough personal alert safety system devices to equip all emergency responders on a shift;
- 65 percent of fire departments do not have enough portable radios to equip all emergency responders on shift;
- Less than 20 percent of fire departments in the United States are able to cover the cost of apparatus replacement through their normal budget.

Similarly, the need for the SAFER grants is demonstrated by the large number of firefighters being laid off throughout the Nation. I imagine the Members here know of at least one similar situation in their own district. Finally, I want to make the point that in FY 2009, nearly 20,000 fire departments across the country applied for more than $3.1 billion in FIRE Act grant assistance—so no one should be able to claim that the demand for these grants does not still exist.

Mr. Chairman, I came here today to state what we all should agree upon, that it is essential that we reauthorize both the FIRE and SAFER grants programs in this 111th Congress. Clearly adjustments must be made to both programs based on the lessons we have learned, but that should not and cannot hinder us from advancing these fire grant programs which have shown to be effective. I have always said that real homeland security starts on the streets of our local towns and not in the hallways of Washington—I truly believe these fire grants awarded to local municipalities are key to our homeland security infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you again for this invitation and the chance to speak on this essential issue.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Mr. Pascrell. If none of the Members have any questions, Mr. Pascrell, you are now excused. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you.

Mr. LUJÁN. And we will now take a short break before our next panel.

[Recess.]

Panel II:

Mr. LUJÁN. At this time I would like to introduce our second panel. Mr. Timothy Manning is the Deputy Administrator of the

National Preparedness Directorate at the Federal Emergency Management Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and comes from the great State of New Mexico, most recently as the director of our homeland security department. Thank you for being here, Mr. Manning. Chief Jeffrey Johnson is the First Vice President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the Chief of the Tualatin—did I get that correct, Chief?

Chief JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. LUJÁN. Valley Fire and Rescue. Chief Jack Carriger is the Stayton, Oregon, Fire District First Vice Chairman of the National Volunteer Fire Council. Mr. Kevin O'Connor is the Assistant to the General President of the International Association of Firefighters, and Chief Curt Varone is the Division Manager of the Public Fire Protection Division for the National Fire Protection Association, and our final witness is Mr. Ed Carlin, who is the Training Officer of the Spalding Rural Volunteer Fire Department in Spalding, Nebraska.

You will each have five minutes for your spoken testimony. Your written testimony will be included in the record for the hearing. When you all complete your testimony, we will begin with questions, and each Member will have five minutes to question the panel. Mr. Manning, please begin.

STATEMENT OF MR. TIMOTHY W. MANNING, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS)

Mr. MANNING. Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, Members of the Committee. I am Tim Manning. I am the Deputy Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and on behalf of Administrator Fugate, it is a privilege to appear before you today to offer the Administration's support for the reauthorization of the Assistance to Firefighters and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant programs.

Mr. Chairman, we at FEMA share your continued support of the Nation's fire service. We understand the value of these programs to firefighters across the country and the citizens they serve. Having been raised in a fire service family and served as a volunteer firefighter myself, I have a firsthand appreciation for the dedication of these men and women, and I am honored to be able to support them in my capacity at FEMA. And as a former State emergency manager, I have a great appreciation of the values these grant programs can add to the fire and emergency services through improved response capacity, increased responder safety, and ultimately a greater public safety.

Our door is always open to these first responders. Within his first weeks at FEMA, Administrator Fugate and I met with representatives of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters and the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs. Our partnership with the fire service is also demonstrated through the process by which each year's AFG and SAFER programs are developed. Each year, FEMA convenes a panel of professionals from the nine major fire service organizations to assist in the development of funding priorities for the com-

ing year and to discuss any changes in the program requirements, and our collaboration and outreach extends throughout the grant award process.

All grant awards under these programs are competitive and are based on funding priorities recommended by the fire service and based on peer reviews by panels comprised of representatives from the fire service.

Mr. Chairman, reducing loss of life and property caused by fire remains a significant challenge. Death and injury rates by fire in the United States are still unacceptably high. Each year, fire injures kill more Americans than the combined losses of all other natural disasters. In 2007, fires in the United States resulted in 3,430 civilian deaths, 17,675 injuries and $14.6 billion in direct property loss, and during that year, 118 firefighters lost their lives in the line of duty.

We believe that AFG and SAFER programs can help reduce these numbers. We also believe that without these programs, these numbers might be higher. Our data is beginning to show that the rates of firefighter and civilian injuries in communities that receive AFG awards are better than the national average. For example, from fiscal year 2005 to 2007, firefighter injuries in AFG communities were reduced by 6.2 percent while the national average rose by 6.1 percent, and civilian casualties decreased more than eight percent over the national average. The AFG program provides competitive grants to address the training, safety, apparatus, personal protective gear, firefighting equipment and firefighter wellness fitness needs for departments large and small, career and volunteer. Through its component grants for fire prevention and safety, the AFG program provides resources to fire departments and nonprofit organizations alike including public education programs, school-based programs, smoke alarm distribution projects for households, and in doing so, SAFER funding allows the fire departments to increase their number of trained front-line firefighters available for their communities, which in turn reduce response times, increases deployment capabilities and enhances the overall public safety.

From fiscal year 2002 to 2009, the AFG program has received applications from over 160,000 applicants, and has made over 48,000 grants totaling over $3.7 billion in financial assistance. Under its component FP&S (Fire Prevention and Safety) program, 17,000 applications have been received, resulting in $172.9 million being awarded to 1,829 organizations to enhance fire safety and prevention efforts. And in fiscal 2005, the SAFER program has received 7,500 applications and provided 974 fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations with $406 million in direct financial assistance.

Mr. Chairman, I will conclude my statement by again emphasizing the support and respect that we have at the Department from Secretary Napolitano to Administrator Fugate to myself the respect we have for the men and women of the Nation's fire service. A commitment to the fire service also represents an ongoing commitment to public safety in our communities and the people who reside within them. We look forward to working with the Committee, Congress, and the community to reauthorize AFG and SAFER programs.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, thank you for allowing us to be here today and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Manning follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY W. MANNING

Chairman Wu, Ranking Member Smith, Members of the Subcommittee, I am Timothy Manning and I serve as Deputy Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). On behalf of Administrator Fugate, it is a privilege to appear before you today to offer this Administration's support for the reauthorization of the Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Programs.

Mr. Chairman, all of us at FEMA share your continued support of the Nation's fire service and the men and women who serve in it. We understand the value of these programs to firefighters across the country and to the citizens they serve. Having been raised in a fire service family and serving as a volunteer firefighter myself, I have a first hand appreciation of the service these men and women provide to communities throughout the country. As a former State emergency manager, I have a great appreciation of the value these grant programs can add to the fire and emergency services through improved response capability, increased responder safety and ultimately greater public safety.

Our door is always open to these first responders. Within his first weeks at FEMA, Administrator Fugate has met with representatives of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters and the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs. During my tenure, I have also met with many of these organizations.

Our partnership with the fire service is also demonstrated through the process by which each year's AFG and SAFER Programs are developed. Each year FEMA convenes a panel of fire service professionals to assist in the development of funding priorities for the coming year. This also provides an opportunity to discuss any changes in program requirements. There are nine major fire service organizations represented on these yearly panels. They are:

- The Congressional Fire Services Institute;
- The National Volunteer Fire Council;
- The International Association of Arson Investigators;
- The International Association of Fire Fighters;
- The National Fire Protection Association;
- The National Association of State Fire Marshalls;
- The International Association of Fire Chiefs;
- The International Society of Fire Service Instructors, and
- The North American Fire Training Directors.

Our collaboration and outreach extends throughout the grant award process. All awards under these programs are competitive and are based on funding priorities recommended by the fire service and on peer reviews by panels comprised of representatives of the fire service. It is also important to note that these programs represent the collaboration of two FEMA components. The first is the Grant Programs Directorate's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program Office. The other is the United States Fire Administration. Both these FEMA components are staffed by dedicated public employees, many who began their careers as firefighters.

Mr. Chairman, reducing the loss of life and property caused by fire remains a significant challenge. Death and injury rates by fire in the United States are still unacceptably high. Each year fires injure and kill more Americans than the combined losses of all other natural disasters. In 2007, fires in the United States resulted in 3,430 civilian deaths, 17,675 civilian injuries, and $14.6 billion in direct property losses. During that year 118 firefighters also lost their lives due to fire. We believe that the AFG and SAFER Programs can help reduce these numbers.

In Fiscal Year 2000, Congress amended the landmark *Federal Fire Protections and Control Act of 1974*—the same act that created the United States Fire Administration—and created the AFG Program. Subsequent amendments in Fiscal Year 2004 created the SAFER Program. In the few short years since their creation these programs have provided the fire service with resources and capabilities which have without question saved lives and property.

The AFG Program provides competitive grants to address the training, safety, apparatus, personal protective gear, firefighting equipment, and firefighter wellness and fitness needs of fire departments large and small, career and volunteer. Through its component grants for Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S), the AFG Program provides resources to fire departments and non-profit organizations to address fire prevention issues, including public education programs, school based programs, and smoke alarm distribution projects for households. FP&S also provides funding for research and development projects aimed at improvements to firefighter health and safety. The SAFER Program has addressed staffing needs by enhancing these fire departments' ability to hire career firefighters and to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. In doing so, SAFER funding allows fire departments to increase the number of trained, front-line firefighters available in their communities which in turn reduces response times, increases deployment capabilities, and enhances overall public safety.

From Fiscal Year 2002[1] through Fiscal Year 2009, the AFG program has received applications from 160,798 eligible applicants and made 48,822 grants totaling $3,731,619,486 in financial assistance. Under its component FP&S Program 17,406 applications have been received resulting in $172,983,355 being awarded to 1,829 organizations to enhance fire safety and prevention efforts. Similarly, since its inception in Fiscal Year 2005 the SAFER Program has received 7,531 applications and has provided 974 fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations with $406,428,090 in direct financial assistance. Further, since its inception, the SAFER Program has resulted in the hiring of 3,705 firefighters.

Over that same period (Fiscal Year 2002 through Fiscal year 2009) applications under the AFG Program were distributed as follows:

- 59.17 percent of AFG applications were for "Fire Operations and Fire Fighter Safety" programs;
- 30.37 percent of AFG applications were for "Firefighting Vehicles"; and
- 10.45 percent were under "Fire Prevention."

Of those AFG Program applications:

- 63.62 percent came from "All Volunteer" fire departments;
- 20.81 percent came from combination fire departments;
- 10.54 percent came from "All Paid" or "Career" fire departments; and
- 5.03 percent came from "Paid On Call/Stipend" departments.

Over that same period (Fiscal Year 2002 through Fiscal Year 2009) applications under the SAFER Program were distributed as follows:

- 58.12 percent of SAFER applications were for "Fire Fighter Hiring"; and
- 41.88 percent of SAFER applications were for "Fire Fighter Recruitment and retention."

Of those SAFER Program applications:

- 29.83 percent were received from "All Volunteer" fire departments;
- 48.89 percent were received from combination fire departments;
- 19.94 percent were received from "All Paid" or "Career" fire departments; and
- 1.79 percent were received from "Interest Organizations", i.e., regional, State or local entities with an interest in the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

In Fiscal Year 2009, $565,000,000 has been appropriated for the AFG Program. By statute a minimum of five percent of those funds, or $28,250,000, must be set aside for the FP&S grants. Further for Fiscal Year 2009, $210,000,000 has been appropriated for the SAFER Program. In Fiscal Year 2009, the AFG Grant Program opened on April 15, 2009 and closed on May 20, 2009. A total of 19,786 applications have been received. The Fiscal Year 2009 SAFER and FP&S Grant application periods have not yet opened and the grant guidance is still being developed.

Mr. Chairman, I will conclude my statement by again emphasizing the support and respect that we at the Department of Homeland Security—from Secretary Napolitano, to Administrator Fugate, to myself—have for the men and women of the Nation's fire service. A commitment to the fire service also represents an ongoing commitment to the public safety in our communities and the people who reside

[1] In Fiscal Year 2001, AFG was paper based, but since Fiscal Year 2002 it has been electronically based and operated.

within them. We look forward to working with you, this Committee and the Congress on the re-authorization of the AFG and SAFER Programs. Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith and Members of the Subcommittee, for allowing me to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

BIOGRAPHY FOR TIMOTHY W. MANNING

Tim Manning is the Director of the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and Homeland Security Advisor to Governor Bill Richardson. He was named the Department's first Director by Governor Richardson in April 2007, having previously been appointed to the Cabinet as Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security in 2005 and as the State Director of Emergency Management since early 2003. In addition to the State's intelligence and anti-terrorism programs, Mr. Manning also oversees the daily administration of the state's disaster and emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts.

Mr. Manning has previously served as a Deputy Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Public Safety. He has a diverse background in emergency services, working in a number of positions in the state's emergency management agency from entering as the hazardous materials response program coordinator up through to the Chief of the Emergency Operations Bureau, and eventually the agency's Director. Prior to his service with the State of New Mexico, Mr. Manning had service as a firefighter, EMT, rescue mountaineer, and hazardous materials specialist. He also spent ten years as a hydrogeologist working on the investigation and restoration of chemical contaminant sites and water resource projects. In addition to his role in the cabinet of Governor Richardson, Mr. Manning is a guest lecturer and subject matter expert at the Center for Homeland defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey California.

Mr. Manning is currently Co-Chair of the National Homeland Security Consortium; Chairman of the National Emergency Management Association's Homeland Security Committee; Executive Board member of the Governor's Homeland Security Advisors Council of the National Governors Association and Chair of the Intelligence and Information Sharing Committee; a member of the Director of National Intelligence's Homeland Security and Law Enforcement Partners Group; an Interagency Threat Assessment Coordination Group Advisory Committee member; and Chair of the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) Commission, an international emergency management standards setting and accreditation body. He has previously served as a Regional Vice President of NEMA and the Chairman of the Response and Recovery Committee, where he oversaw the efforts of the EMAC during Hurricane Katrina, and continues to serve on many other boards and commissions. Mr. Manning is also currently Chair of the New Mexico State Emergency Response Commission and Intrastate Mutual Aid Commission. He received a Bachelors of Science in Geology from Eastern Illinois University, and is a graduate of the Executive Program at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security of the Naval Postgraduate School. He is currently researching terrorism and political violence towards a Master of Letters from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you, Mr. Manning.

Chief Johnson.

STATEMENT OF CHIEF JEFFREY D. JOHNSON, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS (IAFC); CHIEF, TUALATIN VALLEY FIRE AND RESCUE

Chief JOHNSON. Good morning, Chairman Luján, Ranking Member Smith and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. I am Jeff Johnson, First Vice President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and Fire Chief from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue in Oregon.

The IAFC believes that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program is an extremely successful program that improves the safety of the American public. It is one of the few DHS programs dedicated to all-hazard preparedness response. In addition, the program is well designed to improve the baseline operational capabilities of the American fire service.

The program has the following core components that assure its effectiveness: the program distributes funding directly to local fire departments which reduces the amount of overhead and processing costs found in other DHS programs; every year, DHS convenes a meeting with the major fire service organizations to develop the criteria for awarding FIRE and SAFER grants, which ensures that the program is attuned to the needs of its end-users; and the program uses a peer review process that ensures grants are awarded based on merit and demonstrated need.

External reviews by federal agencies have highlighted the effectiveness of the program. A 2003 survey of over 1,500 FIRE grant recipients by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that more than 97 percent of the respondents agreed that the AFG program had a positive impact on their department's operational capabilities. In addition, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reviewed the AFG program in 2007 and rated it effective. OMB also gave the program a 100 percent score for "Program Management" and "Program Results/Accountability." However, there is still a clear need for the program.

Because of the recent economic downturn, many departments must close fire stations, lay off firefighters, cut training and equipment and fire prevention budgets. Meanwhile, they continue to face the constant risks presented by natural and manmade disasters.

As the Subcommittee considers reauthorizing the AFG program, we would like to recommend some of the following changes:

1. There is a need to restructure the SAFER grant program. Currently, the SAFER grant program requires local jurisdictions to make an escalating match with a five-year commitment. In the current economic downturn, many local jurisdictions cannot make this commitment. As a result, there was a 20 percent drop in applications from all career and combination departments with a majority of career firefighters in 2008. The IAFC recommends that the SAFER grant program be changed to a three-year commitment with a straight 20 percent match.
2. The IAFC recommends that Congress removes the SAFER cap per firefighter restriction which is at about $108,000 in 2008. This cap does not take into account the high cost of firefighters in jurisdictions such as mine, where a rookie firefighter is budgeted and actually does cost $76,000 a year. In my case, the Federal Government's match would run out in the second year, even with a three-year commitment on a 20 percent match. Removing the cap would fix this problem.
3. The FIRE grants should support improved regionalism. According to the FIRE grant guidance, DHS has the ability to waive the legislatively established funding limits in order to support regional projects. However, DHS does not reward fire departments that take regionalism to the next step and consolidate or amalgamate. For example, my department is composed historically of 12 separate fire departments. We now serve more than 432,000 people in nine cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area. To reward de-

partments that consolidate and cover large populations, the IAFC recommends that the funding limit be raised.

4. Congress should establish centers of excellence in fire safety research. Currently, the AFG program funds a number of projects that are aimed at reducing more than 100 firefighter deaths, and as discussed, over 3,000 civilian fire deaths each year. While beneficial, many of these programs are not comprehensive research programs. Also, their results need to be transferred to the mainstream fire service. The IAFC recommends the creation of two or three centers of excellence in fire safety research. The research centers would be partnerships between major fire service organizations and major research institutions aimed at improving firefighter health and public fire safety.

The FIRE grant program should also have a waiver to local match requirements for economically challenged areas. According to the existing statute, most jurisdictions must meet a 20 percent match while jurisdictions serving smaller populations must meet matches as low as five percent. Some jurisdictions cannot meet these requirements, especially due to the economic downturn, but still need training and/or to replace antiquated equipment. The IAFC recommends that Congress create the authority for DHS to waive the local match requirement for these departments.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to testify on the importance of the FIRE and SAFER grant programs. We look forward to working with the Committee and yourselves to continue these important programs. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Chief Johnson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHIEF JEFFREY D. JOHNSON

Good morning, Chairman Wu, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. I am Jeff Johnson, First Vice President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and Fire Chief of Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, which is located in Beaverton, Oregon. I appreciate the opportunity to testify this morning on the importance of reauthorizing the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program, which strengthens the baseline operational capabilities of America's fire and emergency services.

The IAFC represents the leadership of over 1.1 million firefighters and emergency responders. IAFC members are the world's leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety policy. Since 1873, the IAFC has provided a forum for its members to exchange ideas and uncover the latest products and services available to first responders.

The Fire and Emergency Service Community

America's fire and emergency services are the only organized group of American citizens that is locally situated, staffed, trained, and equipped to respond to all types of emergencies. There are approximately 1.1 million men and women in the fire and emergency services—approximately 300,000 career firefighters and 800,000 volunteer firefighters—serving in over 30,000 fire departments around the country. They are trained to respond to all hazards ranging from earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes and floods, to acts of terrorism, hazardous materials incidents, technical rescues, and fires. America's fire and emergency services also provide 68 percent of the Nation's pre-hospital 9–1–1 emergency medical response.

The fire service protects America's critical infrastructure—the electrical grid, interstate highways, railroads, pipelines, petroleum and chemical facilities—and is, in fact, even considered part of the critical infrastructure. The fire service protects

federal buildings, including military installations, and interstate commerce. No passenger airliner takes off from a runway that is not protected by a fire department.

The Success of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

The AFG program is one of the few grant programs dedicated to all-hazards preparedness and response. The FIRE grant program was created in 2000 as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 *National Defense Authorization Act* (P.L. 106–398) to improve the baseline operational capability of America's fire service through improved equipment, training, and staffing. The program also includes the Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grants, which are designed to enhance fire prevention programs and fire safety research. In 2004, Congress reauthorized the program. The SAFER grant program was created in 2003 as part of the FY 2004 *National Defense Authorization Act* (P.L. 108–136) to specifically address the staffing shortages in career, volunteer and combination fire departments. Between FY 2001 and FY 2009, Congress appropriated $4.815 billion for the FIRE grant program. Also, Congress appropriated $689 million for the SAFER grant program between FY 2005 and FY 2009.

From the IAFC's perspective, the AFG program has been very successful. The programs distribute federal funding directly to local fire departments, which reduces the amount of overhead and processing costs that are found in other DHS grant programs. Every year, DHS convenes annual meetings of the major fire service organizations to develop the criteria for awarding the FIRE and SAFER grants, which ensures that the award process is attuned to the needs of the end users. The AFG grant funds are awarded through a peer-review process to ensure that applications are judged on merit and demonstrated need. The programs also are designed to ensure that federal funds are used to supplement, and not supplant, local budgets. These factors ensure that the federal funds are used judiciously to meet the program's goal of improving public safety.

There is clear evidence of the AFG program's success based on external federal studies. In 2003, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) surveyed over 1,500 AFG recipients to assess the effectiveness of the program. The USDA found that "more than 97 percent of the respondents reported that the AFG program had a positive impact on their department's ability to handle fire or fire-related incidents." More than 75 percent of the respondents said that the grants had a "significant" impact on their operational capabilities. In addition, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reviewed the program in 2007, and rated it "Effective." Notably, the OMB also gave the program a 100 percent score for "Program Management" and "Program Results/Accountability."

In 2006, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) completed a statutorily-mandated analysis of the AFG program entitled *"Matching Assistance to Firefighters Grants to the Reported Needs of the U.S. Fire Service."* The report compared data received from fire service needs assessments in 2001 and 2005. This report demonstrated that the AFG program had begun to make progress in meeting the needs of the fire service. The following examples show some of the progress made by the program nationwide:

- The percentage of departments where there were not enough portable radios to equip everyone on a shift declined by 13 percentage points (from 77 percent to 64 percent).
- The usage of thermal imaging cameras increased (and the need therefore decreased) by 31 percentage points (from 24 percent to 55 percent).
- The percentage of departments without enough SCBA to equip all emergency responders on a shift declined by 10 percentage points (from 70 percent to 60 percent).
- The percentage of departments without enough PASS devices to equip all emergency responders on a shift declined by 14 percentage points (from 62 percent to 48 percent).

The report also found improvements in the size of the population covered by fire prevention programs. The programs include plans review; permit approval; routine testing of active alarm systems; the distribution of free smoke alarms; and programs that work with at-risk youth to reduce arson.

One problem in measuring the effectiveness of these programs is that the most recent data that we have is from 2006. The data shows that the AFG program was beginning to show progress. However, we would encourage the Committee to support an updated needs assessment and further analysis of the AFG program's effectiveness as part of a FIRE–SAFER reauthorization bill.

The Continued Demonstrated Need for the AFG Program

While the studies listed above have documented the success of the AFG program, there is still a demonstrated need for its reauthorization. In 2006, the USFA and NFPA also released a report entitled *"Four Years Later—A Second Needs Assessment of the U.S. Fire Service."* This document updated an earlier 2002 needs assessment. The 2006 report still found a number of equipment and training shortages that can be addressed by the AFG program:

- An estimated two-thirds (66 percent) of departments have at least some personal protective clothing that is at least 10 years old. This includes basic equipment, such as helmets, bunker gear, coats and boots.
- An estimated 63 percent of fire departments involved in wildland firefighting have not provided formal training in those duties to all involved personnel.
- An estimated 36 percent of fire departments involved in emergency medical services or hazardous materials response have not provided training to all involved personnel.
- In communities with a population of less then 2,500, 21 percent of fire departments, nearly all- or mostly-volunteer departments, deliver an average of four or fewer volunteer firefighters to a mid-day house fire.

In light of the recent economic downturn, many fire departments across the country have seen their budgets cut. To respond to these budget cuts, fire stations have been shut down, firefighters have been laid off, and training, equipment, and fire prevention budgets have been cut. Meanwhile, fire departments face increased risks, including the widespread transportation of ethanol-blended fuels (which requires new training and equipment) and the outbreak of pandemic influenza, along with the continued risks presented by natural disasters and man-made incidents. Over the next two years, the IAFC believes that the FIRE and SAFER grants will be critical for helping local fire departments prepare for and respond to these risks.

Proposed Changes to the FIRE Program

While the IAFC believes that the AFG program runs well, we would recommend the following legislative changes to the FIRE grant program:

- **Waiver to the local match for economically-challenged jurisdictions:** According to the current statute, most fire departments have to meet a 20 percent match. A jurisdiction with 50,000 or fewer residents has to meet a 10 percent match, and a jurisdiction with 20,000 or fewer residents only has to meet a five percent match. There are some jurisdictions that cannot meet these local match requirements due to the economic downturn, but still need to replace antiquated equipment or need new training. Since the FIRE grant program is designed to improve the operational baseline capability of fire departments, we ask that the Committee create the authority for the DHS to grant a waiver for the local match for these needy departments. We would be willing to work with the Committee to develop a fair, credible and transparent process for granting waivers for needy departments.
- **Establish Centers of Excellence in Fire Safety Research:** Every year, over 100 firefighters die in the line of duty and over 3,000 members of the public die in fire-related deaths every year. The FP&S grants fund a number of research projects to study issues such as how to improve firefighter cardiovascular health, reduce community fire risk, and the IAFC's National Fire Fighter Near-Miss Reporting System, which is designed to reduce firefighter deaths and injuries. However, many of these projects are single projects that are not part of a comprehensive research program. Also, there needs to be greater success at transferring new technology and important information developed by the FP&S grants to the mainstream fire service.

  To address these concerns, the IAFC supports the use of the FP&S funds to develop two or three centers of excellence in fire safety research that would establish long-term, comprehensive applied research programs to improve firefighter health and public fire safety. We envision these research centers as being joint partnerships between major fire service organizations and regionally-accredited, major academic research institutions aimed at reducing firefighter and public mortality and improving firefighter and public safety. These centers would be overseen by the AFG office and funded at up to $2 million in the first year and no more than $5 million annually thereafter from the FP&S grants.

- **Reward Improved Regionalism:** The FIRE grant program is designed to support regionalism and even allows a separate category of applications for regional projects. According to the FIRE grant guidance, the DHS has the ability to waive the legislatively established funding limits under the AFG to fund larger projects that support training and equipment acquisition that "positively affect inter-operability between jurisdictions." The IAFC supports these incentives to promote greater regional cooperation between jurisdictions. Mutual aid between jurisdictions is the backbone of our national emergency response system.

  However, we are seeing an increasing trend, especially in the West Coast states, to take regionalism "to the next level." To improve operational capabilities and derive economies of scale, many departments are combining into larger, amalgamated fire departments. For example, my fire department, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, is composed of what were historically 12 departments. Today, my fire department has 500 members and protects more than 432,500 people in nine cities and portions of three counties in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area. My fire department is limited to a $1 million grant, but if the 12 departments had applied separately for AFG funding, they would be able to apply for a much larger amount. In order to promote greater regional integration and support greater equality for fire departments that are composed of historically smaller entities, the IAFC recommends that the funding cap be raised for larger fire departments.

Proposed Changes to the SAFER Program

The IAFC also would recommend some major revisions to the SAFER grant program. The current program requires a five-year commitment with an escalating local match of 10–20–50–70–100 percent. The current economic downturn has demonstrated some weaknesses in this formula. Many jurisdictions can no longer make a five-year commitment to the program, because they do not know what their budget situation will look like in the fifth year when they have to cover 100 percent of the firefighter's salary. In 2008, the DHS reported a greater than 12 percent drop in SAFER grant applications from 2007, including a 20 percent drop in applications from all-career and combination departments with a majority of career firefighters. In addition, there is an increasing number of jurisdictions that have had to decline SAFER grants or give back federal funding, because they can no longer meet the local match requirements in the second, third, or fourth year. Congress attempted to address this issue temporarily earlier this year in both the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (P.L. 111–5) and the *Supplemental Appropriations Act* (P.L. 111–32) by waiving the local match and other SAFER Act requirements. The IAFC supported these temporary relief measures, and believes that the situation can be simplified with a straight three-year local commitment for the SAFER grant program with a 20 percent match.

The IAFC also would recommend that Congress remove the SAFER program's $100,000 statutory cap per firefighter (which was increased with inflation to $108,380 in 2008). This cap does not take into account the costs of hiring even a rookie firefighter in some parts of the country. For example, my fire department budgets $76,070 for a rookie firefighter for one year. Even under a three-year commitment with a 20 percent match, the $108,380 from the Federal Government would run out in the second year. Regardless of the federal match required by law, the statutory cap per firefighter would require me to pay 100 percent of the "subsidized" firefighter by the third year. To prevent this contradiction, the IAFC would urge the Committee to remove this cap.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Subcommittee for its continued dedication to helping America's fire service. Last year, this subcommittee passed the *United States Fire Administration (USFA) Reauthorization Act of 2008* (P.L. 110–376), which strengthened the USFA and the National Fire Academy. The IAFC is grateful that the Subcommittee is now focused on reauthorizing the FIRE and SAFER grant programs. As my testimony demonstrates, these programs play a vital role in making sure that local fire departments are prepared to respond to all-hazards and they have a proven record of effectiveness. We hope that the Subcommittee will consider the recommendations that we have outlined here today, and look forward to working with you to pass an AFG reauthorization bill this year.

BIOGRAPHY FOR CHIEF JEFFREY D. JOHNSON

Jeff Johnson, Fire Chief and Chief Executive Officer of Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue (TVF&R), joined the fire district in 1989, following an 11 year fire service career in Douglas County, Oregon. Chief Johnson served as Division Chief and Assistant Chief at TVF&R prior to becoming Fire Chief in 1995.

Serving a resident population of more than 432,500 in nine cities and portions of three counties in the Portland (OR) metropolitan area, TVF&R is a fire district with approximately 500 members providing fire, EMS, and specialty rescue response along with prevention services. While under Chief Johnson's leadership, TVF&R has twice received the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)/U.S. Safety and Engineering Fire Service Excellence Award, the Nation's top award for organizational excellence in the fire service. TVF&R is accredited by the Center for Public Safety Excellence Commission on Fire Accreditation International CPSE/CFAI).

Chief Johnson is an ambassador for excellence and innovation in our service to the community. Additionally, he advocates for cooperative initiatives and other business practices that achieve efficiencies and demonstrate smart government and value for the citizens' investment. He has authored two fire service books and is a featured guest lecturer across the nation.

Chief Johnson is the Vice President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and holds membership in the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association and the various IAFC Sections. He is the IAFC's alternate representative to the SAFECOM Executive Committee and a member of the SAFECOM Emergency Response Council. Additionally, he is a member of the USA Delegation to the Comite' Technique International De Prevention Et D'Extinction Du Feu (CTIF), also known as the International Association of Fire and Rescue Services.

By gubernatorial appointment, he is the Chair of Oregon's State Inter-operability Executive Council and a member of the Oregon Governor's Homeland Security Council. He is Past President of both the Western Fire Chiefs Association (WFCA) and the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (OFCA), the Past Chair of the Oregon Governors' Fire Service Policy Council, and a charter member of Oregon's Meritorious Service committee. Locally, he is a board member for both the Washington County Office on Consolidated Emergency Management (OCEM) and for the Washington County Consolidated Communications Agency (WCCCA; the 911/dispatch center.

In the corporate environment, Chief Johnson sits on the boards of two private companies, specifically as a member of the Informed Corporation Board and as the Chairman of the Global Public Safety Solutions (GPSS) Board. He also is on the Editorial Board of *FireRescue Magazine.*

Chief Johnson holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business and Associate Degrees in Fire Science and Criminal Justice Administration. He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program and achieved the CPSE Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Designation. During his leisure time, Jeff enjoys spending time with his wife Kay and their two children. An avid outdoorsman and student of Oregon history, he enjoys camping, fishing and motorcycling in Oregon's back country.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Chief.

Chief Carriger.

STATEMENT OF CHIEF JACK CARRIGER, STAYTON FIRE DEPARTMENT, STAYTON, OREGON; FIRST VICE–CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL (NVFC)

Chief CARRIGER. Good morning, Chairman Luján and Ranking Member Smith and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to be here today and I would like to also thank Chairman Wu for his dedicated service to public safety and his commitment to this program and others.

My name is Jack Carriger. I am the Fire Chief for Stayton Fire District, which is in the northwest section of Oregon, and I am also here as the First Vice President of the National Volunteer Fire Council. The council has participated since the inception of the AFG program and SAFER program in the criteria and strategic planning of the programs through the Department of Homeland Se-

curity and has continued to be a part of that input, which has made this program the success that it is. That we in the fire service can give input to DHS and provide the information that is used to base the criteria development for the AFG grants and the SAFER grants is probably, as it has been testified earlier, one of the most successful things that has happened on this Hill in many years. Stakeholders have input that is solicited through the meetings since 2000 at its inception and the process was codified last year during the AFG reauthorization. In addition to consulting with the fire service through the criteria development and strategic planning, AFG convenes panels of firefighters to evaluate and rank applications based on merit and based on the panel's rankings awards those grants to departments across the United States, both rural, suburban and metro departments equally.

When AFG was created in 2007, it was the first federal program designed to assist local fire agencies with goals of bringing all fire departments to a baseline to be able to provide a base level of security for the citizens of our country. And then in 2002 and 2004, AFG was reauthorized and a second assessment study was published in 2006 that found significant progress had been made in several areas including a 56 percent increase in the number of departments with enough portable radios to provide everyone on shift, a 33 percent increase in the percentage of departments with enough self-contained breathing apparatus to provide everybody on shift, 129 percent increase in the number of departments with thermal imaging cameras and 21 to 42 percent increase in the overall percentage of departments with written agreements of cooperation using outside personnel and equipment in response to emergencies.

In addition to statistical documentation of the program's success, there are several available web sites such as *www.firegrantsupport.com,* which is maintained by FEMA, and *www.firegrantdata.com,* which is maintained by several of the national fire service organizations, and I can tell you that my department has received several of these grants and they have made an extreme difference in our ability to not only provide service to the public but to provide service to other agencies through inter-operability and through compatibility. Our first grant was for SCBAs (self-contained breathing apparatus). Our equipment was more than 15 years old and did not meet any of the current NFPA standards. We were able to purchase new SCBAs that were compatible with larger departments around us and all of those neighboring departments that surrounded us.

Our second grant was to receive personal protective equipment, which included helmets, turnouts, boots, and gloves, which replaced equipment that was 15 to 20 years old, and this allowed us to not only be able to provide safer service to the public but to provide that extra level of safe protection to the firefighters themselves, and as is stressed so heavily in the fire service today, the need for everyone to go home is based on our ability to provide safety for those firefighters, both career and volunteer.

Our third grant was for a rehabilitation trailer for firefighters and other emergency agencies, people that provide monitoring, care and treatment on scene for firefighters while they are working, especially in long-duration incidents.

The SAFER Act has brought a new ability to the volunteer fire service to be able to go out and actively participate in recruitment and retention programs that are so vitally important to the volunteer service right now with its challenges of finding people that are willing to take the time out of their lives and help revitalize the ranks of the volunteer fire service in the United States, and we at the NVFC feel that this program is vital to the future of the fire service in general, and that both SAFER and AFG are vital to the future of our ability to provide first response service to the communities that we serve, which is equal across the Nation no matter what size the Department is.

At NVFC, we would like to see some things take change in the service. Although we feel that the program is an excellent program, it is designed well through criteria development, through strategic planning and through the peer group evaluation, those groups continually bring better things to the matrix process and the application process but we would also like to see Congress authorize additional tools for assessing AFG and SAFER. This would include another fire service needs assessment to measure the progress that has been made in bringing fire departments up to baseline levels of readiness based on national consensus standards. It would also include developing tools to analyze the impact that grants are having in the communities and incorporated data from NFIRS (National Fire Incident Reporting Systems). State fire training agencies should be made eligible grantees through the AFG including grants for the purchase of vehicles and equipment. Grants for State training agencies should be capped at $1 million, the same as all but the largest fire department jurisdictions. State training agencies are a critical component of creating and delivering training throughout the country, especially in rural areas. National organizations should be able to be eligible to apply for SAFER recruitment and retention grants. Recruitment and retention is one of the most significant challenges facing volunteer fire service today. State and local interest organizations are already eligible to apply for these grants and have been able to use the funds to assist hundreds of departments. National organizations could use the same approach and even on a larger scale and larger groups for departments.

The local matching requirement for the departments through the fire prevention and safety should be eliminated. This would hopefully rejuvenate the participation in those programs as well as in the interest of national organizations, which currently have no matching requirements.

I would like to thank you again for allowing me to participate, and if you have any questions, I would be more than happy to answer those.

[The prepared statement of Chief Carriger follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHIEF JACK CARRIGER

Chairman Wu, Ranking Member Smith and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be here today to speak with you about the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant program as the subcommittee prepares legislation to reauthorize both programs. My name is Jack

Carriger and I am the Chief of the Stayton Fire Department in northwest Oregon as well as the First Vice-Chairman of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC).

The NVFC is a nonprofit organization representing the interests of the more than one million volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel in the United States. Volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel serve in more than 20,000 communities across this country. Their services save local taxpayers more than $37.2 billion each year. Without volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel, thousands of communities, particularly in rural areas, simply could not afford to provide effective emergency services to their citizens.

Program Overview

The AFG and SAFER programs provide assistance to local fire and EMS agencies through a competitive grant process that ensures that funding is efficiently directed to the communities that need it most. AFG funds are used primarily to purchase equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles and training while SAFER funds are used for hiring career firefighters as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. By statute, five percent of AFG funds are set aside to support "fire prevention and control activities." These funds have traditionally been administered as a separate program, the Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grants.

With several notable exceptions, AFG, SAFER and FP&S use local matching requirements restrictions on using federal funding to replace local spending to ensure that the programs are building capacity and improving safety rather than simply helping local governments balance their budgets. The size of grant awards is capped based on community size to ensure that there is funding available to help a large number of communities of different sizes.

Over the past few years, I have represented the NVFC at criteria development and strategic planning meetings that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) holds in order to receive stakeholder input on AFG, SAFER and FP&S. In March, I participated in a conference call with other stakeholders to provide input on criteria for the Fire Station Construction (FSC) grants that were funded through the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (ARRA) of 2009.

Stakeholder input has been solicited though criteria development meetings since the inception of AFG in 2000—a process that was codified during the last AFG reauthorization. DHS is able to take the input from the criteria development meetings and use it to recalibrate the grant criteria each year to ensure that it is addressing the most pressing needs of the fire service. The meetings also offer DHS an opportunity to share information with the fire service about emerging trends within the grant programs that may necessitate consideration of additional adjustments to the criteria.

In addition to consulting the fire service through the criteria development and strategic planning meetings, DHS convenes panels of firefighters to evaluate and rank grant applications based on merit. Based on the panel rankings, awards are made directly to fire and EMS agencies. This funding delivery method, combined with the outstanding work of Grants Program Directorate (GPD) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which administers the various programs, has resulted in more than 95 percent of appropriated funds reaching local first responders.

AFG

When AFG was created in 2000, it was the first federal program designed to assist local fire agencies, with the goal of bringing all fire departments up to a baseline level of readiness. Congress authorized a needs assessment study to identify major areas of need based on national consensus standards in 2000 and again in 2004 when AFG was reauthorized. The second needs assessment study was published in 2006 and found that significant progress had been made in several areas, including:

— A 56 percent increase in the number of departments with enough portable radios to equip everyone on a shift.

— A 33 percent increase in the percentage of departments with enough self-contained breathing apparatus to equip everyone on shift.

— A 129 percent increase in the number of departments with thermal imaging cameras.

— A 21–42 percent increase (depending on the type of incident) in the overall percentage of departments with written agreements to coordinate the use of outside personnel and equipment in a response.

A 2007 DHS Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review of AFG determined that the program was 95 percent effective—the second highest rating of any DHS program behind only the Secret Service Domestic Protectees program. The Assessment found that AFG has been particularly successful at reducing on-scene firefighter injuries and reducing the percentage of grant dollars spent per firefighters trained.

In addition to the statistical documentation of the program's success, there is substantial anecdotal evidence available on various web sites including *www.firegrantsupport.com,* which is maintained by FEMA, and *www.firegrantdata.com,* which is maintained by several national fire service organizations. My own fire department has received three AFG three AFG grants have been for firefighter safety and wellness. The first grant we received replaced Self Contained Breathing Apparatus that was for the most part over twenty years old and no longer compatible with or neighboring departments we know can work with all of our surrounding departments. The second grant assisted us in providing our firefighters with new Personal Protective Equipment which included turnout gear, helmets, gloves and boots that meet current NFPA standards that our old equipment, in most cases over fifteen years old, did not meet and left our firefighters exposed to much higher risk. Our third grant provided a firefighter rehabilitation unit designed to provide monitoring, care and treatment to firefighters and other emergency service agencies on scene. These grants have allowed us to provide a much higher level of protection to our volunteers then we have ever been able to provide before.

One of the challenges in tracking the impact of AFG in statistical terms is a lack of comprehensive data on fire incidents nationally. The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) is in the process of being updated using funds authorized last year in the *United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008,* which was written by this committee. More consistent and comprehensive reporting of fire incidents will allow us to examine with far greater accuracy the true impact of AFG. Additionally, Congress should authorize another needs assessment of the fire service in order to examine progress that has been made since the last assessment was performed.

In each of the past three years, an average of nearly 20,000 fire departments and EMS agencies have submitted requests for an average of more than $3 billion through AFG. The largest percentage of these requests—both in the number of applications and funds requested—have come from volunteer departments, which are first-due responders to approximately 70 percent of communities nationwide.

Volunteer departments serve urban and suburban areas but are most highly concentrated in rural communities that have small tax bases and higher rates of poverty on average than larger jurisdictions. DHS needs assessments have consistently shown that equipment, training and apparatus needs are most acute in volunteer departments. Many volunteer departments rely on used equipment and apparatus, either purchased from or donated by other departments. According to a 2005 survey by the U.S. Fire Administration, in communities of 2,500 or less, only 43.5 percent of fire departments purchase new apparatus. According to the same survey, 71 percent of those communities are served by fire departments that are involved in structural firefighting without all personnel having formal training.

Over the years, the roles and responsibilities the fire service has been asked to take on have been gradually expanding—a process that accelerated after the terrorist attacks on our country in September, 2001. Since that time, a number of grant programs have been established through DHS to improve preparedness, including providing assistance to first responders. Funding through these programs is made available primarily in densely populated communities, which are perceived to have a higher risk of terrorist attack. Since Hurricane Katrina, the priorities of these programs have been altered to recognize the importance of preparing for a wider range of disasters. Still, the bulk of funding is still being directed to urban areas—both directly and by providing larger allocations of block-grant funding to states with major population centers.

Of all DHS programs, the various firefighter assistance grants stand alone in serving communities of all sizes and distributing funding based on need rather than population (although population protected is one component taken into account in ranking AFG applications). AFG is particularly important to volunteer departments because it addresses the pressing needs that represent the largest proportion of their budgets—equipment, training and apparatus expenditures.

Even with little-to-no costs in the form of personnel compensation, most volunteer departments still rely on private fundraising to balance their operating budgets. Volunteer firefighting and EMS professionals respond to emergency calls with or without the type of equipment, training and apparatus that their counterparts in

many larger communities take for granted. For many volunteer departments, AFG represents their only option for purchasing up-to-date firefighting tools.

AFG is also an invaluable tool in encouraging training within the volunteer fire service. Earlier I cited the percentage of fire departments serving small communities that have not trained all of their personnel for structural firefighting, and similarly dismaying statistics exist for training levels of personnel responding to other types of incidents, including EMS, wildland fires and hazardous materials incidents, among others.

One of the things that is consistently stressed at stakeholder criteria development meetings is that departments receiving grants for equipment and apparatus must have their personnel trained to use it. As a result, departments must certify that their personnel are trained to a level consistent with minimum national consensus standards for the use of a piece of equipment or apparatus that they are applying for. Departments that do not already meet this minimum standard are still eligible to receive AFG funds if they adopt a plan to train their personnel and their applications will actually score higher if they include funds to pay for necessary training.

Last year, the NVFC adopted a position that all volunteer fire departments should at least be working towards training all personnel to a level consistent with NFPA 1001: Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications. This is not a unique position within the fire service, but it was a major step for the NVFC because there are a number of volunteer departments in the country that do not believe training their personnel to that level is possible, desirable or some combination of the two.

Incorporating national consensus standards into the AFG criteria is having a ripple effect on the way that some states approach training. The Mississippi Fire Academy recently changed its field-delivered training and now offers classes that lead to certification based on NFPA 1001 requirements. The NVFC's Mississippi Alternate Director George Stevens is the Lamar County (MS) Fire Coordinator and reports that this change was in part the result of a lobbying effort by the state's County Fire Coordinators, who were motivated by the requirements in AFG.

Some of the major challenges facing volunteer departments in training their personnel include a lack of resources, time constraints on the individual volunteers and a lack of locally-available training opportunities. AFG is a vital part of the solution to dealing with all of these issues, first and foremost by providing departments with resources to pursue additional training.

State training agencies also play a critical role in training volunteer firefighters, but are not currently eligible for funding through AFG. These agencies deliver training to fire departments in remote areas by producing and disseminating training materials, funding training offerings at local colleges and other institutions and through regional training facilities. State training agencies should be made eligible to apply for funds through AFG to supplement ongoing efforts and encourage expanded training offerings.

SAFER

Staffing was originally a component of AFG, but based on input from the fire service through the criteria development process, AFG has never funded staffing grants. Instead, Congress created the SAFER program in 2003 to address the significant personnel needs that exist throughout the fire service.

SAFER's primary function is to assist career, combination and volunteer departments with hiring personnel. There is also a minimum 10 percent set-aside required by statute to assist combination and volunteer departments with recruitment and retention (R&R) of volunteers.

In each of the past three years, 1,300–1,700 fire departments have applied for $750–$593 million in funding through SAFER. One of the reasons for the low level of requests through SAFER (relative to AFG) has been high local matching requirements for hiring grants. Many departments have been forced to return hiring grants because they are unable to meet the local match. This was addressed, at least in the short-term, in ARRA, which eliminated local matching requirements for SAFER for FY 2009 and 2010. There has never been a local matching requirement for the R&R portion of SAFER, which have represented 30–40 percent of total requests over the past three years.

There is no single more significant challenge facing the volunteer fire service than recruitment and retention. While the total number of people who are members of volunteer fire departments has remained relatively constant over the past 25 years, the average age of those individuals has been increasing to the point where today, approximately half of all volunteer firefighters are over the age of 40. In 1987, roughly 65 percent of volunteer firefighters were 39 years of age or less.

As this trend suggests, fire departments are increasingly having difficulty recruiting and retaining the next generation of volunteer firefighters. There are a variety

of reasons for this: increased training requirements mean that individuals have to commit more time than ever to volunteering; people today are commuting longer distances to work, leaving less time for training and putting particular strain on departments ability to have adequate staffing during working hours; an increase in the number of one- and two-parent households in which all the parents are working; and pressure from career fire departments/union locals to prevent career firefighters from volunteering during off-duty hours (also known as "two-hatters").

This last issue is already being addressed to some degree through SAFER. Fire departments that receive a SAFER hiring grant are prohibited by statute from discriminating against two-hatters. Two-hatters tend to be individuals who got their initial firefighter training and experience through their hometown volunteer fire department. In a 2005 study, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) estimated that 27,000 (close to 10 percent of) career firefighters volunteer during off-duty hours. The volunteer protections in SAFER ensure that hiring grants aren't increasing capacity in career departments by subtracting from the ranks of volunteers.

Volunteer fire departments can use R&R funds for a variety of activities from marketing campaigns to establishing modest financial or other incentives to their personnel. In addition to fire departments, local and State interest organizations are eligible to apply for R&R funding. My department received a SAFER grant in FY 2008 that is currently in the process of being implemented. The grant includes matching funds to assist the District with hiring a full time volunteer recruitment and retention office for the District, this person will also assist the nine surrounding Fire Districts with their R&R challenges in meeting the need for increased volunteer firefighting.

The Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association received a SAFER grant in 2006 to establish a State-wide marketing program to assist local fire departments in recruiting volunteers in their areas. The Oregon Fire Chief's Association also received a SAFER Grant in 2007 that was incorporated with the Volunteers grant to enhance recruitment and retention across the state. A number of departments have reported an increase in interest and in volunteers since the programs were implemented.

One of the major benefits to allowing interest organizations to compete for SAFER funds is that they can implement programs with the potential to reach volunteer fire departments that are not applying for R&R grants. Many of these departments desperately need additional personnel but are unsure about how to go about implementing a recruitment and retention program. Through the grant that OVFA received in 2006, we have directly assisted more than 200 and indirectly assisted all 340 volunteer and combination departments—many times more than the 32 fire departments in the State of Oregon that applied for SAFER funding in FY 2006.

As I just alluded to, one of the major benefits of allowing interest organizations to compete for SAFER funds is that they can implement programs with the potential to reach the vast majority of volunteer fire departments that are not applying for R&R grants. Many of these departments desperately need additional personnel but are unsure about how to go about implementing a recruitment and retention program. Through the grant that OSFA received in 2006, we have assisted more than . . . departments in the State of Oregon, three times the number of departments in the state that applied for SAFER funds.

Unfortunately, national organizations are not currently eligible for R&R funding. The NVFC is already active in promoting recruitment and retention on a number of fronts, operating a national 1–800–FIRELINE phone number where individuals interested in learning about volunteering can be connected with a department in their area and last year developing, in partnership with USFA, an extensive Recruitment and Retention manual. National organizations should be made eligible to compete for R&R grants so that they have access to additional resources to leverage ongoing efforts and establish new initiatives for departments nationwide.

FP&S

As mentioned earlier, FP&S grants are a component of AFG. By statute, FP&S must comprise at least five percent of funds appropriated to AFG, although in recent years the actual awards have been in excess of that figure.

While AFG and SAFER focus on building response capacity, FP&S focuses on reducing the national fire problem through prevention activities, with a primary goal to target high-risk populations and mitigate high incidences of death and injury. Over the past three years, approximately 2,700–3,330 fire departments and interest organizations have applied for $270–$448 million through FP&S.

The NVFC has received FP&S funds to operate our Heart-Healthy Firefighter program, the only national program dedicated to saving America's firefighters and EMS personnel from heart disease, the leading cause of line-of-duty death. Through the Heart-Healthy Firefighter program, the NVFC disseminates information, materials

and programs to implement locally that emphasize heart health through fitness, proper nutrition and lifestyle choices to firefighters and EMS personnel. The program has also provided more than 15,000 health screenings at no cost to firefighters.

In the 2004 AFG reauthorization, the matching requirement for interest organizations was eliminated in an attempt to encourage additional applications. Since the reauthorization we have seen a substantial increase in applications from interest organizations. Unfortunately, since that time we have also seen a major decrease in funding requests from fire departments. In FY 2007, the last fiscal year for which application statistics have been made available on *www.firegrantsupport.com,* applications from non-fire departments made up nearly 43 percent of total funds requested. Between 2005 and 2007, fire departments have gone from requests through FP&S have fallen from $394 million to $191 million.

The NVFC would like to see the FP&S local matching requirement eliminated altogether in order to level the playing field between fire departments and interest organizations and encourage more applications generally.

NVFC Priorities for Reauthorization

The NVFC's main priority for reauthorization of AFG/FP&S and SAFER is to extend the programs without substantial changes. We believe that the programs are well-run, distributing funding in an efficient manner to the most deserving awardees. Through the criteria development and strategic planning meetings, DHS is already able to make adjustments to the programs on a yearly basis to ensure that the program is responsive to the shifting needs of the fire service.

There are a few changes that we would like to see made, that I alluded to earlier and will summarize again:

> Congress should authorize additional tools for assessing AFG/FP&S and SAFER. This would include another fire service needs assessment to measure the progress that has been made in bringing fire departments up to a baseline level of readiness based on national consensus standards. It would also include developing tools to analyze the impact that grants are having in communities and incorporate data from NFIRS.
>
> State fire training academies should be made eligible grantees through AFG, including grants to purchase vehicles and equipment. Grants for State training academies should be capped at $1 million, the same as all but the largest fire department jurisdictions. State training academies are a critical component of creating and delivering training throughout the country and especially in rural areas.
>
> National organizations should be made eligible to apply for SAFER R&R grants. Recruitment and retention is one of the most significant challenges facing the volunteer fire service today. State and local interest organizations are already eligible to apply for these grants and have been able to use funds to assist hundreds of fire departments. National organizations could use the same approach to benefit an even larger group of departments.
>
> The local matching requirement for fire departments through FP&S should be eliminated. This would hopefully re-invigorate participation by fire departments in the FP&S program as well as create equity between fire departments and interest organizations, which currently have no matching requirement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today. I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

BIOGRAPHY FOR CHIEF JACK CARRIGER

Chief Carriger started his emergency service career as a Reserve Deputy with the Marion County Sheriff's Office where he spent 10 years. During that time he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in charge of the Reserve Training Academy.

After leaving the Sheriff's office he joined Marion County Fire District #1 as a volunteer. During his ten years with MCFD he served as a Lt., a member of the Training Committee, President of Volunteer FF Association, and became involved with the OVFA.

In October 1996, Chief Carriger was hired by Nestucca Fire District to serve as their Fire Chief.

In November of 2002 he accepted the Fire Chief's position with Stayton Fire District where he continues to serve.

During his career he has been involved with the following: Adjunct Instructor for CCC; OVFA President; OFCA member; Board Member BPSST; Chair of the Fire Advisory Committee to BPSST; Tillamook County Fire Defense Board, 1st Alt. Chief; Chair, Tillamook County 911 Advisory Committee; Chair, Santiam Canyon 911 Center Council; Interim Director of Santiam Canyon 911 Center.

Currently he serves on the following local, State, and national committees and councils: Marion County Emergency Management; Marion County Communications Plan Committee; Marion County Fire Defense Board 1st Alt Chief; Santiam Canyon 911 Center Executive Board; Chair of the Oregon State FF Training and Emergency Relief Fund; State Mobilization Plan Review Committee; FIRE ACT Grant Criteria and Development Committee; Advisory Committee to FIRE ACT Administration Staff; 1st VP National Volunteer Fire Council.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Chief.

Mr. O'Connor, you are recognized. I just want to remind the witnesses of the five-minute timeline. We may be called for votes close to 11:00 so that way we can get through all the questions. Mr. O'Connor.

STATEMENT OF MR. KEVIN B. O'CONNOR, ASSISTANT TO THE GENERAL PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS (IAFF)

Mr. O'CONNOR. Thank you, Chairman Luján, Ranking Member Smith. I am Kevin O'Connor, representing the men and women of the International Association of Fire Fighters. Prior to my IAFF service, I served for 15 years as a firefighter/EMT in the Baltimore County Fire Department and was also a proud volunteer in that same jurisdiction.

Let me begin by thanking this committee for its continued interest in the AFG and SAFER programs. Without the consistent bipartisan support of the Science Committee, neither program would have ever been authorized. Today I am here to support the reauthorization of both programs but also to offer constructive advice to make AFG and SAFER more efficient and cost effective.

In its eight-year history, as you have been told, AFG has dispensed over 40,000 grants totaling almost $4 billion; but those statistics belie the fact that the programs have not always met their original objective. AFG and SAFER were designed to strengthen the ability of local fire departments to better protect safety nationwide. While some communities have used the grants to make important enhancements in local fire protection, it is clear that the funds are not being used effectively and the current statutory limitations are undermining AFG's mission. Recognizing this problem, the IAFF worked with the IAFC and NFPA, who are also at this table today, as well as others to craft a proposal which we believe addresses serious impediments under current law that may prevent many communities from taking full advantage of AFG and SAFER. Empirically, the overwhelming majority of FIRE grants are awarded to departments that protect a relatively small percentage of the population. Since 2002, fire departments protecting only 20 percent of our nation's populations have received a disproportionate share of AFG funding. We fully support ensuring that communities of every size, large and small, both career and volunteer departments, receive a fair share of AFG grants. However, the current distribution of funds, which protects only a small portion of the population, is an inefficient use of scarce federal resources.

For a glaring example of this disparity, we only need to look at my old fire department, Baltimore County. There, career units run 70 percent of the calls but are only eligible under current guidelines for $1.7 million in AFG grants. The county's 33 independent volunteer companies, which run 30 percent of the call volume, are collectively allowed to apply for $33 million in grants. Other examples abound and are enumerated in my written testimony.

By all measurements, this is an uneven and ineffective allocation. The system should be changed. Therefore, we advocate revamping the program to apportion AFG into four separate pots of money: 30 percent allocated for all volunteer departments, all career, and all combination departments with the remaining 10 percent allocated through open competition.

We further suggest that the funding caps be adjusted upwardly. Under current law, for example, the New York City Fire Department, which runs 357 fire companies and responds to nearly half a million calls for assistance per year, can only receive $2.75 million in AFG funding. Under our proposal, the smallest jurisdictions could receive up to $1 million and cities with over a million residents could receive up to $10 million. So the smallest communities would still continue to enjoy proportionately very large awards. By increasing the size of awards for larger jurisdictions, AFG could finally start making measurable differences in a larger department's response capabilities.

Lastly, we suggest lowering the match from 20 to 15 percent with exceptions to further reduce or eliminate the local portion if financial distress can be enumerated. We concur with the IAFC's position in that regard. These changes will improve AFG and ensure that federal dollars are spent in a way that maximizes the benefit to public safety while ensuring that communities of all sizes continue to benefit from the program.

SAFER, the staffing component of AFG, also needs to be reformed. In its current iteration, SAFER requires an increasing local match over five years and caps the federal share at $110,000 per position. As a result, SAFER has become a program that only benefits a small number of growing but prosperous jurisdictions. To truly assist departments in meeting safe staffing and deployment requirements, the rules governing SAFER should be simplified. We advocate: one, establishing a flat 20 percent match to allow for better resource management; two, shortening the grant period from five to three years to allow communities to better plan expenditures; and three, eliminate the current cap to address significant differences in starting salary as has been testified to by Chief Johnson. Collectively, these changes will enable more communities to use SAFER to increase the number of firefighters which in turn improves local response capabilities and assists in meeting national consensus standards.

In conclusion, the changes we advocate with the united fire service organizations will improve both AFG and SAFER to better fulfill their statutory obligation to improve the capabilities of local communities while ensuring that federal resources will be used more effectively to protect public safety.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify and will be ready to answer questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. O'Connor follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KEVIN B. O'CONNOR

Thank you Chairman Wu, Ranking Member Smith and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Kevin O'Connor and I am the Assistant to the General President of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) for Governmental Affairs and Public Policy. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of General President Schaitberger and the nearly 300,000 firefighters and emergency medical personnel in our 3148 affiliates from every congressional district in the Nation.

Mr. Chairman, I testify today not only as a representative of the IAFF, but as a former firefighter who fully understands the critical impact that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program has on the ability of local firefighters to serve their communities. I spent my entire adult life in the fire service, starting as a volunteer firefighter and serving for over fifteen years as a professional firefighter and emergency medical technician in the Baltimore County, Maryland Fire Department, where I worked as a line firefighter assigned to both engine and ladder companies as well the medic unit. I also served as the Administrative and Fire Ground Aide to the Chief of the Fire Department.

Since AFG's inception, the various fire service organizations, many of whom are represented on this panel today, have worked together to improve the programs and ensure that they are administered effectively so that local fire departments nationwide, in communities of all sizes, may benefit. However, over time we have seen that the programs have not met their original objective. The FIRE and SAFER grant programs were meant to strengthen the ability of local fire departments to protect the public safety and respond to all hazards nationwide. While some communities have used FIRE and SAFER to make important enhancements in local fire protection, restrictions in current law prevent many communities from taking full advantage of the programs, undermining AFG's mission of enhancing the safety of firefighters and the public nationwide.

Recognizing this problem, the IAFF, working with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Fire Protection Association, the Congressional Fire Services Institute and other prominent firefighter organizations representing all facets of the fire service—professional and volunteer, labor and management—have together proposed a series of amendments to FIRE and SAFER which we believe will address the significant impediments under the law that prevent many communities from taking full advantage of the programs.

The Need for FIRE and SAFER

The modern fire service is no longer simply responsible for firefighting. In almost every community in America, our duties encompass a wide variety of emergency services including firefighting, advanced and basic life support emergency medical services, technical, high-angle and water rescue operations, terrorism and hazardous materials response. Additionally, today more than ever our nation's firefighters are on the front lines working to protect our nation's homeland security, whether responding to a natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina, the Midwestern floods, or a terrorist attack like that at the Murrah Building or the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11. Firefighters are expected to risk, and give, our lives and we do so every day without hesitation. Yet, despite the ever-growing duties and risks facing local fire departments, firefighters are too often expected to perform their duties with outdated equipment, minimal training and insufficient personnel.

Thus, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program was created and given a unique mission: to protect the health and safety of firefighters and the public nationwide through the provision of federal funding for staffing, training, equipment and health and wellness programs. AFG, popularly known as the FIRE Grant program, was later expanded to include the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant program to provide a mechanism to fulfill the original goal of assuring fire departments had adequate staffing to operate effectively and safely.

By utilizing a peer-review process and awarding funds directly to local fire departments, FIRE and SAFER grants are among the most well-administered grants in the Federal Government. A recent Office of Management and Budget study recognized FIRE as among the most efficiently-administered grant programs.

Although only $750 million was available to make awards in 2008, local communities applied for nearly four billion dollars in FIRE and SAFER grants. Furthermore, an assessment of the fire service's needs conducted by the National Fire Protection Association concluded that local fire departments continue to face significant equipment and training needs. And while SAFER grants have enabled local commu-

nities to hire approximately 3300 new firefighters, the U.S. Fire Administration has found that most fire departments are unable to respond to many common emergencies with existing staff, and an estimated two-thirds of all jurisdictions do not currently have enough firefighters to safely respond to emergencies.

The FIRE and SAFER grant programs are clearly an efficient means by which to improve local baseline capabilities and fulfill the critical and ongoing unmet needs of local departments. Yet, after eight years, is it also clear that the funds are not being used in the most effective manner, and that current statutory limitations are preventing the program from fulfilling its mission of protecting firefighters and public safety.

Impediments Under Current Law

The restrictions under current law preclude many communities, including many of the most needy communities in the Nation, from being able to take full advantage of the FIRE and SAFER grant programs. Under current law, the overwhelming majority of FIRE grants are awarded to fire departments that protect a relatively small percentage of the population. Since 2002, nearly seventy percent of funds have been awarded to rural departments, while only ten percent of funds have been awarded to protect metropolitan areas. Viewed another way, over two and half billion dollars has been awarded to protect twenty percent of the U.S. population, while slightly less than four-hundred million dollars has gone to benefit departments protecting fifty-eight percent of the population. By all measurements, this is an uneven and ineffective allocation.

The SAFER grant program also contains a number of budgetary restrictions, including a high local match and the need for municipalities to budget five years into the future, that have complicated the ability of many jurisdictions to apply for and maintain a grant, and have prevented many jurisdictions from seeking a grant at all. Although the SAFER grant program is not due for reauthorization until 2010, we believe that the restrictions under SAFER are so onerous, the program is in danger of failing unless fixed now. Consequently, the united fire service feels that both programs should be re-authorized together.

The difficulties facing communities in applying for FIRE and SAFER grants have only been exacerbated by the current economic crisis. Communities nationwide have cut their fire department budgets and reduce services, simultaneously making it more difficult to meet the programs' requirements while also making funding through FIRE and SAFER more important than ever.

It is with these obstacles in mind that we present our proposals to the Subcommittee. We strongly believe that this package of amendments to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program will help ensure that federal funding is spent in a way that maximizes the benefit to public safety and that grants are distributed more equitably among fire departments.

Improving the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

Funding Disparity

As mentioned previously, the most significant problem facing the FIRE Grant program is uneven distribution of funds such that the lion's share of funds are awarded to departments that protect a subset of the population. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, 68.4 percent of funds awarded under the FIRE grant program since the program's inception have been awarded to rural areas, while only ten percent have been awarded to urban areas.

When AFG was first authorized, there was a legitimate fear that the funding would be monopolized by large urban departments. All stakeholders agreed that the AFG program should be more balanced in its approach to awarding grants. I am very proud that I was part of those original discussions to fashion a system that allowed fire departments of all sizes to share in the FIRE Grant program. But, in our attempt to assure fairness, we overcompensated and created a situation in which the grants are skewed disproportionately against professional and combination departments.

These statistics can be viewed in the following chart:

SERVICE_AREA	Awarded			
	# Grants	% of total	Federal Funding	% of total
Rural	32,498.00	78.40%	2,631,055,911.00	68.40%
Suburban	6,675.00	16.10%	823,555,213.00	21.41%
Urban	**2,279.00**	**5.50%**	**392,178,218.00**	**10.19%**
TOTAL	41,452.00		3,846,789,342.00	
DEPT_TYPE	**Awarded**			
	# Grants	% of total	Federal Funding	% of total
All Paid/Career	**4,875.00**	**11.77%**	**742,164,763.00**	**19.27%**
All volunteer	**25,976.00**	**62.70%**	**1,965,647,588.00**	**51.03%**
Combination/Paid on Call	10,580.00	25.54%	1,144,399,276.00	29.71%
TOTAL	41,431.00		3,852,211,627.00	

This disparity can be explained by two reasons. First, current law contains a set-aside for volunteer fire departments and majority-volunteer departments, but contains no similar set-aside for any other type of department. This protection was built into the original law, with the support of the IAFF, to alleviate concerns that the majority of FIRE funds would be awarded to professional departments in urban areas. In part, this concern came from a fear that volunteer departments would not have the resources or know-how to apply for grants. In addition to the set-aside, FEMA has done a superb job of ensuring that the grant applicant process is easy, transparent, and accessible. FEMA has gone so far as to hold grant-writing workshops across the country, many of which are heavily marketed to volunteer departments and promoted by Members of Congress. These efforts have done much to enable applications by volunteer departments such that their ability to apply for a grant is no longer a common concern.

The second reason for the disparity in grant awards is due to the differences in the way volunteer and professional fire departments are organized. In the career fire service, a fire department is generally a function of the local government, such as a city or county, and consists of many fire stations that protect the jurisdiction in question. A volunteer fire department, on the other hand, generally consists of a single fire station that protects a defined geographic area. As a result, a professional fire department will generally protect a much larger population and run a significant number more calls than would a volunteer company.

My former fire department in Baltimore County, Maryland provides a good example of this dichotomy. Over a three year period, Baltimore County averaged approximately 120,000 to 125,000 emergency calls each year with the career component responding to over seventy percent of the calls. Of the 125,000 responses, 80,000–85,000 are run by the professional Baltimore County Fire Department, which consists of twenty-six fire stations. 32,000–33,000 of the calls are run by the thirty-three volunteer departments in the County. Under current law, the Baltimore County Fire Department is eligible for $1.75 million in FIRE grants. The thirty-three volunteer departments, however, are each considered separate eligible applicants, and are eligible to receive a million dollars apiece or $33 million in aggregate. In other words, the volunteer departments in Baltimore County are eligible to receive almost twenty times the amount of funding as is the professional department, even though they combined only run one-third as many calls as the professional department. This pattern is not unique to Baltimore County. In nearly every state, the number of volunteer fire departments dwarfs the number of professional departments; in almost every case, the professional departments run far more calls than do the volunteers.

No one begrudges the ability of volunteer fire departments to receive FIRE grants. However, the current distribution of funds to protect only a small portion of the population is an inefficient use of scarce federal resources. According to the National Fire Protection Association, volunteer departments protected twenty-one percent of the population, professional departments protected forty-five percent, and combination departments protected thirty-three percent.

Lest I give the wrong impression, professional fire departments do protect a very large number of small communities. Over half of the IAFF's locals consist of less

than fifty people, the vast majority of which serve communities of under 50,000. As a matter of fact, a full quarter of our locals consist of less than twenty-five members. The IAFF is not simply an organization representing big city departments.

Current law guarantees that rural communities and small communities are guaranteed a portion of FIRE grants, and we would not support any proposal that would eliminate that requirement.

Likewise, volunteer departments have significant needs and should continue to receive a large portion of FIRE grants. Thus, to alleviate the disparity in FIRE grant awards and to maximize the benefit federal dollars can provide to public safety, we propose that professional, volunteer and combination departments are each guaranteed thirty percent of total grant funding. This provision better allocates FIRE grants to those departments that serve a majority of the population, while still ensuring that volunteer and combination departments receive the vast majority of FIRE grant dollars.

We also recommend amending current law to codify FEMA's current requirement that priority be provided to applicants that protect large populations and have high call volume relative to other applicants. This provision is consistent with current guidance and will help ensure that federal dollars are used more effectively.

Funding Cap

Current funding caps under the FIRE grant program are too low to prove effective. Under current law, the largest jurisdictions, those of one million population or more, can receive no more than $2.75 million. All metropolitan areas of one million or more in the United States are professional departments, which means that the entire City of New York, with hundreds of fire stations and nearly fifteen-thousand firefighters and emergency medical personnel, is limited to $2.75 million in FIRE grant awards. Simply put, $2.75 million is insufficient to measurably improve the fire department's preparedness and safety.

The Chief of the Kansas City Missouri Fire Department and Past President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Smokey Dyer, also noted the restrictions placed on his fire department by the current funding cap: "The FIRE Act is a great program, but needs to be re-tooled. It's just plain wrong that as Chief of the Kansas City Missouri Fire Department with almost 500,000 people and all the issues confronting a major urban city, that I can only apply for a million dollars in AFG grants and our neighboring town of Lee's Summit, a bedroom community with significantly fewer hazards and population (82,000) density, where I was also privileged to serve as Fire Chief, is also eligible for the same grant level. For Kansas City to really benefit from the AFG program, we need to be able to access much larger grants."

Many of the largest fire departments do apply for FIRE grants, but they cannot make the best use of the funds they receive because of the cap. For this reason, we propose increasing the funding cap for communities of all sizes and all types of departments, so that the largest communities, those of one million or more, are eligible to receive up to $10 million. Communities of 500,000 or more would be eligible for $5 million, those of 100,000 or more for $2 million, and those smaller than 100,000 for $1 million. Even the smallest volunteer departments would qualify for a grant of $1 million under our proposal.

Local Match/Maintenance of Effort

The reduced property values, shrinking tax bases, and tighter budgets that have restricted the ability of many local fire departments to afford urgently-needed equipment and training are also preventing these same jurisdictions from affording FIRE's current 20 percent match required of metropolitan areas. To alleviate this burden, we propose reducing the local match from 20 percent to 15 percent.

Additionally, while the fire service supports the principle of a local match, we recognize that there will be a few cases each year where cash strapped jurisdictions are facing critical public safety needs but are unable to afford this reduced match. To this end, we propose providing the Department of Homeland Security with the authority to waive the local match requirements for particularly needy departments.

For the same reason that many communities are unable to afford the current local match, many communities, especially in the years to come, will prove ineligible to receive a FIRE grant because they do not meet the maintenance of effort requirement under current law. This provision requires that grantees maintain their fire department budget at one-hundred percent of the average budget over the previous two years. As fire departments in communities of all sizes must make due with less, due to the current recession, this provision will significantly shrink the pool of eligible applicants unless addressed. Reducing the current maintenance of effort require-

ment to eighty percent will help assure that communities will be able to apply for FIRE grants in the coming years, while still requiring that they fund their departments as robustly as possible.

Improving the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program

Although the FIRE grant program faces significant serious shortcomings, the situation facing the SAFER grant program is particularly dire. The hiring portion of the SAFER grant program contains numerous budgetary restrictions by which municipalities must abide if they wish to receive, and keep, a SAFER grant:

- Municipalities must supply an increasing local share of the firefighter's salary over four years and provide 100 percent of the firefighter's salary in the fifth year.
- Municipalities must retain firefighters hired with SAFER funds for at least five years.
- Municipalities may not use SAFER funds to supplant State or local funds.

If a municipality fails to meet these requirements, it must return the grant to the Federal Government. Unfortunately, this is happening in greater and greater numbers. According to the Department of Homeland Security, since SAFER's inception four years ago, seventy-eight grantees have had to repay the Federal Government a total of $62.7 million because they failed to meet the rigorous requirements. An additional seventy-one grants totaling $51.4 million were declined by municipalities that felt they could not meet the program's obligations.

In North Aurora, Illinois, for example, the North Aurora Fire Protection District was forced to turn down a $650,000 SAFER grant it received, citing the sliding match and the maintenance of position requirement as commitments they could no longer keep. The grant was originally intended to add six additional firefighters to the District's roster.

SAFER's restrictions have proven to be extremely difficult for many municipalities to abide by, and have only been exacerbated by the economic crisis. Although Congress enacted temporary measures to waive SAFER's local match and provide the Secretary of Homeland Security the authority to waive some of SAFER's other restrictions for 2009 and 2010, without a permanent change in law the SAFER Grant program will be left unable to fulfill its mission of helping local communities meet safe firefighter staffing levels.

The most significant issue facing SAFER is the simple inability of municipalities to accurately budget five years into the future. Current law requires that communities increase their local match over four years and pay 100 percent of a firefighter's salary in the fifth year, and many communities are finding that they cannot meet their commitments in the third, fourth, and fifth years of the grant cycle. Furthermore, current law requires that a department maintain its staffing levels throughout the five year grant cycle. The simple fact of the matter is that five years ago, the very notion that communities today would have to cut fire department budgets and lay off firefighters was unthinkable. No one could have predicted the depths of this recession, and likewise, few communities have sufficient resources to handle unanticipated expenses and dramatically lower than expected revenues.

In further illustration of this point, the Washington Fire Chiefs recently conducted a survey of their members to determine whether the sliding local match required under SAFER precluded fire departments from applying for a grant, or accepting a grant for which they had previously applied. Twenty-one percent of the departments responded that, although they had received a SAFER grant, they were unable to meet the local match. Additionally, sixty-one percent of departments replied that the local match requirement precluded them from applying for a SAFER grant at all.

In essence, the current budgetary requirements under SAFER limit federal awards to only well-off communities. Clearly, this was never Congress's intent.

We think the best way to address these issues is to simplify the entire grant process. The joint fire service proposal calls for an across-the-board twenty-percent match, rather than the sliding scale under current law, and shortening the length of the grant period from five years to three. These changes will make it easier for municipalities to commit to a SAFER grant and prevent many unseen circumstances from necessitating a grant's return to the Federal Government.

SAFER law should also be amended to eliminate the current funding cap. Under current law, departments are granted up to $100,000 per firefighter over four years to fund the cost of the firefighter's salary and benefits. The average first-year firefighter salary is currently $37,429. Thus, in many jurisdictions, the $100,000 only

meets the federal commitment for the first years of the grant, leaving the local department to bear more than the local match in the third and fourth years. This is especially true in urban areas and on the West Coast. In Portland, Oregon, for example, a first year firefighter's salary is $52,538, well over the national average.

By eliminating the funding cap, more communities will be able to take advantage of SAFER grants without regard to subsidizing any unmet federal share.

Lastly, we propose that the waiver authorities granted to the Secretary of Homeland Security just last month on a temporary basis be made permanent. Specifically, the Secretary should be granted the authority to permit grants be used to avoid or reverse firefighter layoffs, waive the local match, maintenance of position requirement and maintenance of budget requirement. We anticipate that such waivers will be an uncommon occurrence, but will provide the Department with the flexibility to help fire departments that have particularly great need and are at particularly great risk.

Conclusion

On behalf of the International Association of Fire Fighters, I appreciate the opportunity to share with you our views on how to best improve the Assistance to Firefighters grant program. Having been intimately involved in the creation and administration of the FIRE and SAFER grant programs, it is clear to the IAFF that current law undermines the programs' mission to enhance the safety of firefighters and the public nationwide. The changes we have produced with the united fire service organizations and have outlined here today will help fulfill the programs' intent and allow the Federal Government to better play a key role in protecting the public safety.

To the extent that the IAFF can assist the Subcommittee in achieving this vision, I am happy to offer our expertise and pledge to work closely with you and your staffs.

Again, I'd like to thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to testify today and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

BIOGRAPHY FOR KEVIN B. O'CONNOR

Mr. O'Connor currently serves as Assistant to the General President of the International Association of Fire Fighters, representing 295,000 professional firefighters and emergency medical personnel in every state in the United States and Canada.

He also serves as Chairman of the Congressional Fire Service Institute Advisory Board and previously served as a Commissioner on the Maryland Fire, Rescue, Education and Training Commission, where he was responsible for recommending training and operational standards for the 7,000 professional and 35,000 volunteer fire, rescue and emergency medical personnel in the State of Maryland.

From 1985 to 2000, Kevin served as a professional firefighter and emergency medical technician for the Baltimore County Fire Department in Baltimore County, Maryland, where he had previously served as a volunteer firefighter.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Mr. O'Connor.

Chief Varone.

STATEMENT OF CHIEF CURT VARONE, DIVISION MANAGER, PUBLIC FIRE PROTECTION DIVISION, NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (NFPA)

Chief VARONE. Good morning. I am Curt Varone, Division Manager, Public Fire Protection for the National Fire Protection Association. Mr. Chairman, Subcommittee Members, NFPA strongly supports reauthorization of the U.S. FIRE grant programs, both AFG and SAFER, and appreciates the opportunity to speak about these programs. For my allotted time, I want to focus on three areas: research we have done to analyze the needs of our nation's fire service and the impact these programs have had on alleviating those needs; some thoughts on enhancements that can be considered during reauthorization; and lastly, NFPA's position on the most effective ways to continue to reduce fires and fire fatalities and firefighter fatalities.

By way of background, NFPA is the principal source for voluntary consensus codes and standards related to fire safety in the fire service. Our standards utilize a true consensus approach to address a broad range of topics such as professional qualifications and performance testing, maintenance and operational procedures for protective and firefighting equipment. Many NFPA codes and standards appear as mandatory references cited throughout federal agency regulations including DHS, DOT (Department of Transportation), CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services), EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration). NFPA is also a recognized authority on fire analysis and research. In 2001 and 2005, working with the U.S. Fire Administration, NFPA conducted two national surveys of the needs of U.S. municipal fire departments. In both surveys, needs were defined as the comparison of department resources to resources required for compliance with applicable national standards and guidelines. As part of the second needs assessment, NFPA examined the degree of match between the type of resource for which a grant was awarded and the department's reported need for that type of resource. NFPA also examined the changes in the levels of need for the most commonly requested types of resources. Our analysis concluded that the grant program was well designed, well executed and well targeted and has made a difference in the needs it was intended to address. However, the difference has been limited simply because the needs of our nation's first responders are great.

Despite this, some notable changes stand out. The percentage of departments with enough self-contained breathing apparatus to equip all emergency responders on a shift increased by 10 percentage points from 30 percent to 40 percent. The percentage of departments with enough personal alert safety system devices to equip all emergency responders on a shift increased 14 percent from 38 to 52 percent. Personal protective equipment accounted for the largest share of grant funds awarded for departments in the years analyzed.

The NFPA matching analysis, part of our second needs assessment, shows a positive correlation between the express needs and the impact of the AFG program in targeting that need. NFPA believes that there are ample data to support the successful initiation by both programs of vital changes necessary to protect the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards. The AFG program is a good beginning and SAFER is an even more recent good beginning. We have a long way to go to close our national gap in staffing and we need to continue to support SAFER for several years in order to ensure that it fulfills its objectives of helping fire departments meet safe staffing levels to provide protection from fire as well as emergency response to many other types of hazards identified by DHS. These programs can be strengthened. In the reauthorization, NFPA believes it would be appropriate to eliminate the cost share in fire prevention and firefighter safety grants as was the original intent of the program, or to allow a waiver or reduction of the match requirement for applicants facing a demonstrated economic hardship. Data show that roughly three out of every five emergency responses by U.S.

fire departments are medical emergency calls. Therefore, the NFPA recommends that a minimum of five percent of funding be designated for fire service-based emergency medical services. Finally, NFPA believes that funds for training and equipment should be utilized to meet the latest applicable national voluntary consensus standards.

In order to facilitate fire prevention and fire control activities, the USFA could identify specific safety strategies they wish to give priority to in the calls for a proposal, specify fire and life safety education programs in the listed grant fund purposes and/or require all AFG grants to include an aligned fire prevention or mitigation project. The USFA could also direct some funds to building the fire prevention personnel and organizational infrastructure in local fire departments. An NFPA research project on fire code effectiveness measurement showed several examples of how lack of funding and other limitations are forcing communities to leave most inspectable commercial properties uninspected.

Lastly, the way to decrease the number of fires and fire-related fatalities, particularly in vulnerable populations, is through a combination of education, teaching individuals how they can be safer from fire, engineering utilizing the latest technologies to prevent, mitigate, detect and suppress fire, and enforcement, ensuring that the latest codes and standards are being followed. To do this, we need to adequately staff, train and equip local fire services.

Today we ask our fire service to do a lot more than fight fires. We ask them to be the first line of defense in a full range of ordinary and extraordinary situations. As we place more demands on them, we must be willing to provide them with the resources to do the job. We know from our analysis that the fire service is woefully underfunded. The FIRE grant programs are working. They are moving the fire service in the right direction and must continue. It is essential that the FIRE grant programs be reauthorized. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Chief Varone follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHIEF CURT VARONE

Good morning. I am Curt Varone, Division Manager, Public Fire Protection, for the National Fire Protection Association. Mr. Chairman, Subcommittee Members, NFPA strongly supports the reauthorization of the U.S. FIRE Grant Programs the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and appreciates the opportunity to speak about these programs.

For my allotted time I want to focus on three areas—research we have done to analyze the needs of our nation's fire service and the impact these programs have had on alleviating the needs, some thoughts on enhancements that can be considered during reauthorization and lastly NFPA's position on the most effective ways to continue to reduce fires and fire fatalities.

By way of background, NFPA is the principal source for voluntary consensus codes and standards related to fire safety and the fire service. Our standards use a "true consensus" approach, to address a broad range of topics such as professional qualifications; performance, testing, maintenance, and operation standards for protective and firefighting equipment.

Many NFPA codes and standards appear as mandatory references cited throughout federal agency regulations, including DHS, DOT, CMS, EPA and OSHA.

NFPA is also a recognized authority on fire analysis and research.

In 2001 and 2005, working with the U.S. Fire Administration, NFPA conducted two national surveys of the needs of U.S. municipal fire departments. In both surveys, "needs" were defined as the comparison of department resources to resources required for compliance with applicable national standards and guidelines.

As part of the second needs assessment, NFPA examined the degree of match between the type of resource for which a grant was awarded and the department's reported need for that type of resource. NFPA also examined the changes in levels of need for the most commonly requested types of resources.

Our analysis concluded that the grant program was well-designed, well-executed and well-targeted and has made a difference in the needs it was intended to address. However, the difference has been limited simply because the needs of our nation's first responders are great. Despite this, some notable changes stand out:

The percentage of departments with enough self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) to equip all emergency responders on a shift increased by 10 percentage points, from 30 percent to 40 percent of departments. The percentage of departments with enough personal alert safety system (PASS) devices to equip all emergency responders on a shift increased by 14 percentage points, from 38 percent to 52 percent. Personal protective equipment accounted for the largest share (39 percent) of grant funds awarded for the departments and years analyzed.

The NFPA matching analysis, part of our second needs assessment, shows a positive correlation between the expressed need and impact of the AFG program in targeting that need.

NFPA believes that there are ample data to support the successful initiation by both programs of vital changes necessary to successfully protect the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards. The AFG program is a good beginning and SAFER is an even more recent good beginning. We have a long way to go to close our national gap in staffing and we need to continue supporting SAFER for several years in order to ensure that it fulfills its objective of helping fire departments meet safe staffing levels to provide protection from fire as well as emergency response to many other hazards identified by DHS.

These programs can be strengthened. In the reauthorization, NFPA believes that it would be appropriate to eliminate the cost share in the Fire Prevention and Firefighter Safety Grant as was the original intent of the program or to allow a waiver or reduction of the match requirement for applicants facing a demonstrated economic hardship.

Data show that roughly three out of every five emergency responses by U.S. fire departments are medical emergency calls; therefore, NFPA recommends that a minimum of five percent of funding be designated for fire service-based emergency medical services (EMS). Finally, NFPA believes that funds for training and equipment should be utilized to meet the latest applicable national voluntary consensus standards available at the time of application.

In order to facilitate fire prevention and control activities, the USFA could identify specific safety strategies they wish to give priorities in the call for proposals, specify fire and life safety education programs in the listed grant fund purposes and/or require all AFG grants to include an aligned fire prevention or mitigation project. The USFA could also direct some funds to building the prevention personnel and organizational infrastructure in local fire departments. An NFPA research project on fire code effectiveness measurement showed several examples of how lack of funding and other limitations are forcing communities to leave most inspectable commercial properties uninspected.

Lastly, the way to decrease the number of fires and fire related fatalities, particularly in vulnerable populations, is through a combination of education—teaching individuals how they can be safer from fire; engineering—utilizing the latest technologies to prevent, mitigate, detect and suppress fire; and enforcement—ensuring that the latest codes and standards are being followed. To do this, we need to adequately staff, train and equip the local fire services.

Today, we ask our fire service to do a lot more than fight fires. We ask them to be the first line of defense in the full range of ordinary and extraordinary situations. As we place more demands on them, we must be willing to provide them with the resources to do the job. We know from our analysis that the fire service is woefully underfunded. The Fire Grant programs are working, are moving the fire service in the right direction and must continue. It is essential the FIRE grant programs be reauthorized.

Thank you.

BIOGRAPHY FOR CHIEF CURT VARONE

Curt Varone is a Division Manager and Director of the Public Fire Protection Division at the National Fire Protection Association. He has over 37 years of experience in the fire service, retiring in 2008 as a Deputy Assistant Chief (shift-com-

mander) with the Providence, Rhode Island, Fire Department, after twenty-nine years of service. He is also a practicing attorney licensed in both Rhode Island and Maine.

Curt joined the fire service in 1972 as a volunteer firefighter in North Providence. As the department transitioned from a volunteer to a combination department, Curt served as a call firefighter, being promoted to lieutenant in 1977. 1979 he was hired as a full-time firefighter by the Providence Fire Department, where he rose steadily through the ranks. He has served with both Massachusetts Urban Search and Rescue Task Force MATF01 and Rhode Island Urban Search and Rescue Task Force RITF01. Curt was one of the principal organizers of RITF01, and served as task force leader. In 2005 he led the team on a deployment to Hancock County, Mississippi in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Curt has two Bachelor degrees from Providence College, the first in biology (1978), and the second in fire safety (1982) *summa cum laude.* He is a *cum laude* graduate of Suffolk University Law School, Class of 1985. Since graduating from law school, he has engaged in the general practice of law with a concentration in fire service issues.

In 1997, Curt completed the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy, becoming the first person ever to receive four Outstanding Applied Research Awards. In 1998 he was awarded an Executive Fire Officer Fellowship to study Advanced Issues in State and Local Government at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He presently teaches in the Executive Development program at the National Fire Academy.

He also teaches courses in Fire Tactics, Fire Protection, Fire Service Law, and Firefighter Occupational Safety & Health in the fire science program at Providence College, is an instructor-coordinator for the Rhode Island Fire Academy, and teaches NIMS ICS for Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency.

Curt has written two books, *Legal Considerations for Fire and Emergency Services,* and *Fire Officer's Legal Handbook,* and writes the Fire Law column for *Firehouse Magazine.* He continues to serve as a volunteer firefighter in Exeter, Rhode Island.

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. Carlin.

STATEMENT OF MR. ED CARLIN, TRAINING OFFICER, SPALDING RURAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, SPALDING, NEBRASKA

Mr. CARLIN. Chairman Luján, Ranking Member Smith and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today to provide testimony in regards to the AFG program. My name is Ed Carlin. I live in the small town of Spalding and belong to the Spalding Volunteer Fire Department, a department made up of 35 volunteers. I also help serve my community as an elected official on the city council. In addition, I am a career firefighter currently serving as captain on the Grand Island Fire Department. Our fire department functions with 68 members operating out of four stations. We provide emergency services such as fire, EMS, rescue, hazardous-material response, airport response and technical rescue response such as trench and high-angle rescue. While off duty, I teach both fire and EMS education to departments in Nebraska. As a career firefighter, a volunteer firefighter, and a fire and EMS instructor, I have been able to see the benefits of the AFG program and some of the shortfalls of the grant as I travel throughout the state. I was asked to come before you and give an oral testimony to what I have seen and experienced on a local and community level where I am involved.

Funding for career and volunteer fire departments was almost impossible to obtain until the AFG program was established. A lot of the departments are in areas classified as low-income areas. Although these designations offered relief to citizens in the area, it did nothing to help the fire departments. With poor economies not

just locally but across the Nation along with their low-income classification, funding for equipment and staffing was becoming impossible to secure. The community where I reside, Spalding, Nebraska, had this problem until awarded an AFG grant in 2008. The community only had one fire apparatus, a 1948 pumper that could not hold water due to a rusted tank. This tank could not be fixed or relined due to the structural integrity of the tank. When a fire broke out, they would have to park this pumper next to a hydrant and deploy a portable tank so they could pump out of it until mutual aid arrived from the rural fire district. Valuable time was lost setting up this tank, allowing a fire to further destroy property and eliminating the window of opportunity for a rescue. Our ability to protect the two things a firefighter is sworn to protect, life and property, was jeopardized in our community. When Spalding applied for a grant, they opted for a mini pumper for several reasons. The smaller size allowed it to fit in the current building and allowed for a quicker response. Once the five percent matching funds was obtained, the grant was submitted, and as stated earlier, we received this grant. The new mini pumper will now allow the village to respond with a reliable pumper to help mitigate emergencies in our area.

Obtaining equipment to protect our firefighters and allowing them to conduct their mission in a safe, efficient manner would be next to impossible without the AFG grant. I believe this program is on the right track of fulfilling its objective of protecting the public and firefighters from the hazards of fire. I do know that we have a long way to go to meet these objectives. It is still hard for some departments to come up with their matching portion of the grant, which ultimately keeps them from applying. I know of a few departments who are not applying this year because they will not be able to meet the required match for the grant.

In the profession of firefighting, it is often said that all firefighters are professional and held liable for their duties whether they are from a career or volunteer fire department. In the 2009 AFG grant, new priorities were outlined giving higher levels of consideration to departments that protect a larger population and have a higher call volume. This is a highly competitive grant and this provision alone could possibly eliminate several rural area grants from advancing to the next round of peer review. I understand the higher call volume will show a greater cost benefit of the award but the grant should not discriminate on the basis of the population served by a certain fire department. A life is a life and death does not discriminate by population. Possibly, they should give a higher consideration to departments by the square miles they protect as well since most rural areas have huge coverage areas.

I recently instructed a rural department which I could not allow to participate in any live fire exercises because their bunker gear did not meet the required standards. They were not able to complete some of the realistic training that I feel is critical for firefighters to experience and learn from. If this department was dispatched to a fire call today and had a rescue situation in front of them, I can almost guarantee that not one firefighter would hesitate to attempt a rescue. Not one would say I cannot go in because

Instructor Carlin told me my gear is not compliant with the NFPA standards. It is what they are trained to do, whether we like it or not. They are going to do their job and attempt to save the life. Fortunately, an AFG grant was awarded to them and they are in the process of acquiring new gear to protect their firefighters.

It is stated in the program guidance for the 2009 AFG that our primary goal is to help fire departments and non-affiliated EMS organizations meet their firefighting and emergency response needs. Based off this, I do not believe the intent of the grant program was for it to become biased toward the population of a given area whether large or small. I feel the AFG is not a complex grant to apply for but many departments use grant writers to write their grants. There is nothing wrong with using a grant writer to provide an edge by using experience and expertise in the field. There are still thousands of departments out there that cannot afford to use a grant writer and will continue to submit their own grants due to the lack of funds. Funding for the AFG is right on track. The money goes straight to the fire department and 100 percent of it can be used at their request.

The SAFER program has also been a huge benefit to fire departments across the Nation in this time of economic crisis. Fire departments nationwide are being forced to freeze hiring and lay off firefighters. Unlike factories, manufacturing plants and other businesses that can slow production or reduce production to coincide with their layoffs, we cannot. There is no control over fires, accidents, injuries and other emergency calls, and our call volumes will not decline. Fire scenes are demanding and often require continuous aggressive actions to stop the fire. Waging this war in dangerous environments close to a point of exhaustion, firefighters work as they await other units to arrive and relieve them so they can rehabilitate and return to the battle. At these scenes, manpower is often the primary resource, and without it, firefighters will be forced to operate in multiple roles, putting them in dangerous situations without the help they need.

In closing, as these cuts to fire departments are made, I would not expect the number of injuries and fatalities to firefighters on fire and emergency scenes to decline, but possibly increase instead. It was evident early on that the SAFER grant was needed to adequately staff the fire departments' manning to a level where they could safely respond. SAFER funding needs to remain at a higher level at $420 million but taking money from the AFG program and adding it to the SAFER program is not the solution. With 21,000 departments applying for $3.2 billion in the AFG, it is evident that there is still a need for the AFG to be fully funded.

Thank you, and I will be happy to answer questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carlin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ED CARLIN

Chairman Wu, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today to provide testimony in regards to the AFG program. My name is Ed Carlin. I live in the small town of Spalding located 60 miles away and belong to the Spalding Volunteer Fire Department, a department made up of 35 volunteers. I also help serve my community as an elected official on the city council. In addition, I am also a career FF currently

serving as Captain on the Grand Island Fire Department. Our fire department functions with 68 members operating out of four stations. We provide emergency services such as fire, EMS, rescue, hazardous material response, airport response and technical rescue such as trench and high angle rescue.

While off duty, I teach both fire and EMS education to departments in Nebraska. As a career firefighter, a volunteer firefighter and a fire and EMS instructor I have been able to see the benefits of the AFG and some of the short falls of the grant as I traveled throughout the state. I was asked to come before you and give an oral testimony to what I have seen and experienced on a local and community level, where I am involved.

Funding for career and volunteer departments was almost impossible to obtain until the AFG was established. A lot of the departments are in areas classified as low income areas. Although these designations offered relief to citizens in the area, it did nothing to help the fire departments. With poor economies not just locally but across the Nation—along with many areas being classified as low income—funding for equipment and staffing was becoming impossible to secure.

The community where I reside—Spalding, Nebraska—had this problem until awarded an AFG grant in 2008. The community had only one fire apparatus, a 1948 pumper that could not hold water due to a rusted tank. This tank could not be fixed or relined due to the structural integrity of the tank. When a structure fire broke out they would have to park this pumper next to a hydrant and deploy a portable tank so they could pump out of it until mutual aid arrived from the Rural Fire District. Valuable time was lost setting up this tank, allowing a fire to further destroy the property and eliminating the window of opportunity for a rescue.

Our ability to protect the two things a firefighter is sworn to protect, life and property, was jeopardized in our community When Spalding applied for a grant they opted for the Mini pumper for several reasons. The smaller size allowed it to fit in the current building our pumper was housed in and allowed for a quicker response. Once the five percent in matching funds was obtained, the grant was submitted and as stated earlier we received the grant. This new mini-pumper now allows the village to respond with a reliable pumper to help mitigate emergencies in our area.

Obtaining equipment to protect our firefighters and allow them to conduct their missions in a safe, efficient manner would be next to impossible without AFG program. I believe this program is on the right track of fulfilling its objective of protecting the public and firefighters from the hazards of fire. I do know that we have a long way to go to meet these objectives. It is still hard for some departments to come up with their matching portion of the grant, which ultimately keeps them from applying. I know of a few departments who are not applying this year because they will not be able to meet the required match for the grant. As easy as it sounds to obtain five to ten percent in matching funds, it is still very hard to do for some departments that have small budgets with no leeway.

Grant Review Criteria

In the profession of fire fighting it is often said that all firefighters are professionals and are held liable for their duties whether they are from a career or volunteer department. In the 2009 AFG grant, new priorities were outlined giving higher level of consideration to departments that protect a larger population and have a higher call volume. This is a highly competitive grant and this provision alone could possibly eliminate several rural area grants from advancing to the next round of "peer review," where the grants are actually read and discussed. I understand the higher call volume will show a greater benefit of the award, but the grant should not discriminate on the basis of the population served by a certain fire department. A life is a life and death does not discriminate by population. Possibly, DHS should give higher consideration to departments by the square miles they protect as well since most rural areas have huge coverage areas.

I recently instructed a rural department which I could not allow to participate in any live fire exercises because their bunker gear did not meet the required standards. They were not able to complete some of the realistic training that I feel is critical for firefighters to experience and learn from. If this department was dispatched to a fire call today and had a rescue situation in front of them I can almost guarantee that not one firefighter would hesitate to attempt the rescue. Not one would say "I cannot go in because Instructor Carlin told me my gear is not compliant with NFPA standards." It is what they are trained to do and whether we like it or not they are going to do their job and attempt to save a life. Fortunately, an AFG grant was awarded to them and the department is in the process of acquiring new gear to protect their firefighters. This is just another example of why we need to make sure this grant remains a grant to help firefighters and fire departments equally across the Nation based on their needs.

It is stated in the Program Guidance for the 2009 AFG that *"Our primary goal is to help fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations meet their firefighting and emergency response needs. AFG seeks to support organizations that lack the tools and resources necessary to more effectively protect the health and safety of the public and their emergency response personnel with respect to fire and all other hazards."* Based off this I do not believe the intent of the grant program was for it to become biased toward the population of a given area.

I feel the AFG is not a complex grant to apply for but, due to the urgent need and competiveness, many departments use grant writers to write their grants. There is nothing wrong with using a grant writer. It can provide an edge by using experience and expertise in the field to demonstrate needs, further increasing the chance of an award.

There are still thousands of departments that could not afford a grant writer to and will continue to submit their own grants due to the lack of funding.

Funding from the AFG is right on track. The money goes straight to the fire department and 100 percent of it can be used for their request. Whether they are a small or large fire department, this grant is needed by all departments across the Nation to upgrade their equipment so we can continue to provide our services to the public.

SAFER

The SAFER program has also been a huge benefit to fire departments across the Nation in this time of economic crises. Fire departments nationwide are being forced to freeze hiring and lay off firefighters. Unlike factories, manufacturing plants and other businesses that can slow production or reduce their production to coincide with their layoffs, we cannot. There is no control over fires, accidents, injuries and other emergency calls and our call volumes will not decline. Departments nationwide will continue to respond to their call volume understaffed and it will be the public who will suffer by waiting longer for a rescue unit or engine company to arrive.

Fire scenes are demanding and often require continuous aggressive actions to stop the fire. Waging this war in dangerous environments close to a point of exhaustion, firefighters work as they await other units to arrive and relieve them so they can rehabilitate and return to the battle. At these scenes manpower is often the primary resource and without it firefighters will be forced to operate in multiple roles, putting them in dangerous situations without the help they need.

As these cuts to fire departments are made I would not expect the number of injuries and fatalities to firefighters on fire and emergency scenes to decline, but possibly increase instead. It was evident early on the SAFER grant was needed to adequately staff the fire departments manning to a level where they could safely respond. SAFER funding needs to remain at the $420 million, but taking money from the AFG program and adding it to the SAFER program is not the solution. With 21,000 departments applying for $3.2 billion dollars in the AFG it is evident that there is still a need for the AFG to be fully funded.

Thank you and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

BIOGRAPHY FOR ED CARLIN

Ed Carlin has been a career firefighter with the Grand Island Fire Department for 13 years serving initially as a FF/Paramedic and now as a Captain. Some of training received by the Grand Island Fire Department includes FFI, rescue technician, Haz-mat technician, Officer I and II and many other Fire and EMS courses.

He also belongs to the Spalding Volunteer Fire Department in the community of Spalding where he resides and serves on the city council as well. In his off-duty time he enjoys teaching Fire and EMS classes across the State of Nebraska.

Ed is married to Wendy, who works as a dental hygienist, and has three kids, Will, Sarah and Nick.

DISCUSSION

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you, Mr. Carlin, and at this point we will open our first round of questions. The Chair recognizes himself for five minutes.

I want to thank each of you for sharing your testimony today. My district in New Mexico is a rural district, for the most part. My fa-

miliarity with the important responsibilities that our fire service has across New Mexico is one that I had serving in my previous capacity. We were a regulatory commission that was structured in such a way that our fire marshal for the State of New Mexico and our State fire academy were under our jurisdiction, and we worked closely with them in the State of New Mexico to create opportunities to be able to take advantage of a fire fund that was put in place at the State level but that was not being fully allocated to our firefighters across New Mexico and our fire districts, recognizing the importance of being able to get them the support that they need. But the emphasis in our state was to look at those ISOs that were in trouble, those fire districts that didn't have the tax base or the ability to get their resources and so we put together the FIRE grant fund to be able to emphasize the fact that we could grow those fire departments that were weaker, and as we strengthened them, the state as a whole would be in a better position to be able to protect our citizens, to be able to respond to different areas. I have counties where we don't have many people that reside in them. Mr. Manning is familiar with those. I was in many of them just last week. And it is important that we are also able to provide them support. And so with that being said, with some of the suggestions that we are hearing today, how will we make sure that we are able to still fully support the fire needs of all parts of the country as we are looking to make sure we are maximizing the investments that can be made? And I would open that up to any one of you.

Mr. O'CONNOR. I will take a crack at it, Mr. Chairman, Kevin O'Connor again from the IAFF. I think that everybody at this table is committed and recognizes that there is not an unlimited pool of federal resources. There is no way that the Federal Government can properly resource all local fire departments. So with the limited pot of money that we have—and some of the observations here I completely concur with—we have to make sure that we spent it efficiently. I think that when you look at the data over eight years, clearly it has helped departments of all sizes, and we recognize that and we think that that should continue. But I think in an objective analysis, as the stewards of the public dollar, we have an obligation to make sure that it is spent efficiently. That doesn't mean that population needs to be the only requisite, which is one of the reasons why in adopting the proposal 30/30/30, you essentially are comparing apples to apples.

For our organization, a lot of people are under the misconception that we only represent large jurisdictions. We have 3,100 chapters across the country. We call them the locals. Over half of them have under 50 people and 20 percent have under 15 members, so some of the same problems that local volunteer companies are facing, in terms of grant writing, we have. We have small departments that don't have those capabilities. But by our measure, if you can group the money proportionately, all the professional departments—in some of the areas in Mr. Smith's district, we have locals with eight people—they will be competing for the professional pot against New York City. So it is not done as large versus small, it is trying to compare apples to apples and make sure that there is a reasonable allocation of dollars, and we just think that on the front end

of this, and I was privileged to be part of that process, we were very cognizant of the legitimate concerns of smaller departments and in crafting the statutory requirements of the 45 percent, we took that in consideration. But as time has evolved, we have seen just the opposite has been the case, and this is just an attempt to rectify while ensuring fairness and equity to everybody.

Chief CARRIGER. Mr. Chairman, I agree with some of the statements that Mr. O'Connor and that Mr. Carlin made. I think it is extremely important that this program be reauthorized but I believe that we need to look at the fact that there are two different issues involved in this program with AFG and with SAFER, and I believe that neither issue is satisfied by robbing one's resources and giving them to the other. They need to both be fully funded at the authorized amounts that have been recognized in the past, and as we continue to grow and as the system builds for this program, it gets better, and we are constantly looking at ways to recognize how to apply the matrix system for the application process in a more fair way, and I would have to compliment the staff for their constant vigil on recognizing that there is always a better way. Even though this program has been very, very effective and I have been very proud to be a part of it, we are constantly looking for ways to make it better, and I think that through this process, that will happen, but that will only happen if both of these programs are funded to their maximum authorized levels, and that is what is going to result in providing our country with the first-response capabilities that this committee is looking for as a result.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Chief.

I now recognize Mr. Smith for five minutes.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I guess for the record, Mr. Carlin, could you state the population of Spalding?

Mr. CARLIN. Six hundred.

Mr. SMITH. So I overstated in my opening statement when I talked about communities of a few thousand people up to communities of a few hundred thousand people and even more, but how many miles across would you say your jurisdiction is?

Mr. CARLIN. I believe Spalding covers about a 350-square-mile district.

Mr. SMITH. So there might be a fire where no people are located but you still need to fight the fire. Is that accurate?

Mr. CARLIN. That is correct. A lot of times they have to travel miles, which is across the Nation, miles off the road just to get to a fire, you know.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. I appreciate that. And I do want to point out that I am constantly impressed and truly amazed by the cooperation of departments. It might be a volunteer department complementing a full-time paid department. It might be one paid department from a neighboring community complementing another one. Regardless, I appreciate the hard work and efforts that everyone makes to fight the bad things that can happen in various communities.

Let us talk a little bit about the matching requirement. The Unified Fire Service proposal recommends reducing the current matching requirement for large departments from 20 percent down to 15

percent, and increasing the matching for small departments up to 15 percent from its current level of five percent, basically tripling that. Mr. Carriger and Mr. Carlin, could you discuss how the rural departments you represent currently deal with the match requirement and how this increase would impact your ability to apply and receive the grants?

Mr. CARLIN. Coming up with the five percent is hard for many departments to do. In the regional grants, they add the population of everyone going together in the grant, and it will usually take you up to the ten percent match and that is preventing a lot of the departments in our area from applying for a regional grant because it brings them up to the ten percent and they just can't meet that requirement. So a 15 percent match would definitely eliminate several departments from even applying.

Chief CARRIGER. Mr. Smith, I would have to agree with Mr. Carlin. I think it is very difficult for many departments to come up with the five percent match because when you are talking about departments that have maybe 40 or 50 volunteer firefighters on them and they are looking to replace their SCBAs, you are talking about a cost of a quarter of a million dollars, and for a lot of those departments, their budget for the year is less than $50,000 and they have to maintain their equipment and provide all the services to their community out of that, so moving that up to 15 percent I would say definitely would affect the number of departments that would even apply. And then I think when we start losing departments that apply, we start losing our ability to have data on who is out there and who needs what. If they are not involved in the system, we don't have that information. And I think any time that we do anything that discourages departments from applying, we have cut our ability to recognize what the fire service needs for especially in rural areas in this country are.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Johnson, Mr. O'Connor, would you care to comment on that scenario of increasing and decreasing the matches to respective sizes of departments?

Mr. O'CONNOR. From our perspective, I think that both the witnesses bring up very, very good points. I don't think it is in anybody's intention or objective to try to reduce the number of grants. We honestly thought in crafting the United Fire Service position that the waiver for DHS to basically take into account economic exigencies would in fact provide an out to allow jurisdictions to address that, but when we were, I guess, contemplating this, we recognized that there are certain jurisdictions that are small in terms of population but very, very well disposed financially, and our whole issue here was equity. So I think that, you know, we certainly would be willing to work with the Committee in trying to address that issue because it is not anyone's intention to try to limit the number of FIRE Act grants.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Anyone else wishing to comment?

Chief JOHNSON. I would just concur with those comments. From the IAFC's perspective, we are not interested in raising that minimum threshold. We can actually live with it the way it is, for sure, but this was about making 15 percent more attractive, and likewise

we thought the waiver for economic hardship would deal with the ones that were in the most dire of need.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Lipinski, you are now recognized for five minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for holding this hearing. I thank Ranking Member Smith for this hearing. I think that both the FIRE and SAFER grant programs are two vital tools for strengthening local fire departments nationwide, and although they have only been in existence a relatively short amount of time, I think they have already demonstrated their value, particularly in helping local departments fulfill emergency response duties that obviously these days have expanded beyond firefighting. Especially in the post-9/11 world, there has been a big expansion in what these local departments have to be prepared for.

I am concerned that many of the protections included in the bill for rural and volunteer departments, though, may have been more successful than expected, resulting in suburban and urban departments combined only receiving 30 percent of the federal funding awarded. The FIRE grants authorizing legislation required that volunteer and combination departments receive funding in proportion to percentage of the U.S. population that they serve, about 55 percent, but from Mr. O'Connor's testimony, I understand a significantly larger percentage has been awarded to these departments since 2002. Now, under the 30/30/30 proposal, wouldn't this still—and I am throwing this question out to whoever wants to address it. Under that proposal, wouldn't that still result in more than 55 percent, the required 55 percent going towards volunteer and combination departments? Who wants to—aren't you still going to have that even under this 30/30/30 proposal? I know Mr. O'Connor wants to jump in. I thought maybe someone else wanted to, but go ahead.

Mr. O'CONNOR. We think so. We think that the aspect of the combination departments, clearly most of those in our view are generally departments that are primarily volunteer where you hire two or three firefighters to help with EMS, help with being a paid driver. There are notable exceptions. My old department was a combination department. We had 3,000 volunteers and 1,000 career guys. But by and large when you take a look at the combination, you know, I can't say this scientifically and I wouldn't purport to, but if you look at this pot of 30/30/30 and you break it down, I think certainly that it would hit the 55 percent bogey. I just think that when you look at, you know, the way the grants have been distributed over the eight years, I don't think there is anybody that can legitimately look at it and say that the larger suburban and urbanized departments really haven't gotten a fair share, and nobody wants to tilt the balance. We certainly are not looking to tilt the balance dramatically in the other side. We would just like equity, and collectively we thought this was a fair way to address the issue.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Chief Carriger.

Chief CARRIGER. Thank you. And I think that we are all interested in that. I don't think anybody at this panel feels any differently about making sure that we are doing the right thing for

the right reason. That is what this is about. I think there is also other things that have to be considered in this such as funding from other sources through US&R (Urban Search and Rescue), through domestic preparedness, and there is a lot of other funding that is available too, especially metro departments for specific challenges that they face and the types of things that they are definitely going to deal with as opposed to rural departments. So I think that has an effect on making sure that metro and suburban-type departments do receive the funding that they justly deserve but I don't think it always has to come from AFG, and I think that AFG is one of those programs that—it is the only program that truly can deliver training, equipment, and again, a capability for rural fire districts to perform at that baseline level. So when the metro departments such in the 9/11 incident are faced with those challenges, those rural departments and those volunteer departments can come in and help provide service to them as they have been affected with a baseline of equipment that is compatible, that is capable and that is safe for those jurisdictions coming in to operate at that level with the metro departments.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Was there something you wanted to add, Mr. O'Connor? Go ahead.

Mr. O'CONNOR. Well, just in general I wouldn't take exception to the comments about the scope of UASI (Urban Areas Security Initiative) but as most folks in the fire service community know, specifically fire chiefs in those types of areas, is that UASI money generally doesn't filter down to the departments. It is not something that a fire department is able to identify their specific needs and make the application, and the chief is absolutely correct with respect to US&R but I would submit that that is a federal function, those 28 teams which are chronically underfunded and legitimately we think that poses a threat to homeland security, but I think you have to look at that separately because that US&R training is not specifically geared to basic first response, it is geared to responding to a Katrina situation, a Murrah building, a World Trade Center. But the Chief's point is right. There are large pots of money available but it is not necessarily directed to the fire service. This AFG is also our pot of money for all jurisdictions specifically for fire service utilization.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Thank you. My time is up. I yield back.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Mr. Lipinski.

Mr. O'Connor, I had some of the same thoughts pertaining to the waivers or to the matching funds—I apologize—the matching funds and making sure that we are able to fully take advantage of the funding that is available, recognizing that some fire districts or fire departments have more trouble than others. You testified that SAFER is in danger of failing if it isn't fixed now, and the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* waived the matching requirements and the supplemental allows departments to use the funding to retain firefighters and to retain firefighters that may have otherwise been lost. Given these major changes to the program, why is it still in danger of failing now and what more should be done to make sure the program can continue to help local departments?

Mr. O'CONNOR. I think you have to answer that in two phases, first off, the specifics to the current crisis that we are facing eco-

nomically, and a lot of the steps we are taking first in the stimulus with the original waiver on the SAFER grants for this fiscal year; and next coupled with the recently passed, about two weeks ago, supplemental, which affords the Secretary of DHS the authority to waive these requirements for a two-year period. Simply put, no one needs to be lectured or educated on the crisis nationwide. Small communities, much more so than large communities—if you take a look at the State of Massachusetts, Falls River, New Bedford, O'Leary, Ohio, small communities throughout Michigan are laying off firefighters in unprecedented numbers. SAFER, the way it is currently constructed, was authorized at a time when the economy was a lot better. People did not envision firefighters being laid off so it was originally authorized as a program to augment a local jurisdiction's hiring capability. We applaud this Congress, the Obama Administration and DHS for addressing that on a short-term basis. So that is with response to what was just done with respect to the supplemental and the stimulus.

Separate and apart from that when it comes to the reauthorization, under the current rules, as Chief Johnson very eloquently articulated, some of the requirements with respect to the $110,000 the way it is tiered over five years, the duration of the program really gives great pause to a lot of budget managers looking at it. We really can't prognosticate over a five-year period. So I think that you really have to keep it separate and apart from what was done in both the stimulus and the supplemental as it relates to what I will call the tweak on SAFER to address the economic crisis as opposed to the reauthorization to make structural long-term changes to make SAFER a more appealing program for communities hopefully after we recover from this current crisis.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you.

And Deputy Administrator Manning, how does FEMA create the criteria for fire protection safety grants, and how do the grants align with other fire protection research being performed across the Federal Government such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and what is FEMA's view on the need to create centers of excellent for fire health and safety R&D?

Mr. MANNING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We feel that those are some of the most important aspects to this, the reduction in loss of life and property and the creation and the crafting of good guidance in the grant, not just AFG but across all of the grant programs and across all of our preparedness policy can only come from establishment of collection of good data, the analysis of good data and the creation of centers of excellence is one way to accomplish that. We would look forward as we go forward to working with the Committee to identify how best to accomplish that.

Mr. LUJÁN. Chief Johnson?

Chief JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, I think an example I am experiencing right now about the value that a center of excellence could potentially bring to our profession is, we have come a long way in the fire service to bring residential fire sprinklers to the forefront both in the fire code and other places, but when you try to implement it at the local level, one of the things that happens is, you find out your local water purveyors are implementing system development charges oftentimes between

$6,000 and $10,000 because the larger water line requirement to supply a fire sprinkler system based on engineering calculations make them up-size their system so they charge you for that in the system development charge. Now, we all know that a fire sprinkler is going to use far less water than four of my firefighters showing up on an engine company after the house is well involved. We are talking 18 gallons a minute. However, water purveyors have no empirical evidence that shows that people will not utilize the full capacity of that water line installed for fire sprinklers to do things like add less stations on their sprinkler system for watering their yard. Therefore, they charge the system. When a homeowner is faced with $3,000 to install a sprinkler and $10,000 for a water line to supply that sprinkler, they say "No." We don't have the science, and absent a research center that conducts this kind of research and puts some of these things to bed that don't affect just a single department but affect our nation's fire service, without that, we will actually continue to perpetuate some of the barriers that remain. Thank you.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you, Chief.

Mr. Smith, you are recognized for five minutes.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Manning, might you have an administrative position on the United Fire Service's proposal for the AFG reauthorization and particularly the proposals to introduce the set-asides based on department size and changing the matching requirements and the grant size?

Mr. MANNING. Thank you. At this point the Administration has not taken a position on the details of reauthorization. We anticipate and appreciate the opportunity to work with the Committee to do so as we go forward but we haven't seen a formal recommendation. We are aware of the discussion in the testimony this morning but we look forward to working with the Committee in identifying the potential impacts of any proposed changes to the statute as it goes through reauthorization.

Mr. SMITH. Do you see a timeline for when you might be able to have a recommendation?

Mr. MANNING. Well, we are available to work with the Committee at any time and would be pleased to evaluate any recommendations we may see from the Committee against the numbers that we—the historical numbers and how they might have rerun based on new implementation guidance.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Thank you. Also, the President's 2010 budget, it actually cuts the Assistance to Firefighters Grant, the AFG program, by about 70 percent while doubling it and pushing money over to the SAFER program to hire new firefighters. This is despite the fact that more than $3 billion was requested for AFG while only $580 million was requested for the SAFER grants. Can you explain these numbers?

Mr. MANNING. Well, Ranking Member Smith, the presidential request, the budget that came in from the Administration was, as you are aware, the first time that there was a request from the Administration to support these grants. As we go forward in out years, we anticipate and appreciate working with the Congress on the funding levels. As was discussed earlier, there are a number of

different funding avenues through different grant programs. This being our first budget submission and adjusting those grant programs to the right levels is something we are working on and will continue to work on closely with the Committee and the Appropriations Committees on doing so in out years.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. I appreciate that. Anyone else wishing to comment on those? Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. LUJÁN. Chief Johnson, in your testimony, you include the importance of how the larger fire departments should get funding as well. What can be done again—I know the question was asked before—with some of the smaller fire departments to ensure that they will be able to get the adequate funding and be able to benefit from some of the data that you referenced earlier as well?

Chief JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I think particularly we are hearing from the large regional systems that have gone through the trouble on behalf of their local taxpayers to consolidate and regionalize their service. In our particular area, were we not consolidated, there would be 12 fire chiefs, 24 assistant fire chiefs, 12 fire training programs and on and on and on, and by regionalizing we have saved the taxpayers that kind of redundant overhead and allowed us to redirect that capacity to the street level. With that said, these departments, like in our case, if we were left alone we would be eligible for 12 separate $1 million grants, and right now we are eligible for a single $1 million grant. Our position is, we would like to see the disincentive for cooperating and regionalizing removed when actually you see language in there that promotes regional efforts and cooperation. So we just think this was a nuance that was overlooked and we wanted to bring it to light.

Mr. LUJÁN. And Chief Johnson, to go a step further as well, regarding local budgets and the importance of making sure that we are able to leverage those local budgets, what are your thoughts there on the unintended consequences of relying on federal funding to supplant that local funding? How can we leverage that local funding? And do you think that SAFER should be changed to allow for the retraining of firefighters as opposed to just for training of new firefighters?

Chief JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The IAFC's position is that we believe it was a good move recognizing the current economic situation to recognize the retention component of the SAFER grant. We believe this really does—if you remove the barrier from making these long-term commitments, this really does create additional capacity, not only for career departments but for volunteer departments who are also eligible for this. So we think it makes all the sense in the world. In terms of leveraging the local match, I think as it relates to SAFER specifically, it is less of a barrier to come up with a match for SAFER than it is to say to yourselves, for $100,000 potential federal match, I am willing to lock myself into five years of commitment, knowing that if I hiccup in there economically speaking, I have got to pay it all back, that is a commitment that most policy-makers won't make, and one of the nuances at a local level is, it is not uncommon that at State level and local levels boards are not allowed to bind future boards. So when

you make a five-year commitment, you are outside the four-year term of most local elected officials so you actually run into statutory issues there. So we think that shortening this would provide a lot of incentives and remove the barrier. Thank you.

Mr. LUJÁN. And Mr. Carlin and Mr. Carriger, if you could just again talk about the importance of—I think both of you have referenced how some of our smaller fire departments are just outdated and the importance of this funding to be able to assist you in building upon that local support as well. Mr. Carlin?

Mr. CARLIN. I guess with the 30/30/30, just hearing about it, you know, I would have to look into it further, but if the panel that reviews the grants busted up their peer reviews to smaller people, looking at that 30 percent from small departments, right now if a small area puts in for a grant, my town of 600 may have someone from Chicago, New York and Miami looking at my grant and how are they going to understand my needs. At the 30/30/30, if they bust up the peer reviews to that population category as well, it may actually benefit the small areas as well.

Mr. LUJÁN. Chief?

Chief CARRIGER. Thank you, sir. I believe that there is definitely room for improvement in how we apply these grant fundings, and I think it is very important and certainly from the volunteer fire service, it is very important to a lot of the aspects of SAFER continue. The recruitment and retention section of SAFER is extremely important and it has no match, and that is open for volunteer departments to put in for programs, and one of the biggest challenges for volunteer departments is finding somebody that is capable and has the time and can truly basically build and implement a marketing program for finding new volunteers. So I think SAFER is an extremely important part of this grant process and the program in general but I think the things that need to happen in response to the economic situation of our country right now need to be short-term issues, not permanent issues or not permanent solutions that, you know, five years from now we are looking at in recovery times when things are going good like they were five years ago when most of this was developed that we are not inadvertently hurting how the program is implemented to the fire service, and I think that goes right into the AFG and taking money away from AFG and putting it in SAFER is that the economy is going to be, I think, somewhat proportionate to population and the areas that have the larger population are going to obviously recover faster than the rural areas. So I think that is even more important for us to remember, that any adjustments to the program we need to make need to be unfortunately short term so that we can respond to the economic situation in our country. But I think here today this panel and your comments have proven to all of us that this is a program, it is a puzzle, it is a big picture, and each one of the sections of this program are vitally important and have a ripple effect to the other sections of the program and that is why that funding and the reauthorization and the appropriate funding to all sections of this is so vitally important to the fire service.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you, Chief.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Smith for five minutes.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. O'Connor, can you—in terms of the United Fire Service proposal, can you tell us a little bit as quickly as you can how that came about and who signed on to that?

Mr. O'CONNOR. Discussions, I guess, started beginning recognizing the reauthorization was occurring this year. As you all know, there is an organization, the umbrella group for the fire service, the Congressional Fire Service Institute. A number of the participants in that including the IAFC, the NFPA, the IAFF, arson investigators, State fire training academy directors and others began a series of conversations about trying to address some of the issues that have been articulated in everyone's testimony.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. And I appreciate your willingness to come here today and explain some of this. I mean, clearly there is some disagreement here, you know, among all of us being friends, let us say, and can we get everyone to sit down and discuss this and hopefully arrive—contrary to what some people think, we elected officials don't like controversy. We like it when many, many, many parties can get along and agree on things so that we can kind of make things move quicker here. Do you think that is a thing that can be achieved?

Mr. O'CONNOR. Well, speaking solely from the IAFF perspective, I think that one of the things that has engendered some of the progress that the fire service has made is the fact that by and large we have had a great degree of cooperation among all components. You know, for people that have been in this town historically, about 15, 18 years ago there was open warfare between the IAFC and the IAFF, and happily that has abated and, you know, we have worked very well together for a great number of years. The same applies with, at least in my view, the NVFC. I think the chief's comments and testimony today tracks pretty closely. I don't think there is a great deal of discrepancy and disagreement. I think everyone at this table has come from a firefighting background. We all recognize—you know, Mr. Carlin is obviously a career firefighter and a volunteer. I started as a volunteer and ended as a career firefighter.

Mr. SMITH. We can put him in charge.

Mr. O'CONNOR. But, no, I think the short answer to your question is sure. I mean, everybody here are friends and everybody has the same objective. We might—it is like anything else. We might have disagreements on, you know, where the lines are ultimately cut but as I testified earlier, I don't think that anybody objectively would look at it and not recognize that, you know, there needs to be some realignment. The question is, where do you cut the line.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. And I appreciate, Mr. Manning, I know that there are many details of a President's budget. I guess I might hear you saying that the budget with the 70 percent reduction and shifting of dollars might be a less than optimal idea and maybe we can steer away from that direction. Am I correct in hearing you suggesting that maybe?

Mr. MANNING. Well, we of course support fully the President's recommendation, and as we craft the out-year budgets we will work with the community to identify what the needs are and of course working through our own process.

Mr. SMITH. But for this budget, you would like to see the 70 percent reduction and then shifting dollars elsewhere?

Mr. MANNING. Well, for this budget, we are primarily concerned with making the program as successful as possible and working with the budget that is provided to us by the Congress.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you.

Mr. Manning, would you agree that some of the investment that was included on the waivers to be able to provide more flexibility to fire departments across the country will assist in the upcoming budget cycle?

Mr. MANNING. The changes to the program that were made by the supplemental and to the waiver authority obviously has a possibility, has the potential to assist some communities. The application of that authority is problematic. It can be difficult as you try to find uniform criteria for the application. That is something that we will have to look at closely. I believe that we can work with communities with the existing grant roles in the AFG. On the SAFER program, I believe that the waiver authority that was—the waiving of the match for the next two fiscal years will certainly provide the assistance to communities throughout the country.

Mr. LUJÁN. And again, would also highlight the importance of reauthorizing the SAFER act, correct?

Mr. MANNING. Mr. Chairman, absolutely, yes.

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. Varone, you talked a little bit about the importance of inspections and making sure that we are being responsible in that manner. Could you touch upon the importance of that, especially as we are looking at commercial properties, residential properties and what more we could do there? And also if you could highlight the importance of what are the most effective programs in a few of these areas?

Chief VARONE. Well, in terms of inspections, it seems like one of the first things that gets cut in economic times is activities in the fire prevention bureau, and there are a lot of reasons for that but, you know, one of the first things to go are the inspections, and it is vitally important that the inspections continue, and we would like to see some additional consideration through the AFG to help support some of the fire prevention activities that would help support those inspection activities.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much. I have no further questions.

Mr. Smith?

Mr. SMITH. No questions.

Mr. LUJÁN. With that being said, I want to thank you all for appearing before the Committee this afternoon. The record will remain open for two weeks for additional statements from the Members and for answers to any follow-up questions the Committee may ask of the witnesses.

With that, the witnesses are excused and the hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

Appendix:

Answers to Post-Hearing Questions

ANSWERS TO POST-HEARING QUESTIONS

Responses by Timothy W. Manning, Deputy Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Questions submitted by Chairman David Wu

Q1. In your experience with running the AFG program, if the maximum allowable grant were as high as $10 million, how many departments would be able to meet a 15 percent match for that amount? A 20 percent? Are basing maximum grant awards on jurisdiction population still appropriate? If, so why?

A1. It has been our experience that all applicants applying for the Assistance to Firefighters Grants have done so with the knowledge that a cost-share is one of many conditions of award. Potential applicants assess their own financial stability as well as their ability to leverage federal funds. Quantifying the actual number of potential applicants that would not apply with a changed cost share is not possible.

With respect to the question regarding the appropriateness of basing the maximum grant award on the jurisdiction's population, we do not have any basis for sustaining or removing it. We are not aware of any specific or systemic benefits for fire departments that have been realized under these present funding limitations, nor are we aware of any negative effects.

Q2. What criteria is FEMA using to implement the waiver of matching funds authority that was given under the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2009 *(P.L. 111–32)? How does this authority change the implementation and management of the program? Would FEMA use the same criteria if a waiver authority was added for the AFG program and how would such an authority change the implementation and management of the program?*

A2. The waiver of cost share for SAFER grants awarded with appropriations from FY 2009 and FY 2010 that is contained in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* is universal to all SAFER grants, and hence no specific waiver criteria will be applied—there will be no cost share for any of these SAFER grants. The waiver of the cost-share will have little impact on the implementation or management of the competitive aspects of the grant program. We will still evaluate the merits of each application based on established criteria, award grants to the applications that demonstrate the grant funds will have the highest impact, and monitor or provide oversight to assure that all the conditions of award are followed.

We would not use this approach (global waiver of the cost-share) for the Assistance to Firefighters Grants. In the SAFER grants, the ultimate cost-share amounted to approximately 60+ percent for the local fire department when all the factors were considered (the diminishing federal-share, the statutory salary limit, etc.). Adding to the SAFER burden was the requirement to maintain the pre-SAFER staffing levels. All of these issues contributed to the changes to the SAFER program for FY 2009 and FY 2010.

At this time, we do not believe that there is reason to waive the cost-share under AFG. There is little incidence of a reduction in the number of applications for AFG from FY 2008 to 2009, and the small reduction evidenced is, we believe, a reflection in the lesser number of requested vehicles—the most competitive portion of AFG. More importantly, there is even less evidence of declinations of award offers under AFG (less than one tenth of one percent of the award recommendations) and therefore little to cause concern about cost share capacity at this time, despite current economic conditions in the Nation. We believe that applicants' requests are reflective/representative of the amount of local funds that would be available to match the federal funds if/when awarded.

Q3. For the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants, what percentage of that money is used for research projects? What percentage of applicants for Fire Prevention and Safety Grants apply for research funding? What percentage of the research funding goes to academic researchers and what other types of entities apply for this funding?

A3. Please see table below. Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grants are, per statutory requirement, at least five percent of the appropriation for AFG. The program includes both FP&S activities grants (such as education and awareness programs), as well as research and development grants. Historically, the percentage of FP&S grants for research activities has varied between 20–35 percent from FY 2005 to FY 2008. Thus, the percentage of the total AFG appropriation that is being placed into research has been one to two percent.

	Percentage of FP&S funds used for research projects:	Percentage of FP&S applicants applying for research funding:	Percentage of Research Funding that goes to academic researchers:
FY 2005	20%	3.09%	25%
FY 2006	30%	2.48%	64%
FY 2007	35%	2.15%	99%
FY 2008	20%	1.80%	89%

Additional applicants, aside from academic entities, include foundations and organizations that conduct research, primarily focused on the fire and emergency services, such as Underwriter's Laboratories, Commission on Fire Accreditation International, and the Fire Protection Research Foundation, among others.

Q4. In testimony from Chief Jack Carriger of the National Volunteer Fire Council, he stated that between 2005 and 2007 applications for the Fire Prevention and Safety grants have dropped from $394 million to $191 million. What might account for this drop? What are the most effective activities in preventing fires?

A4. In fact, the amount of federal funding requested through the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants increased by nearly $60 million between 2006 and 2007. However, under the Fire Prevention and Safety grants, eligible applicants include not only fire departments, but national, regional, State, local, or community organizations that are recognized for the experience and expertise in fire prevention and safety programs and activities. Both public and private non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for funding. Additionally, under the research and development activity, eligible applicants include national, regional, State and local organizations, such as academic, public health, occupational health, and injury prevention institutions, especially those that are recognized for their experience and expertise in firefighter safety research and development programs or whose applications demonstrate the potential to improve firefighter safety. From 2006 to 2007, there was an increase in organizations applying for these grants.

The statistics quoted by Chief Carriger of the National Volunteer Fire Council take into account only those applications submitted by fire departments themselves. There was a sharp decrease between 2005 and 2007 in the applications for fire prevention activities in the FY 2005–FY 2007 timeframe. This drop may be attributable to any number of variables. For example, in FY 2005 there was an error in the interpretation of the authorizing statute, and no match from fire departments was required. In FY 2006 & 2007, that error was corrected.

With respect to effective strategies, recent assessments by entities such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have shown that some of the most effective projects for fire prevention include smoke alarm installation projects, sprinkler awareness, public education on the reduction of injury, code enforcement/awareness and arson prevention programs. These same assessments, also show that the effective delivery of these strategies includes the partnering of community/neighborhood organizations with fire departments, the use of education plans and techniques, and intervention programs with juvenile fire setters.

Q5. If the cap for individual SAFER grants were removed, how would this change affect the implementation and management of the program?

A5. We assume that you are referring to the cap on an individual firefighter's salary and benefits, since there is no cap on the amount that can be awarded for an individual SAFER grant such as there is under the AFG. Aside from the long-term federal liability involved in the decision to fully fund local fire departments' personnel costs, removal of the salary cap would not necessarily affect the implementation or management of the program. Applications would still be evaluated based on the merits of each application based on established criteria, the grants would still be awarded to the applications that demonstrate the grant funds will have the highest impact, and the grants would still be monitored to assure that all the conditions of award were followed. However, there would be fewer grants, since on average each grant award would be higher.

Questions submitted by Representative Adrian Smith

Q1. Aside from the AFG and SAFER programs, what other DHS grant programs support fire department preparedness, and in what form and for what types of

departments and activities is such funding used for? Specifically, approximately how much of the combined $1.6 billion Urban Area Security Initiative and the State Homeland Security Grant Program supports fire departments?

A1. In addition to the AFG and SAFER programs, the following DHS grant programs since FY 2004 support fire department preparedness:

- Homeland Security Grant Program, including the
  - State Homeland Security Program (SHSP)
  - Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), and
  - Citizen Corps Program (CCP)
- State Homeland Security Program—Tribal (SHSP–Tribal)
- Inter-operable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP)
- Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG)
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) grant program
- Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP)
- Buffer Zone Protection Program (BZPP)
- Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)
- Transit Security Program (TSP)
- Port Security Grant Program (PSGP)

Funding from these programs is used to support all fire department response activities, especially those associated with non-fire response requirements. Hence the kinds of purchases being supported will include specialty response vehicles, hazardous materials equipment and monitors, biological and chemical response equipment and monitors, specialty rescue equipment, such as that used in urban heavy rescue, and so forth. The departments most often receiving this support are fire departments in threat areas, hence most often urban and large suburban communities.

Since FY 2004, 15.24 percent of SHSP funds have been used for fire-related activities, and 15.63 percent of UASI funds have been used for fire-related activities.

In FY 2008, approximately 8.65 percent of the total expended funds for SHSP and 13.14 percent of the UASI expended funds have been expended for fire departments uses. However, there is no data at present that have been reported on the expenditures of the FY 2009 appropriated funds to UASI and SHSP of $1.6B.

A chart reflecting these and all of the historical data on fire department expenditures since FY 2004 is attached.

Lower Chesapeake Funding by Grant Program
Discipline: Fire Service
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P		Percentage of Total LETPF	CCP	Percentage of Total CCP	UASI	Percentage of Total UASI	TSP	Percentage of Total TSP	EMPG	Percentage of Total EMPG	EMPGSUP	Percentage of Total EMPGSUP	MMRS		Percentage of Total MMRS	BZPP	Percentage of Total BZPP	IECGP		Percentage of Total IECGP	RCPGP	Percentage of Total RCPGP	Total	Percentage of Total
	$8,300,000.00	0.69%	$25,802.63	$0.04																				$3,721,286.71	30.10%
	$4,384,000.00																							$3,391,846.96	27.43%
	$1,201,000.00	7.23%	$1,200.00	1.32%																				$518,014.00	8.99%
	$9,289,000.00		$10,304.00	1.62%	$4,659,474.92	38.42%																		$10,201,466.92	39.11%
	$6,490,000.00	0.66%																						$3,626,411.00	13.99%
	$39,517,000.00	2.81%	$780,522.00	28.22%	$33,867,288.00	25.10%	$91,000.00	1.35%																$63,790,570.86	20.11%
	$8,321,000.00	4.06%			$644,339.26	9.62%																		$3,644,554.61	8.00%
	$7,255,000.00	15.92%	$62,000.00	12.20%	$1,645,000.00	17.18%																		$10,619,622.55	25.67%
	$4,551,000.00																							$3,617,128.06	17.96%
	$20,762,000.00				$12,905,222.00	33.56%																		$16,667,725.05	26.96%
	$12,452,000.00		$103,661.32	11.89%																				$15,774,694.50	23.39%
	$1,900,000.00	1.20%	$12,000.00	15.27%																				$1,307,000.00	14.91%
	$4,997,000.00																							$3,367,811.00	14.91%
	$5,095,000.00																							$3,755,658.22	16.60%
	$18,575,000.00		$58,330.78	5.03%	$1,400,901.00	4.36%	$378,562.00	6.90%																$12,685,417.05	10.10%
	$6,300,000.00	3.31%			$778,667.00	7.71%																		$6,205,026.63	11.22%
	$6,721,000.00	6.99%	$950.00	0.20%																				$5,312,235.78	17.84%
	$6,496,000.00	7.62%	$13,649.00	3.00%																				$5,096,263.09	17.67%
	$7,899,000.00				$1,458,556.00	16.32%																		$3,951,148.44	8.98%
	$8,296,000.00																							$3,616,453.24	7.08%
	$5,047,000.00	1.85%																						$5,827,035.52	26.00%
	$9,291,000.00				$4,482,041.00	28.32%																		$8,508,154.00	14.44%
	$10,279,000.00	1.94%	$39,236.00	5.45%	$2,287,746.63	12.63%																		$20,872,252.41	16.05%
	$13,071,000.00	0.28%	$93,718.00	9.58%	$812,507.80	5.94%																		$7,953,701.18	10.51%
	$8,844,000.00		$89,713.01	14.49%	$5,261,058.25	28.72%																		$20,452,390.05	17.55%
	$6,655,000.00	3.32%	$26,000.00	5.58%																				$4,115,663.72	13.93%
	$9,509,000.00	0.00%	$4,524.00	3.68%	$5,957,906.56	24.89%																		$13,000,000.00	21.97%
	$4,655,000.00	0.00%																						$10,008.00	0.26%
	$5,490,000.00	0.00%																						$963,958.70	3.26%
	$5,943,000.00	2.80%	$152,994.00	36.78%	$1,908,886.00	18.23%																		$3,665,063.27	9.78%
	$4,504,000.00	1.07%																						$6,678,713.17	29.91%
	$52,483,000.00	1.46%			$9,544,695.00	29.85%																		$12,835,694.62	15.47%
	$4,609,000.00	1.49%																						$4,965,249.91	19.50%
	$23,253,000.00	0.20%			$13,996,827.67	22.01%																		$24,429,241.63	18.82%
	$12,208,000.00		$9,363.79	1.10%	$1,110,750.00	15.09%																		$4,391,416.05	7.13%
	$4,374,000.00																							$1,732,108.57	19.22%
	$1,313,000.00																							$430,000.00	7.38%
	$15,368,000.00		$16,120.10	1.50%	$9,624,716.56	29.59%																		$19,097,372.79	35.72%
	$7,289,000.00																							$5,056,986.89	15.63%
	$7,317,000.00		$99,473.00	19.43%	$4,056,362.00	58.00%																		$8,995,139.00	21.93%
	$16,300,000.00																							$180,000.00	0.36%
	$5,818,000.00	14.92%																						$5,251,762.40	19.04%
	$7,914,000.00																							$4,913,274.81	24.64%
	$4,504,000.00		$247,756.89	78.65%																				$3,112,374.00	20.67%
	$9,636,000.00		$28,420.75	4.21%	$2,602,307.00	26.00%																		$8,447,960.54	18.38%
	$6,508,000.00	0.26%	$3,382.60	0.38%	$3,768,836.18	9.86%																		$10,889,149.87	30.96%
	$6,249,000.00	0.37%																						$3,803,010.74	19.68%
	$4,356,000.00	1.63%																						$8,880,819.99	45.96%
	$1,353,000.00	7.02%																						$207,348.00	2.95%
	$13,161,000.00		$60,925.00	7.80%	$880,000.00	13.53%																		$6,804,629.44	11.97%
	$9,911,000.00	0.74%	$28,920.00	3.03%	$4,511,811.52	27.50%																		$9,863,615.20	26.11%
	$9,273,000.00				$3,419,782.31	33.80%																		$8,574,956.52	16.72%
	$4,236,000.00		$4,287.00	1.44%																				$2,517,814.60	13.39%
	$497,050,000.00	1.37%	$1,968,453.89	5.66%	$131,957,564.66	19.64%	$469,562.00	0.94%																$494,568,573.75	15.18%
	$6,432,284.00		$28,615.00	11.85%					$12,552.00	0.45%			$28,000.00	$930,360.00	2.20%	$6,259.68	8.45%							$3,220,448.60	10.90%
	$3,406,760.00												$16,000.00	$855,184.00	3.52%									$1,360,675.55	8.82%
	$1,010,713.00	0.39%													#DIV/0!									$292,320.00	10.60%
	$7,280,630.00	12.45%			$2,260,995.23	22.62%							$126,217.98	$930,368.00	24.81%									$5,167,304.61	18.87%
	$5,838,073.00													$227,592.00	6.00%									$3,927,924.61	17.91%
	$30,768,660.00	6.80%			$30,547,812.00	20.60%			$225,224.00	1.67%			$965,012.00	$9,099,936.00	23.96%									$50,212,961.00	15.92%
	$6,611,512.00	0.00%	$9,765.00	4.32%	$1,583,200.00	18.16%							$90,600.40	$682,776.00	17.27%									$4,715,317.14	11.95%
	$3,535,000.00	25.11%	$39,337.00	20.00%					$22,725.00	2.87%				$227,592.00										$6,699,196.00	20.87%
	$3,539,246.00																							$1,136,868.50	7.26%
	$3,339,656.00				$1,716,749.53	2.09%																		$2,543,598.27	2.28%
	$10,264,891.00				$5,141,395.11	16.65%							$227,592.00	$1,193,144.00	14.29%									$10,808,917.11	9.93%
	$9,718,613.00		$3,944.92	1.16%										$455,184.00										$6,368,326.60	10.52%
	$1,687,307.00																							$490,000.00	0.85%
	$3,884,539.00		$4,800.00	2.95%	$600,000.00	9.30%								$227,592.00										$1,754,457.00	2.29%
	$3,970,237.00								$2,037.00	0.11%														$3,908,073.55	10.91%
	$12,835,959.00		$11,980.15	2.67%	$3,850,816.00	8.02%							$12,583.82	$227,592.00	5.53%									$18,498,825.49	45.99%
	$7,763,554.00	0.14%												$455,184.00										$3,270,728.78	8.09%
	$5,209,575.00	6.96%												$227,592.00										$1,997,458.25	8.39%
	$5,036,396.00	2.72%	$4,643.00	2.64%					$3,272.00	0.14%			$16,500.00	$455,184.00	3.62%	$82,756.83	8.28%							$2,625,879.82	11.53%
	$6,131,518.00	0.33%			$1,038,750.00	20.78%								$455,184.00										$3,586,458.64	14.57%
	$6,628,819.00				$965,852.27	6.64%			$3,935.00	0.14%				$227,592.00										$2,094,683.31	5.80%
	$7,225,154.00				$4,984,365.00	5.94%								$227,592.00										$6,707,952.77	14.08%
	$7,950,218.00	16.06%			$2,825,351.12	16.91%								$682,776.00		$243,330.87	23.12%							$7,388,626.23	20.87%
	$10,000,000.00	0.54%	$22,500.00	5.96%	$1,670,992.00	16.33%							$90,000.00	$682,776.00	13.18%									$7,130,125.95	10.77%
	$6,871,064.00				$1,969,563.32	14.27%								$455,184.00										$3,586,458.64	9.47%
	$5,160,264.00	1.36%											$34,138.00	$227,592.00	15.00%									$3,254,391.03	14.31%
	$7,237,769.00		$16,094.78	7.03%	$2,510,554.49	16.96%								$455,184.00										$6,479,305.60	12.93%
	$4,263,180.00	3.54%			$1,840,728.37	15.75%							$128,494.68	$455,184.00	43.61%									$3,262,693.37	11.45%
	$4,657,472.00				$67,222.22	0.73%								$227,592.00										$1,946,677.18	6.52%
	$3,908,565.00	2.32%												$227,592.00		$59,591.03	11.72%							$3,379,523.22	19.56%
	$9,682,232.00	0.86%			$3,030,000.00	15.66%								$455,184.00										$5,864,933.37	7.23%
	$4,369,571.00	1.43%												$227,592.00										$4,762,316.68	29.99%
	$17,970,155.00	6.36%			$42,520,298.48	19.24%								$1,137,960.00										$10,659,970.52	12.59%
	$9,500,675.00				$1,404,000.00	25.62%							$100,000.00	$682,776.00	14.65%									$2,677,213.00	5.52%
	$3,299,993.00																							$1,656,263.57	11.27%
	$1,020,084.00															$25,000.00	50.00%							$25,000.00	
	$11,879,671.00		$2,299.00	0.55%	$5,365,850.91	20.53%			$1,660.00	0.03%			$176,090.57	$1,365,552.00	12.90%									$10,813,526.80	13.13%
	$5,655,300.00				$372,369.50	6.69%								$455,184.00										$2,012,532.40	5.32%
	$5,693,652.00		$59,720.00	30.05%	$1,213,941.00	22.07%							$227,592.00	$227,592.00	100.00%									$1,655,005.00	13.49%
	$12,609,677.00	1.21%	$7,538.00	1.67%	$205,288.00	0.67%								$455,184.00										$964,966.25	0.95%
	$3,243,422.00																							$818,625.00	2.47%
	$3,745,422.00	0.28%												$227,592.00										$2,551,651.78	15.41%
	$6,154,552.00	0.00%											$11,000.00	$227,592.00	4.83%									$4,862,304.00	17.76%
	$3,497,674.00	0.33%	$3,637.00	2.98%																				$8,376,124.00	55.99%
	$7,483,584.00	0.48%	$6,859.64	2.62%									$255,190.00	$910,368.00	28.03%									$3,047,479.25	8.50%
	$20,270,283.00	4.96%	$32,292.71	4.50%	$4,411,677.00	8.85%							$590,190.24	$2,958,696.00	19.80%									$15,999,282.71	10.67%
	$4,798,118.00	0.09%												$227,592.00										$4,159,084.00	19.49%
	$3,383,429.00																							$5,488,469.99	37.40%
	$1,051,024.00																							$205,322.00	3.51%

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8/25/2009

Seed Discipline Funding by Grant Program
Discipline Fire Service
For Official Use Only

#		Percentage of Total LETPF	CCF	Percentage of Total CCF	UASI	Percentage of Total UASI	TSP	Percentage of Total TSP	EMPG	Percentage of Total EMPG	EMPGSUP	Percentage of Total EMPGSUP	MMRS		Percentage of Total MMRS	BZPP	Percentage of Total BZPP	IECGP	Percentage of Total IECGP	BCPGP	Percentage of Total BCPGP	Total	Percentage of Total
1	$8,658,787.00	0.20%	$5,880.00	1.94%					$19,821.97	0.31%				$1,365,552.00								$2,089,125.00	5.19%
1	$7,711,129.00	0.44%	$2,807.00	1.04%	$1,804,449.88	15.04%			$6,907.00	0.20%			$51,127.72	$682,776.00	7.49%							$4,642,187.12	8.92%
1	$4,319,057.00																					$1,183,305.59	6.40%
1	$7,195,398.00	0.35%			$1,256,802.28	19.87%							$227,496.75	$655,184.00	69.98%							$9,180,124.52	23.60%
1	$3,296,846.00								$47,625.00	3.22%												$389,517.00	2.75%
1	$306,281,347.00	2.16%	$261,721.20	1.94%	$126,043,737.70	14.75%			$295,758.97	0.22%			$3,455,824.63	$28,221,408.00	12.35%	$415,938.41	0.46%					$317,873,238.35	11.56%
1	$6,539,000.00	2.04%	$15,000.00	4.71%										$929,320.00								$1,154,946.07	6.11%
1	$6,238,000.00													$464,660.00								$1,025,874.53	9.25%
1	$2,530,000.00	0.68%																				$350,000.00	6.06%
1	$6,296,000.00	0.53%			$1,475,000.00	37.63%							$133,910.00	$929,320.00	57.45%							$3,629,914.84	11.52%
1	$42,270,000.00	0.72%			$13,665,757.00	24.66%			$7,492.00	0.05%			$1,901,973.00	$5,181,940.00	45.47%							$47,306,665.00	17.39%
2	$7,600,000.00	0.63%			$758,400.00	17.32%								$696,990.00								$667,112.00	3.42%
	$4,950,000.00																					$740,766.83	6.12%
	$1,110,000.00				$1,367,533.00	2.94%																$2,197,533.00	3.12%
	$18,610,000.00				$10,245,323.00	19.16%							$361,423.94	$1,626,310.00	22.22%							$10,106,983.42	14.51%
	$11,430,000.00		$68,728.81	13.98%	$4,316,355.68	23.13%								$464,660.00								$8,805,114.99	17.02%
	$3,260,000.00													$232,330.00								$857,912.00	5.87%
	$4,870,000.00																					$115,700.00	0.84%
	$18,200,000.00		$19,927.63	3.07%	$17,636,986.00	33.75%								$232,330.00								$11,009,113.63	27.59%
	$5,090,000.00													$464,660.00								$130,000.00	4.29%
1	$5,470,000.00	0.55%												$232,330.00								$1,079,815.83	7.22%
1	$5,710,000.00	5.12%	$8,656.84	3.47%					$119,006.00	5.14%			$20,591.00	$464,660.00	4.43%	$37,800.00	10.80%					$2,277,652.41	13.42%
	$8,790,000.00													$929,320.00								$65,566.15	0.18%
	$3,200,000.00																					$486,984.50	4.98%
	$4,940,000.00				$2,139,501.80	23.18%							$232,330.00	$232,330.00	100.00%							$3,021,725.00	10.65%
1	$10,290,000.00	6.61%			$2,359,364.57	12.96%							$91,500.00	$696,990.00	13.10%							$6,266,860.41	10.80%
1	$4,790,000.00	1.58%			$1,650,677.77	8.86%								$696,990.00								$2,448,048.67	4.98%
	$1,990,000.00				$830,943.00	19.28%								$464,660.00								$965,943.00	5.14%
1	$3,390,000.00	12.24%											$25,000.00	$232,330.00	10.76%							$1,557,977.72	14.03%
	$3,610,000.00		$9,319.06	2.54%	$227,674.19	1.23%								$464,660.00								$941,009.96	1.96%
1	$1,590,000.00	6.38%	$17,284.60	8.17%	$1,841,581.00	22.11%							$9,099.00	$464,660.00	1.96%							$3,621,933.37	15.20%
	$4,180,000.00		$91,326.90	36.60%	$150,354.00	2.02%			$51,098.81	2.41%				$232,330.00								$538,779.21	2.25%
2	$3,190,000.00	1.55%												$232,330.00								$1,653,531.42	16.76%
1	$7,590,000.00	0.07%			$1,729,935.00	5.04%								$464,660.00								$2,617,884.16	4.52%
	$3,290,000.00													$232,330.00								$906,248.00	8.02%
1	$26,010,000.00	0.02%			$33,344,909.80	26.02%							$208,602.00	$1,161,650.00	17.96%							$35,405,974.36	14.01%
	$9,560,000.00		$5,850.66	1.22%	$1,344,592.00	14.99%								$696,990.00								$1,350,352.66	3.83%
	$4,350,000.00	1.43%																				$1,251,851.11	14.17%
	$9,180,000.00		$2,012.50	0.34%	$4,589,831.45	26.14%			$500.00	0.01%			$609,601.45	$1,393,980.00	43.37%							$7,194,944.40	14.01%
	$6,170,000.00				$375,686.90	8.18%								$464,660.00								$2,128,406.90	9.55%
1	$3,400,000.00	0.15%	$111,671.00	39.38%	$1,098,685.00	11.87%							$232,330.00	$232,330.00	100.00%							$2,671,767.00	9.55%
	$3,130,000.00		$10,000.00	3.90%																		$610,000.00	5.73%
	$2,960,000.00													$232,330.00								$630,000.00	6.96%
	$5,180,000.00													$232,330.00								$1,222,451.00	6.76%
	$3,180,000.00																					$582,687.79	5.62%
2	$3,480,000.00	2.23%	$2,908.53	0.78%	$280,000.00	6.67%							$232,330.00	$929,320.00	25.00%							$1,616,918.87	5.60%
2	$24,790,000.00	4.28%	$72,595.28	7.12%	$5,581,414.16	15.97%							$399,059.00	$3,020,290.00	25.96%	$51,150.00	2.26%					$10,105,968.32	9.66%
1	$3,280,000.00	5.65%	$11,000.00	4.61%										$232,330.00								$1,261,361.52	12.99%
1	$3,520,000.00	0.30%																				$1,117,358.83	8.67%
1	$1,130,000.00	14.20%																				$353,300.00	9.86%
1	$6,340,000.00	17.39%							$52,323.00	1.31%				$1,393,980.00								$1,935,168.00	8.76%
1	$9,200,000.00	0.16%	$5,975.00	1.55%	$200,147.82	2.19%			$38,864.47	1.10%			$66,935.00	$696,990.00	9.60%							$1,833,376.25	4.52%
	$5,510,000.00																					$725,799.73	4.60%
1	$6,330,000.00	0.09%	$25,107.44	7.05%	$1,991,901.00	23.25%								$464,660.00								$4,779,272.13	17.11%
	$3,090,000.00								$12,900.00	0.82%												$240,397.00	5.77%
1	$394,120,000.00	1.36%	$476,864.05	2.46%	$129,216,663.82	18.18%			$201,634.28	0.16%			$5,304,004.45	$28,808,920.00	18.41%	$88,950.00	0.19%					$219,261,035.83	10.89%
1	$4,290,000.00	0.17%											$57,988.23	$1,032,581.00	5.62%							$1,090,569.23	4.80%
	$2,730,000.00													$516,290.00								$1,002,012.45	9.85%
	$920,000.00	5.99%																				$50,000.00	
	$6,520,000.00				$4,930,333.33	23.96%							$100,000.00	$1,032,581.00	9.68%	$212,875.00	10.25%					$7,479,732.33	12.77%
1	$29,880,000.00	0.26%			$20,940,952.00	20.69%			$13,810.00	0.09%			$109,840.00	$4,646,613.00	10.97%							$40,534,334.00	10.88%
	$4,600,000.00										$245.00	0.03%		$274,935.00								$1,679,180.00	2.80%
1	$3,290,000.00	18.75%												$258,145.00								$1,696,118.00	6.14%
	$2,730,000.00																					$490,022.43	2.82%
	$4,250,000.00				$2,725,000.00	4.92%																$5,169,165.70	4.26%
	$18,180,000.00				$975,000.00	2.52%							$8,067.00	$1,807,016.00	0.44%							$3,955,836.54	2.07%
	$10,170,000.00		$25,985.00	6.98%	$4,242,684.36	28.94%								$516,290.00								$8,342,445.36	20.65%
1	$910,000.00	20.27%																				$528,941.00	9.33%
	$2,730,000.00													$258,145.00								$1,518,290.00	6.90%
1	$2,720,000.00	1.25%																				$68,000.00	0.46%
	$15,920,000.00		$28,679.45	5.56%	$1,800,000.00	3.81%								$258,145.00								$15,511,929.45	9.67%
	$6,200,000.00													$516,290.00								$53,750.00	0.11%
2	$3,200,000.00	4.87%											$23,467.72	$516,290.00	4.55%							$431,238.50	1.91%
	$2,730,000.00																					$583,685.00	3.57%
	$8,430,000.00				$388,900.00	3.22%								$258,145.00								$1,412,190.00	2.28%
1	$8,520,000.00	8.81%			$1,708,517.00	12.62%								$774,435.00								$1,530,291.00	6.07%
	$9,760,000.00													$258,145.00								$1,250,000.00	0.04%
	$4,690,000.00				$503,550.00	5.95%								$516,290.00								$1,091,550.00	2.60%
1	$2,730,000.00	5.17%	$28,000.00	10.31%										$258,145.00								$622,590.86	3.69%
	$5,350,000.00		$23,000.00	8.29%	$1,252,000.00	7.11%								$516,290.00								$1,627,884.70	2.94%
	$2,730,000.00													$516,290.00								$98,127.16	0.51%
	$4,090,000.00		$25,640.20	14.31%										$258,145.00								$56,365.53	0.14%
	$2,730,000.00													$258,145.00								$1,150,791.00	7.00%
	$2,730,000.00				$828,429.51	2.30%								$516,290.00								$1,557,967.50	1.64%
	$2,730,000.00													$258,145.00								$549,567.50	3.05%
	$27,710,000.00				$15,946,704.00	25.76%							$307,495.00	$1,290,720.00	23.82%							$17,914,426.00	9.53%
	$7,980,000.00				$1,450,006.00	29.18%								$774,435.00								$1,450,006.00	2.58%
1	$2,730,000.00	1.15%																				$356,290.89	2.26%
	$12,050,000.00		$400.00	0.09%	$2,133,237.20	13.78%							$519,635.75	$1,548,671.00	27.09%							$5,129,306.51	5.89%
	$3,620,000.00				$1,491,347.06	31.20%								$516,290.00								$1,675,714.42	5.62%
	$3,240,000.00		$32,920.00	15.32%	$610,333.00	7.83%							$258,145.00	$258,145.00	100.00%							$1,787,190.00	5.97%
	$2,730,000.00		$40,000.00	17.96%																		$40,000.00	
	$2,730,000.00				$1,560,000.00	30.17%					$13,200.00	2.73%	$21,467.00	$258,145.00	8.32%							$2,546,162.00	10.68%
	$5,380,000.00													$258,145.00								$1,150,000.00	3.95%
	$2,730,000.00																					$25,000.00	0.16%
1	$5,890,000.00	1.57%	$206.71	0.07%	$366,792.80	8.43%							$263,145.25	$1,032,581.00	25.48%							$1,730,723.17	2.96%
1	$24,560,000.00	2.19%	$67,155.39	8.69%	$5,643,278.00	9.85%							$292,961.84	$3,225,887.00	19.82%	$17,890.00	0.64%					$11,202,295.23	5.27%
	$2,730,000.00													$258,145.00								$665,679.50	2.28%
	$2,730,000.00																					$1,176,450.00	4.84%
	$910,000.00																					$374,245.00	5.63%
	$9,750,000.00								$41,240.00	0.95%				$1,548,871.00								$292,261.000	0.94%
1	$7,170,000.00	0.91%	$4,509.00	1.51%	$1,890,535.00	9.95%			$15,801.00	0.41%	$5,623.86	0.57%	$191,725.00	$774,435.00	24.76%							$2,299,457.23	4.01%
	$5,190,000.00				$735,000.00	15.87%								$516,290.00								$747,765.000	3.95%

For Official Use Only
02/07/09

Texas Discipline Funding to Grant Programs
Discipline: Fire Service
For Official Use Only

#		Percentage of Total LETPP	CCP	Percentage of Total CCP	UASI	Percentage of Total UASI	TSP	Percentage of Total TSP	EMPG	Percentage of Total EMPG	EMPGSUP	Percentage of Total EMPGSUP	MHRS		Percentage of Total MHRS	BZPP	Percentage of Total BZPP	IECGP		Percentage of Total IECGP	RCPGP	Percentage of Total RCPGP	Total	Percentage of Total
1	$2,720,000.00	1.27%																						$426,174.38	2.90%
2	$263,750,000.00	0.81%	$266,495.55	1.82%	$98,512,501.06	13.19%			$70,951.06	0.04%	$19,068.86	0.04%	$2,527,827.81	$32,009,993.00	7.88%	$230,765.00	0.48%			$538,721.00				$125,734,479.85	5.40%
3														$1,264,684.00						$278,294.00				$832,046.49	5.31%
4													$26,759.00	$642,492.00	4.17%					$797,224.00				$944,990.00	4.36%
5					$2,490,069.00	15.26%							$668,063.00	$1,284,684.00	5.24%					$6,107,351.00				$6,211,618.00	12.29%
6					$44,450,252.00	30.91%			$79,901.00	0.35%			$1,826,577.00	$5,791,978.00	31.59%				$921,500.00			6.83%	$63,368,983.00	17.38%
7			$1,250.00	0.50%	$1,296,441.00	17.02%							$75,588.00	$963,663.00	7.88%					$699,534.00				$3,036,476.00	4.92%
8					$396,358.30	10.05%								$321,221.00						$1,360,358.30				$1,980,938.30	6.60%
9																				$242,675.00				$596,684.16	10.62%
10					$12,646,335.00	21.15%														$629,919.00				$12,746,335.00	7.55%
11					$1,038,347.00	2.27%								$2,248,547.00						$2,004,978.00				$7,480,171.00	5.95%
12			$8,600.00	2.08%	$63,000.00	0.96%								$642,492.00						$1,120,474.00				$3,210,000.00	7.49%
13					$652,784.00	32.01%								$321,221.00						$251,638.00				$1,391,964.00	3.36%
14																				$242,675.00				$325,000.00	9.44%
15					$3,150,000.00	6.87%								$321,221.00						$1,827,339.00				$12,277,589.00	2.60%
16									$226,960.00	2.91%				$642,492.00						$720,065.00				$727,977.00	1.67%
17														$321,221.00						$320,299.00				$130,959.00	5.98%
18			$35,236.17	18.62%									$92,622.00	$642,492.00	6.63%			$36,900.78		$569,907.00	10.00%			$793,838.47	6.83%
19														$642,492.00						$531,180.00				$1,205,021.00	7.60%
20					$600,000.00	5.19%							$100,000.00	$321,221.00	31.13%					$1,036,871.00				$1,191,609.00	3.60%
21														$642,492.00						$850,000.00				$1,149,000.00	5.36%
22			$29,000.00	10.35%									$50,000.00	$642,492.00	15.57%			$99,517.78		$1,096,096.75	25.01%			$1,365,000.75	0.17%
23														$642,492.00						$65,000.00				$65,000.00	0.09%
24														$642,492.00						$293,157.00				$10,000.00	2.10%
25			$2,500.00	1.36%										$321,221.00						$500,868.00				$492,942.00	16.20%
26														$321,221.00				$8,000.00		$242,675.00	3.29%			$1,590,675.00	1.34%
27					$75,407.10	0.32%								$642,492.00						$1,443,315.00				$991,435.51	5.32%
28					$18,020,560.00	11.66%							$184,000.00	$1,606,105.00	11.46%					$7,831,108.00				$25,280,381.42	3.03%
29					$803,000.00	17.99%							$121,221.00	$963,663.00	12.18%					$866,572.00				$986,221.00	24.52%
30																				$242,675.00				$2,346,889.00	
31																		$20,000.00		$93,936.00	37.08%			$30,000.00	1.10%
32					$926,899.50	19.99%								$642,492.00						$362,815.00				$1,776,899.50	9.67%
33			$14,685.00	6.76%										$321,221.00						$483,699.00				$865,059.00	3.50%
34					$660,000.00	3.46%								$642,492.00						$1,587,020.00				$1,252,355.00	1.42%
35			$10,090.00	6.67%																$294,293.00				$135,009.00	1.01%
36					$2,691,844.25	53.60%								$321,221.00						$242,975.00				$1,569,609.25	3.75%
37														$321,221.00						$242,675.00				$1,065,669.41	3.70%
38			$10,275.56	7.77%														$94,300.00		$242,675.00	30.82%			$1,063,369.53	11.57%
39			$16,288.75	5.68%	$15,000.00	0.24%							$346,221.00	$1,284,684.00	27.39%					$670,566.00				$1,596,699.22	5.73%
40			$108,757.51	32.63%	$10,793,185.76	14.93%							$611,991.00	$4,175,873.00	14.66%			$28,362.78		$3,508,771.00	0.81%			$17,872,788.88	9.50%
41																								$30,000.00	17.69%
42					$800,000.00	43.36%								$321,221.00						$366,269.00				$1,483,694.00	10.70%
43																				$242,675.00				$1,280,950.00	13.99%
44																				$80,654.00				$9,463.00	0.35%
45														$1,927,326.00						$1,249,035.00				$40,000.00	0.69%
46					$962,713.00	9.31%			$107,491.00	1.83%			$621,221.00	$963,663.00	43.71%			$11,000.00	1.10%	$995,731.00				$2,721,138.00	5.86%
47																		$23,559.00		$242,675.00	9.35%			$103,559.00	1.68%
48			$218,993.29	1.50%	$102,264,195.91	13.14%			$414,302.00	0.14%			$4,476,861.00	$30,831,404.00	11.24%			$312,249.16		$98,579,000.00	0.64%	$921,500.00	1.53%	$283,667,298.71	6.90%
TT	**$1,631,205,537.00**	**1.43%**	**$3,192,527.98**	**3.30%**	**$588,434,683.16**	**15.63%**	**$469,562.00**	**0.94%**	**$1,162,646.31**	**0.14%**	**$19,068.86**	**0.04%**	**$15,790,517.87**	**$128,871,725.00**	**12.25%**	**$735,653.41**	**0.31%**	**$312,640.16**	**$48,573,000.00**	**0.64%**	**$921,500.00**	**1.53%**	**$1,341,104,634.51**	**9.87%**

- Program (LETPP), Citizen Corps Program (CCP), Urban Area Security Initiative, Urban Area Security Initiative Transit Security Program and Urban Area Security Initiative Non-Profit Grant Program (UASI), Transit Security Program (TSP), Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG), Emergency Management Performance Grant Supplemental (EMPGSUP), Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), Buffer Zone Protection Program (BZPP), Operation Stonegarden Grant Program (OPSG), Transit Security Program-Rail Transit, Transit Security Program-Intracity Bus and Ferrest Security Program Program (NSGP), Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program (PSIC), and Intercity Passenger Rail Security Grant Program (CPRGSP), Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP), Emergency Operations Center Grant Program (EOC), Intercity Passenger Rail Program (CPR), Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP), Mississippi Interoperable Communications Grant (MSIC) and REAL ID Demonstration Grant Program (REAL ID Grant Funding.

In Accord with DHS policy relating to FOUO information, This information shall not be distributed beyond the original addressees without prior authorization of the originator

Questions submitted by Representative Donna F. Edwards

Q1. Since the beginning of the 1990's, the number of people dying in fires each year has remained around 3,400. A disproportionate number of those people are poor and minority citizens. Why is this the case?

A1. There is not a definitive study on this aspect of fire incidences, but there are several contributing factors that taken together would begin to explain why a disproportionate number of fire deaths are poor and minority citizens:

- According to the National Fire Protection Association, under-education is one of the top three factors most strongly related to fire death rates (*NFPA Journal,* January/February 1996);
- Lack of financial resources may prevent some individuals and families from purchasing fire prevention and safety tools, such as smoke alarms, because other necessities take precedence;
- Poorer households may use portable heating devices in place of central heating, which increases the risk of fire; and
- Those living below the poverty line in urban areas have a greater risk of arson because some live in high crime areas. Additionally, in the urban areas, greater security measures may jeopardize egress routes.

Q2. What types of programs do the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants support to reduce the number of fatal fires? Can the circumstances that cause these fires be addressed with more education or is some other type of intervention needed?

A2. With respect to Fire Prevention programs, we support and place priority on the most effective projects, which include smoke alarm installation projects, sprinkler awareness, code enforcement/awareness and arson prevention programs. The effective delivery of these strategies often has been shown to rely on the partnering of community/neighborhood organizations with fire departments, the use of education plans and techniques, and intervention programs with juvenile fire setters.

Additional education on fire prevention and safety will continue to prove to be effective strategies in reducing fires, as well as death and injury from fire and related hazards. As for other interventions, the most notable would be the adoption of a change in the International Residential Code that would require fire sprinkler systems in all new construction. Recently, the Acting United States Fire Administrator released a statement on this change, stating:

> "It is the position of the U.S. Fire Administration that all Americans should be protected from death, injury, and property loss resulting from fire in their residence. All homes should be equipped with both smoke alarms and residential fire sprinklers, and all families should have and practice an emergency escape plan. The U.S. Fire Administration supports all efforts to reduce the tragic toll of fire losses in this nation, including the recently adopted changes to the International Residential Code that require residential fire sprinklers in all new residential construction."

ANSWERS TO POST-HEARING QUESTIONS

Responses by Chief Jeffrey D. Johnson, First Vice President, The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC); Chief, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue

Questions submitted by Chairman David Wu

Q1. What criteria would IAFC recommend be used to waive the matching requirement for AFG and SAFER? Should the criteria be the same for waiving other program requirements? How should these criteria be developed?

A1. The IAFC recommends that the waivers to the local matching requirements for FIRE grants be based on a two-step process to ensure both transparency and accountability. The first step would require that the jurisdiction applying for a waiver fall below a specified threshold within an index using U.S. Census data, such as the State poverty level or median household income. Then, if a jurisdiction met this requirement, the AFG program office would make a final determination on the fire department's request based on financial information provided with the application. This process would ensure that fire departments that receive waivers both meet a clear economic benchmark, and that the AFG office has made a positive, accountable determination to grant the waiver.

The AFG office should establish the criteria for the waiver system by consulting the major fire service organizations and other stakeholders. The current, annual AFG criteria development meeting may provide a relevant forum for this consultation.

Q2. The proposal to raise the maximum allowable grant for the AFG program to $10 million would more than triple the current maximum. Why is such a large increase needed? If the cap were significantly increased, would departments be able to provide a 15 percent match? 20 percent?

A2. There are a number of good reasons for supporting an increase in the cap for FIRE grants. To ensure economies of scale, local fire departments in many Western states are consolidating into larger fire departments. For example, my fire department, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, is composed of what were historically 12 departments, and now covers more than 432,500 people in nine cities and portions of three counties in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area. My department is limited to a $1 million grant, but if these 12 departments had applied separately for FIRE grant funding, they could have applied for a much larger amount. My department faces many of the same equipment and training needs as the 12 departments would, because we cover the same area. A larger maximum allowable grant would allow my department to better handle our equipment and training needs, while also rewarding fire departments that promote economies of scale and more effective use of taxpayer money by consolidating into larger departments.

In addition, the $2.75 million limit can be a challenge for larger departments. For example, the Fire Department of New York has over 11,000 firefighters covering over eight million people and the Los Angeles County Fire Department has over 2,500 firefighters covering over four million residents. The current $2.75 million cap does not go very far in helping these larger departments meet their needs.

The IAFC would like to work with the Committee to set an appropriate larger amount to be the maximum allowable grant for larger fire departments.

Q2a. Is the current structure of basing award sizes on jurisdictional population still appropriate today? If so, why?

A2a. The IAFC believes that it is important to base award sizes on the population of the jurisdiction. The population of a jurisdiction is an important factor in determining the staffing and equipment needs for protecting it. For example, in areas with large populations, a fire department needs more firefighters and equipment to perform its lifesaving mission. In jurisdictions with smaller populations, a fire department may require a smaller number of firefighters or equipment.

The IAFC also supports the proposal to use a 30–30–30 percent floor to distribute FIRE grants to career, combination and volunteer fire departments (with the remaining 10 percent available for open competition). The current statute (15 U.S.C. § 2229((b)(11)) requires that all-volunteer and combination departments must receive "a proportion of the total grant funding that is not less than the proportion of the United States population that those firefighting departments protect." The IAFC supported this set-aside in the past, because we were originally concerned that volunteer fire departments might not receive as much funding from the FIRE grant program as larger all-career departments. In fact, volunteer fire departments

have received over 60 percent of the funds from the FIRE grant program and all-career fire departments have received about 10 percent of the funding. The IAFC supports a fair and equitable distribution of AFG grant funds. Based on our discussions with some of the other national fire service organizations, we believe that the 30 percent floor for each type of department was the best method to achieve this goal.

Q3. In your testimony you offered the example of fire sprinklers as one area where a coordinated research program would be useful in advancing public safety. What other types of large research questions would Centers of Excellence address? How many Centers of Excellence are needed? How effectively is current fire research put into practice and how can this technology transfer be improved? Why would Centers of Excellence be more effective than simply increasing the amount of R&D funds available overall?

A3. The IAFC would recommend the creation of 2 or 3 centers of excellence. The purpose of these centers would be to reduce the fire-related death and injury rate of firefighters and the general public by examining the behavioral, engineering, social science and technological causes. The centers would use tools and methods developed from the behavioral, clinical and social science fields; the computer, engineering and physical sciences; and injury surveillance studies to examine issues such as:

- Overexertion and stress due to cardiac or cerebrovascular illness
- Motor vehicle crashes
- Accidental injury on the fireground
- Exposure to toxic substances
- Situational leadership
- Development of personal protective equipment.

During my testimony, I described how the centers could be used to address cost calculations related to residential fire sprinklers. Water purveyors are implementing system development charges that are oftentimes between $6,000 and $10,000, because they assume a larger waterline requirement for the sprinkler. However, the water load for a sprinkler is much less than that caused by a fire department's operations in trying to put out a fully involved house fire. However, a homeowner will only see the $3,000 cost to install a sprinkler and $10,000 cost for the water line to supply that sprinkler. The centers of excellence can perform an important service to homeowners by providing a cost analysis comparing the water requirements and costs associated with the preventive installation of fire sprinklers versus the costs and water use associated with putting out a fire in a single-family dwelling.

The AFG office does a good job of overseeing the research that is funded by the Fire Prevention and Safety grants. However, there is not a direct pipeline for transmitting most of this research to the public. Research findings and technological developments can be transmitted through conferences; web, news and magazine articles; and "word of mouth," but there is no systematic way for this information to be released.

We envision that the Centers of Excellence in Fire Safety Research would be partnerships between major fire service organizations and major research universities. The major fire service organization would give the center credibility within the fire service and a clear pipeline to distribute information to the fire service. The major research institution would provide the academic discipline, research infrastructure, and rigorous scientific testing required to provide world-class research. In addition, the centers would develop the infrastructure required to support long-term fire safety research programs, such as the continued involvement between the fire service and major academic research institutions, stable funding for fire safety research, and the systematic involvement of junior faculty and students.

Q4. In his testimony, Chief Jack Carriger of the National Volunteer Fire Council stated that between 2005 and 2007 applications for the Fire Prevention and Safety grants have dropped from $394 million to $191 million. What might account for the drop? What are the most effective activities for preventing fires and how can those activities be encouraged?

A4. The matching requirement is one of the major obstacles to fire departments applying for the Fire Prevention and Safety grants. Fire departments must meet the same 20–10–5 percent matching requirement based on population that they must meet for the FIRE grant program. As fire departments face budget cuts, the IAFC is being told that fire prevention funding is **the first to be cut** to meet lower budget projections and still maintain staffing and operational capability. If the matching

requirement were eliminated for the fire prevention grants (as it currently is for national, State, local or community organizations), you may see an increase in fire prevention grant applications.

On behalf of the nearly 13,000 chief fire and emergency officers of the IAFC, I would like to thank you for leading the effort to reauthorize the FIRE and SAFER grant programs. The IAFC is dedicated to working with you to reauthorize these programs this year.

ANSWERS TO POST-HEARING QUESTIONS

Responses by Chief Jack Carriger, Stayton Fire Department, Stayton, Oregon; First Vice–Chairman of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)

Questions submitted by Chairman David Wu

Q1. You recommended in your testimony that State fire training academies be able to apply for more types of activities under the AFG program. What types of activities may they apply for now, and what other activities would you recommend Including?

A1. State training academies are not currently eligible to apply for funds through AFG, although several have received funds for research through the FP&S program. State training programs train over one million students each year and provide the majority of courses resulting in national certifications. Allowing State fire training academies to compete for AFG funs would result in improvements in firefighter training and safety and allow greater access to important fire service training programs.

Q2. You noted in your testimony that between 2005 and 2007 applications for the FP&S grants have dropped from $394 million to $191 million. What might account for this drop? What are the most effective types of activities in preventing fires and how can those activities be encouraged?

A2. Funds requested by career, combination, volunteer and paid-on-call fire departments through FP&S went down between 2005 and 2007, but the steepest drop came from the volunteers. In 2005, 938 volunteer fire departments applied for $194.2 million. In 2007, 711 volunteer fire departments applied for $31 million.

It is difficult to say exactly what caused such a precipitous drop in funds requested, but it is worth noting that even in 2005, less than five percent of volunteer fire departments applied for FP&S funds. Fire departments that apply for funds through AFG may not have additional resources available to cover the local matching funds requirement through FP&S. AFG/FP&S appropriations have declined since 2005, leaving a smaller pool of funds available for fire departments that do apply, and the number of applications from non-fire departments has increased significantly since matching funds requirements from those entities were eliminated in the last reauthorization. Ail of these factors likely have contributed to the low application rate through FP&S.

Different communities face different challenges in preventing fires. For instance, steps taken by communities located in the wildland/urban interface (WUI) to reduce their exposure to wildland fire would have little to no impact in communities outside of the WUI. Fire prevention strategies should be tailored to address the unique challenges facing each community. The competitive grant process ensures that funds are allocated to the most effective projects. Eliminating the local matching requirement for fire departments through FP&S would encourage more applications making the grant process even more competitive.

Q3. How successful have SAFER recruitment and retention grants been in increasing the number of volunteer firefighters? What are the most successful recruitment and retention activities? How should we encourage more types of these activities?

A3. Since SAFER was created, a little less than $50 million have been made available in the form of recruitment and retention grants and to this point, there hasn't been any comprehensive study performed to assess the effectiveness of these grants collectively. As I mentioned in my testimony, the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association (OVFA) received a grant in 2006 to conduct a statewide recruitment campaign. 200 volunteer fire departments have benefited directly from the campaign, reporting an increase in volunteers and general community interest in the volunteer fire department.

We estimate that statewide we have directly or indirectly impacted 340 volunteer fire departments through the campaign.

Communities face different challenges when it comes to recruitment and retention. Providing modest monetary awards to volunteers is an effective tactic for boosting retention rates, but many communities cannot afford to offer financial incentives. Marketing campaigns like the OVFA's have been very successful at generating interest in the volunteer fire service and drawing potential recruits to volunteer fire departments, but relatively little is known about the retention rates of

those recruits over time. More data collection and analysis would be extremely useful in determining the effectiveness of recruitment and retention grants.

Questions submitted by Representative Adrian Smith

Q1. What is NVFC's position on the specific provisions in the United Fire Service proposal, particularly the recommendations related to the "30/30/30" set-aside, increased matching requirements and increased allowable grant size?

A1. The United Fire Service Proposal was developed and submitted to Congress without input from the NVFC.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

Provides all career, all volunteer and combination departments each with a minimum 30 percent guarantee of total grant funding to better distribute funds among departments according to population served. If not enough applications are received to meet this floor for a specific category, then the remaining funds would be given to the other two categories.

Volunteer fire departments have historically received significant levels of funding through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program to purchase equipment, training and apparatus for a variety of reasons, including:

— Volunteer departments submit more applications for a collectively higher level of funding than their combination or career counterparts;

— One of the main focuses of AFG is bringing fire departments up to a baseline level of readiness. Fire service needs assessments consistently show that by a wide margin, volunteer departments need far more assistance to achieve baseline readiness as defined by compliance with national consensus standards.

— Larger fire departments, which tend to utilize career staffing, receive substantially more financial support from local government sources and other Department of Homeland Security grant programs to address equipment, training and apparatus needs.

Applications and Awards

Looking at the statistics for FY 2007 applications and awards through AFG, volunteer fire departments submitted close to five times as many applications for more than three times the amount of funding. Applications from volunteer fire departments had a success rate of 24 percent, compared with 20.6 percent for career departments. Overall, 15 percent of funding requests from volunteer departments were met compared with 14.2 percent from career departments.

	FY 2007 Applications ($ Requested)	Grants ($ Awarded)	% Grants (% Awarded)
Career	2,452 ($500 m)	506 ($71 m)	20.6 (14.2)
Combination	3,794 ($803 m)	1,177 ($136 m)	31.0 (16.9)
Volunteer	12,175 ($1,584 m)	2,922 ($238 m)	24.0 (15.0)
Paid On-Call/Stipend	1,571 ($213)	368 ($30 m)	23.4 (14.1)

Applying the 30/30/30 standard to the FY 2007 grant cycle gives us an idea of what would happen if that proposal were adopted:

	FY 2007(With 30/30/30) Applications ($ Requested)	($ Awarded)	(Awarded)
Career	2,452 ($500 m)	($158.3 m)	(31.7)
Combination	3,794 ($803 m)	($158.3 m)	(19.7)
Volunteer	12,175 ($1,584 m)	($158.3 m)	(10.0)

Since the proposal doesn't account for Paid On-Call/Stipend departments, it is difficult to say with certainty where they would fit in. Paid On-Call/Stipend departments pay their personnel cash awards for each call they respond to or on an annual or monthly basis. It is likely that these departments would either be classified as volunteer departments or left out of the 30/30/30 classification altogether. In the chart I simply eliminated Paid On-Call/Stipend departments.

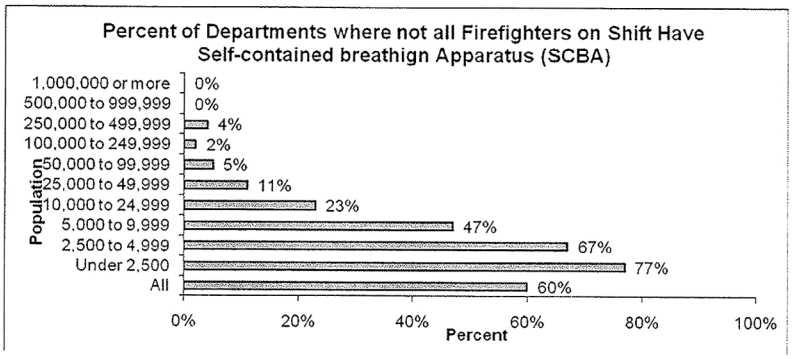
As the chart above shows, if the 30/30/30 standard had been applied to the FY 2007 grant cycle, 31.7 percent of funds requested by career departments would have been funded compared with 19.7 percent of funds requested by combination departments and 10 percent of funds requested by volunteer departments.

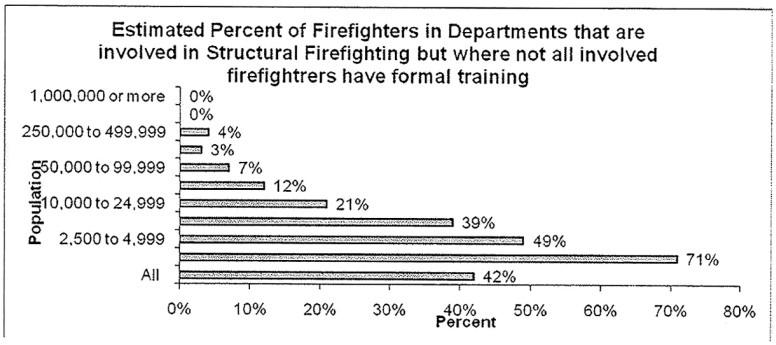
Assessing Need

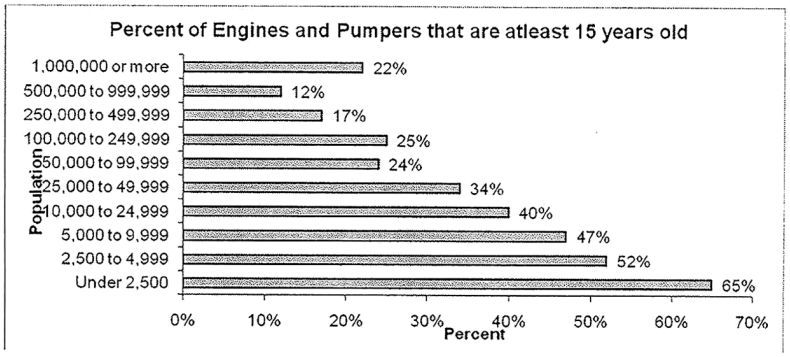
Congress authorized a needs assessment of the U.S. fire service when it created AFG in 2000, and authorized another needs assessment when the program was reauthorized in 2004. The latest needs assessment, "Four Years Later—A Second Needs Assessment of the U.S. Fire Service" was published by DHS in 2006.

Both of these needs assessments consistently show that smaller communities tend to be protected by volunteers and that those volunteer departments are far less likely to meet national consensus standards. On average, volunteers tend to have less training and older equipment and apparatus. This is primarily due to a lack of resources, which is hardly surprising since one of the main reasons that communities have volunteer staffing in the first place is because they can't afford to hire full-time personnel. Most volunteer departments rely on private fundraising just to meet their operating budgets.

The following three charts are from the 2006 needs assessment and demonstrate the difference in equipment, training and apparatus need in large and small departments:







The charts above are a snapshot of a trend that is demonstrated consistently throughout the needs assessment—that shortfalls in equipment, training and apparatus tend to be more significant in smaller communities. Because need is a component of the AFG criteria, applications from departments that have the greatest shortfalls tend to score higher.

Other Sources of Federal Funding

Volunteer and mostly-volunteer departments collectively receive a lower percentage of funding through the SAFER grant program than the percentage of the population that they protect, and virtually no funding through numerous other DHS grant programs that tend to direct money toward densely populated areas served by large career departments. Through the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) alone, 60 of the most populated areas in the country were awarded differing amounts of $781.6 million in FY 2008, almost twice as much as was available for equipment, training and apparatus through AFG.

In 2007, volunteer fire departments and State and local interest organizations collectively received approximately 11 percent of SAFER funds to implement recruitment and retention plans. Mostly volunteer fire departments received 24 percent of SAFER funds to hire firefighters while 65 percent of SAFER funds were distributed to career and mostly-career departments for additional hiring.

The focus of SAFER on hiring as opposed to recruitment and retention is a product of the significant cost paying salaries and benefits to career firefighters. Additionally, while staffing shortfalls in smaller communities tend to be greater than those in larger communities, the disparity is not as significant as the corresponding equipment, training and apparatus shortfalls.

The bulk of DHS grant dollars flow to large densely populated communities to pay for a wide range of preparedness activities, including local fire department functions, through programs like UASI and the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSP). Fire departments' access to assistance through UASI and SHSP is difficult to track because funds are distributed to State and local governments rather than directly to first responder agencies. Still, there is evidence that hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on metro fire departments through UASI in particular: In 2006, five of the 15 of projects proposed to be funded by New York City through UASI were for FDNY. New York City received $124.5 million through UASI in 2006—three times as much as any state received through AFG that year.

By contrast, states that do not have major metropolitan areas tend to receive considerably less preparedness funding through DHS. In 2008, AFG was the largest single source of DHS funding distributed to Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin. In many other states with smaller populations and population densities, AFG was the largest single source of DHS funding in 2006 outside of SHSP, which provided a minimum of $6.2 million per state.

Summary

Volunteer fire departments have historically applied for far more funding through AFG than career fire departments. DHS needs assessments consistently show that equipment, training and apparatus needs tend to be more severe in volunteer departments. Career departments receive a higher percentage of SAFER grants than

volunteer departments, and the largest career departments have access to significant levels of additional assistance through other DHS grant programs.

The fire services' involvement in criteria development and ranking grant applications already ensures that funds are directed to the departments that need it most. Applying the 30/30/30 standard would result in fire departments with lower-scoring applications receiving grants simply because they employ full-time paid personnel and departments with higher scoring applications being denied funding simply because they utilize volunteer personnel. The NVFC opposes applying the 30/30/30 standard to the AFG program.

Increases the funding cap for all categories of grantees:

- **Jurisdictions of more than one million: $10 million cap**
- **Jurisdictions between 500,000—one million: $5 million cap**
- **Jurisdictions between 100,000–500,000: $2 million cap**
- **Jurisdictions of less than 100,000: $1 million cap**

In FY 2004, there were 12 awards made to departments protecting 500,000 or more people that were at or within $100,000 of $750,000, the grant cap at that time. During the FY 2004 reauthorization of AFG, Congress increased the grant caps for all departments to $1 million. Additionally, the grant cap for fire departments protecting communities with a population of 500,000—one million was increased to $1.75 million and the cap for fire departments protecting one million or more people was increased to $2.75 million.

Under current law, no single grant can constitute more than .5 percent of the funds appropriated for AFG in any year. For FY 2010, the House—and Senate-passed DHS appropriations bills include $390 million for AFG—a decrease of $175 million from FY 2009. If the grant caps were increased to the levels recommended in the United Fire Service Proposal, each fire department serving one million or more people would be eligible for more than three percent of the funds appropriated in FY 2010.

From FY 2005–2008 (since the grant caps were raised) a total of four awards have been made to fire departments protecting more than 500,000 people that were within $100,000 of the grant cap (none have been made for the full amount allowed under the cap). During that same time period, AFG awards were made to fire departments in Baltimore (twice), Boston, Charlotte, Cleveland, Columbus (OH), Dallas, El Paso (twice), Fort Worth, Hartford, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Louisville, Memphis, Montgomery County (MD), Nashville, New York (twice), Oklahoma City, Orange County (FL), Pittsburgh, Prince Georges County (MD), and San Francisco.

Fire departments protecting 500,000 or more people are receiving awards through AFG, just not at or near the maximum amount allowable under the law. There is no evidence from the award statistics that large fire departments would take advantage of the inflated grant caps contained in the United Fire Service Proposal—at least as long as local units of government have to put up matching funds and safeguards are kept in place to ensure that AFG funds are used to supplement rather than supplant local spending.

Provides priority to applicants that protect large populations and have high call volume

Population protected and call volume were incorporated into the AFG criteria in FY 2008. As a result, departments that protect large communities and/or have a high call volume score higher on their grant applications.

Because of the changes made in FY 2008, the overall percentage of AFG funds directed to career fire departments as well as urban and suburban areas increased slightly from FY 2007. The primary impact on the smallest fire departments has been that they are less likely to receive high scores on applications for expensive items, such as new apparatus.

The NVFC does not oppose the inclusion of population protected and call volume as a component of the AFG criteria matrix as it is currently being applied. Other components of the matrix, including an assessment of the need of fire departments based on their ability to meet national consensus standards, have ensured that the smallest fire departments still have reasonable access funds through AFG, particularly for purchases of equipment and training. The current scoring matrix is carefully calibrated by DHS with input from the fire service on an annual basis to ensure that funding is directed where it is needed most.

It is not clear from the United Fire Service Proposal whether this recommendation is meant to merely codify existing practice or expand the influence of population protected and call volume within the AFG criteria matrix. If the aim is the former,

the NVFC would like to see language clarifying that in the committee report. If the aim is the latter, the NVFC would oppose this recommendation.

Reduces the local match from 20 percent to 15 percent, enabling economically challenged communities to take advantage of the program and allow DHS to grant a waiver to fire departments facing economic hardship.

Under current law, the matching requirement for fire departments serving communities of 50,000 or more is 20 percent. Fire departments serving between 49,999 and 20,000 have a 10 percent match and departments serving communities of less than 19,999 have a match of five percent. Smaller departments have a reduced local match because they tend to have fewer financial resources at their disposal than their larger counterparts.

As discussed in the section of this document that dealt with the 30/30/30 proposal, fire departments in smaller communities are far more likely to utilize older equipment and apparatus and far less likely to have ail personnel trained to the level recommended by national consensus standards. This disparity is primarily due to the fact that most small fire departments are located in communities that are sparsely populated and/or have high poverty rates. As the following charts from the 2006 Needs Assessment

demonstrate, many small fire departments do not have a budget for equipment and apparatus replacement and most rely on private donations simply to maintain operations.

Does Department's Normal Budget Cover the costs of Apparatus Replacement? by Community Size

	Yes		No*		Total	
Population of community	Number Depts	Percent	Number Depts	Percent	Number Depts	Percent
1,000,000 or more	12	80.0%	3	20.0%	15	100.0%
500,000 to 999,999	30	78.9	8	21.1	38	100.0
250,000 to 499,999	36	66.7	18	33.3	54	100.0
100,000 to 249,999	149	68.7	68	31.3	217	100.0
50,000 to 99,999	257	57.4	191	42.6	448	100.0
25,000 to 49,999	528	49.2	545	50.8	1073	100.0
10,000 to 24,999	967	32.9	1972	67.1	2939	100.0
5,000 to 9,999	847	22.5	2917	77.5	3764	100.0
2,500 to 4,999	847	17.4	4021	82.6	4868	100.0
Under 2,500	1431	10.4	12319	89.6	13750	100.0
Total	5105	18.8	22061	81.2	27166	100.0

*"No" means the department must raise or seek funds to cover some or all expenses.

For All-or Mostly-Volunteer Departments
Sources of Budget Revenue
by Share (%) of Revenue and Community Size

Population of community	Fire District or other Tax	Payment per Call	Other local Payment	State Government	Fund Raising	Other	Total
25,000 to 49,999	80.5%	1.1%	5.4%	2.8%	7.8%	2.4%	100.0%
10,000 to 24,999	76.3	1.8	6.6	3.7	9.4	2.1	100.0
5,000 to 9,999	72.4	1.7	5.9	3.2	13.2	3.7	100.0
2,500 to 4,999	68.3	1.5	5.3	4.3	16.8	3.8	100.0
Under 2,500	63.9	1.4	6.1	5.9	18.7	3.9	100.0

Source: FEMA US Fire Administration 2005
Survey of the Needs of the US Fire Service

The United Fire Service Proposal's draft bill would increase the local match for all fire departments protecting communities of 50,000 or less to 15 percent. That represents a 50–300 percent increase in the matching requirement for 97 percent of fire departments in the United States, including for the smallest departments that have the most financial need. The NVFC vigorously opposes any increase in the matching requirement for communities of any size, but does not oppose reducing the matching requirement for communities serving 50,000 or more from 20 percent to 15 percent.

The United Fire Service Proposal would also allow DHS to waive the local matching requirement for "fire departments facing economic hardship." The NVFC does not oppose the concept of waivers but is concerned about how such a system would be implemented. How ,would "economic hardship" be defined, and who would define it? How many waivers per year would be granted? A waiver system has the potential to create significant controversy and draw negative attention to AFG if it is not implemented properly.

Reduces the requirement that grantees maintain their budget at 100 percent of the average budget over the previous two years to 80 percent with a waiver on this requirement for departments facing an economic hardship.

Requiring departments to at least maintain past years' operating budgets ensures that AFG funds are being used to supplement rather than supplant local spending. Without this safeguard, AFG funds could be used to plug holes in local government budgets rather than improving the capabilities of local fire departments.

There may be justification for allowing some fire departments that have reduced their budgets to receive AFG funds. Many departments that have been forced by the recent economic downturn to reduce their budgets have significant equipment, training and apparatus needs. Additionally, departments that experience a budget spike in a year when they make a sizable one-time purchase or expenditure should not be penalized.

What is being proposed here, however, would essentially give permission to fire departments to replace local spending with AFG funds. Furthermore, it would become a permanent feature of AFG. The NVFC would prefer to see the requirement that fire departments maintain their budgets at 100 percent of the average over the previous two years maintained, but permit the Secretary to waive this requirement at the request of an applicant. Applicants would have to justify the budget reduction based on criteria established by DHS in conjunction with the criteria development panels.

Adds State fire training academies as eligible grantees for vehicles and equipment, and limits grants to such entities to $1 million

The NVFC supports making State fire training academies eligible applicants through AFG. Some of the major challenges facing volunteer departments in training their personnel include a lack of resources, time constraints on the individual volunteers and a lack of locally-available training opportunities. State training agencies play a critical role in delivering training to fire departments in remote areas

by producing and disseminating training materials, funding training offerings at local colleges and other institutions and through regional training facilities.

Adds a new category of prevention grant for joint research programs between universities and national fire service organizations focused on reducing injuries and LODDs among firefighters; limits such grants to $2 million in the first year and $5 million annually thereafter.

The NVFC believes that joint research programs could be a valuable addition to AFG's Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) program. The existing $1 million cap and one-year limit on FP&S grants severely restricts the scope of research that can be performed.

The NVFC is concerned, however, that allocating as much as $5 million in one grant could significantly reduce the total number of grants and grant recipients, particularly during down appropriations years. By statute, five percent of AFG funds are set aside to fund the FP&S program. It appears likely that Congress will appropriate $390 million for AFG in FY 2010, a reduction of $175 million from FY 2009. Assuming that approximately $20 million is made available through FP&S in FY 2010, under this proposal as much as 25 percent of the entire program's funding could be devoted to one joint research program grant.

The NVFC is also concerned that this proposal could exacerbate the recent trend of FP&S funds being directed to universities and non-profit fire service organizations rather than fire departments. In FY 2006, fire departments received less than 34 percent of FP&S funds, despite requesting nearly twice as much funding than non-fire departments.

Clarifies that training purchased with FIRE Grant dollars must comply with applicable national voluntary consensus standards, and allows for a waiver of this requirement by the Administrator.

The NVFC is supportive of this recommendation.

Staffing for Adequate Fire And Emergency Response Program

The United Fire Service Proposal recommends several changes to the manner in which hiring grants through SAFER are administered, including: lowering the local matching requirement and reducing the length of the grant; eliminating the cap on grant funds that can be used to pay for firefighters' salaries and benefits; allows the Administrator to waive local matching requirements altogether, waive the requirement that firefighters hired under SAFER be retained after the grant expires and waive the requirement that fire departments not reduce past years' budgets in order to receive a SAFER hiring grant; and grants the administrator the authority to allow departments to use SAFER hiring grant funds to avoid layoffs rather than hiring new personnel.

The NVFC does not oppose any of these recommendations.

Q2. You cite in your testimony that recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters is being hindered in part due to "pressure from career fire departments/union locals to prevent career firefighters from volunteering during off-duty hours." Please elaborate on this issue. In what form does the "pressure" occur, how widespread is it, and how does it impact fire department preparedness? Are there any actions underway—either from the NVFC or other national organizations, or at the Department of Homeland Security—to protect firefighters' right to volunteer during off-duty hours?

A2. The Government Accountability Office estimates that close to 30,000 career firefighters volunteer during off-duty hours. These "two-hatters" tend to be individuals who got their start in the fire service volunteering for their hometown fire department and eventually decided to pursue firefighting as a career. They tend to be among the most experienced, well-trained and dedicated members of the fire service community. Because career firefighters generally work 24-hour shifts with multiple days off in between, two-hatters are often available to cover the daytime, weekday shifts that are the most difficult for many volunteer fire departments to staff.

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) prohibits its members from volunteering as firefighters during off-duty hours. The types of pressure brought to bear on two-hatters ranges from peer-pressure and intimidation by fellow union members to formal charges and in some cases expulsion from the union. Two-hatters are often told that their prospects for career advancement will be hindered if they continue to volunteer. In many cases, some combination of these tactics is enough to convince a two-hatter to quit his volunteer department.

The NVFC's Maryland Alternate Director, Jim Seavey, is a career firefighter in Washington, DC, and a volunteer fire chief in Montgomery County, MD. Several

years ago, Jim and a number of other two-hatters in the metropolitan Washington area were brought up on charges by the IAFF for volunteering during off-duty hours and threatened with expulsion from the union. The charges were eventually dropped just before the formal hearing was scheduled to take place, although Jim remains a volunteer fire chief.

In 2006, New Jersey two-hatter Vincent Pereira had his IAFF membership revoked after he joined a local volunteer fire department. Mr. Pereira had been a member of the Colonia Volunteer Fire Company but resigned his membership when he was hired by the Woodbridge Fire Department as a condition of being admitted to membership in IAFF Local 290. Mr. Pereira eventually re-joined his volunteer fire department after observing that other IAFF members that he worked with continued to volunteer.

Last August, the IAFF amended their prohibition against volunteering to apply only in areas where the volunteer activities of the member in question are deemed detrimental to the ability of an IAFF local's organizing efforts. This limits the scope of the IAFF's prohibition against volunteering but also protects the IAFF from charges of selective enforcement like the ones employed by Mr. Pereira. Since the IAFF amended their volunteer prohibition, union locals in Albany and Jamestown, NY, have publicly forbade their members from volunteering during off-duty hours, claiming that they were enforcing the recent bylaws change.

Collective bargaining agreements in a handful of fire departments around the country stipulate that as a term of employment, career firefighters will not volunteer as firefighters during off-duty hours. These provisions are generally justified as being a health and safety measure, but the collective bargaining agreements in question do not prohibit career firefighters from engaging in other types of potentially dangerous activities. Many of these collective bargaining agreements exist in municipalities in Connecticut, which recently passed a statewide law allowing local units of government to enter into agreements allowing career firefighters to volunteer during off-duty hours.

One problem that exists in trying to track instances of two-hatters quitting the volunteer fire service under pressure from the IAFF is that the individuals who do so are often not willing to come forward publicly. The NVFC is developing a web-based resource for two-hatters to report instances of formal or informal attempts by the IAFF to dissuade them from volunteering. The web site will allow for anonymous reporting, although we hope to encourage individuals to come forward publicly as well.

Last year, the International Association of Fire Chiefs issued a statement expressing their support for the right of individuals to volunteer as firefighters, whether or not they are career firefighters. I am not aware of any efforts by other national organizations to address this issue.

By statute, firefighters that are hired through the SAFER program cannot be discriminated against because they volunteer during off-duty hours. I am not aware of any other programs or initiatives through DHS or any other federal agency that address the problem of the targeting of two-hatters by the IAFF or local units of government.

ANSWERS TO POST-HEARING QUESTIONS

Responses by Kevin B. O'Connor, Assistant to the General President, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)

Questions submitted by Chairman David Wu

Q1. What criteria would IAFF recommend be used to waive the matching requirement for AFG and SAFER? Should the criteria be the same for waiving other program requirements? How should these criteria be developed?

A1. The Secretary of Homeland Security should be provided with the authority to waive the local match requirement for AFG and SAFER. In determining such waivers, the following criteria should be considered:

- Financial Need: Three consecutive years of budget data (including the current year) for both the department and the jurisdiction should be required as part of the application process. Changes in revenue projections/collection, change in bond rating, general fund balances and operational costs of providing fire, rescue and EMS services should also be considered. Applicants should also be required to disclose any major events, such as missing bond payments, which have impacted the jurisdiction and budget within the past 12 months. The overall financial health of the jurisdiction should also be taken into account including unemployment rates, foreclosure rates, percentage of the population in poverty and whether or not significant cuts have been made in staffing or the budgets of other agencies within the jurisdiction.
- Remedies: What steps have the jurisdiction and the fire department undertaken to deal with the exigency.
- Impact on the Community: Departments should provide information regarding response unit call volume and individual apparatus response time, impact on firefighter health and safety, and impact on the health and safety of the public.

Other waivers, including waivers for the maintenance of effort provisions, should be granted in accordance with these recommendations as well.

The authority to waive provisions limiting grants to the hiring of new firefighters under SAFER will require additional criteria, namely:

- Jurisdictions seeking waivers to bring employees back to duty should provide documentation of layoffs, including dates and the percentage of the department laid-off.
- Jurisdictions seeking waivers to reverse a reduction-in-force should provide documentation of the staffing complements at the time of application and the staffing complements prior to the RIF. Information on official policies within the past 12 months, such as a hiring freeze, that have impacted the ability of departments to hire or maintain positions should also be included.

The waiver criteria should be developed via the criteria-setting process as described under current law, through which the national fire service organizations currently determine criteria for awarding AFG and SAFER grants. Additionally, such criteria should be published in the *Federal Register* prior to making any grants, as is required for AFG and SAFER application and award guidelines under current law.

Q2. The proposal to raise the maximum allowable grant for the AFG program to $10 million would more than triple the current maximum. Why is such a large increase needed? If the cap were significantly increased, would departments be able to provide a 15 percent match? 20 percent?

A2. Current funding caps under AFG are too low to prove effective. Under current law, the largest jurisdictions, those of one million population or more, can receive no more than $2.75 million. All metropolitan areas in the United States of one million or more are professional departments, which means that, for example, the City of New York, with hundreds of fire stations and nearly fifteen thousand firefighters and emergency medical personnel, is limited to $2.75 million in FIRE grant awards. While we do know that very large departments are making relatively small purchases, such as the purchase of a new engine, through AFG, the current caps preclude such departments from making purchases that would measurably improve the fire department's preparedness and safety.

For example, a relatively inexpensive self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) costs approximately $2000. Under the current cap, a very large jurisdiction such as

New York City could only afford to purchase SCBA for 1,700 individuals. Raising the cap to $10 million for the largest jurisdictions would permit the city to purchase new equipment for a much larger percentage of the force, and consequently make a much larger impact on firefighter health and safety.

We anticipate that, in healthy economic times, most departments would be able to meet the 15 or 20 percent match for a large grant.

Q2a. Is the current structure of basing award sizes on jurisdictional population still appropriate today? If so, why?

A2a. Yes. Jurisdictions with larger populations require proportionately larger fire departments, which have proportionately larger equipment, vehicle and training needs.

Q3. In Chief Jeffrey Johnson's testimony, he offered the example of fire sprinklers as one area where a coordinated research program would be useful in improving public safety. What other types of large research questions would the Centers of Excellence address? How many Centers of Excellence are needed? How effectively is current fire research put into practice and how can this technology transfer be improved? Why would Centers of Excellence be more effective than simply increasing the amount of R&D funds available overall?

A3. There is a great and continuing need for additional fire service research. Considering the continued persistence of firefighter fatalities and injuries, there is an especially urgent need for research to support advances in firefighter health and safety. Some research areas which could be explored include research on how crew size impacts response time, injury data collection and analysis, and the impact of performance-based codes, to name a few.

Much of this research requires ongoing study for a longer period, and additional expense, than is currently permitted. Under current restrictions, Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grantees are limited to $1 million in funding over a period of up to three years. In addition to allowing long-term research through the Centers of Excellence, the Department should permit FP&S grantees to receive continuing funding for successful and necessary research.

Q4. In his testimony, Chief Jack Carriger of the National Volunteer Fire Council stated that between 2005 and 2007 applications for the Fire Prevention and Safety grants have dropped from $394 million to $191 million. What might account for this drop? What are the most effective activities in preventing fires and how can those activities be encouraged?

A4. The current recession is causing many jurisdictions to make cuts to their fire department budgets; as fire departments make do with less, fire prevention activities are among the first activities to decline. Under current law, fire department applicants for Fire Prevention and Safety grants are subject to the same cost-share requirements to which they are subject under the AFG program. It is possible that many potential applicants have declined to apply for a FP&S grant because they may not currently be able to afford the cost-share. Additionally, under current law, the combined awards through AFG and FP&S may not exceed statutorily-defined funding caps. Given this limitation, and combined with budgets which may preclude many departments from obtaining needed equipment, vehicles and training with local funds, many departments may choose to apply solely for funding under AFG.

Effective fire prevention strategies may vary widely among communities, depending on factors such as population density, infrastructure age, poverty rate and education level. Regardless of such factors, however, the most effective means to fire prevention and mitigation is ensuring that a community's fire department employs sufficient personnel at sufficiently located stations—consistent with NFPA standards. Well-staffed departments ensure sufficient time and personnel to conduct prevention activities including community education and smoke detector programs.

Additionally, as referenced in my answer to the previous question, FP&S grantees are not currently permitted to receive continuing funding in subsequent years for ongoing research. Lifting this restriction, and allowing grantees to receive continuing funding for successful and necessary research will both encourage applications as well as help advance novel fire prevention strategies.

ANSWERS TO POST-HEARING QUESTIONS

Responses by Chief Curt Varone, Division Manager, Public Fire Protection Division, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Questions submitted by Chairman David Wu

Q1. What criteria would NFPA recommend be used to waive the matching requirements for AFG and SAFER? Should the criteria be the same for waiving other program requirements? How should these criteria be developed?

A1. Although NFPA encourages the use of waivers to allow communities in which revenues fell five to ten percent or more to receive FIRE grants without matching fund requirements, the details of the waiver program criteria are best left to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). The criteria to prove financial hardship will differ from those associated with other program requirements.

Q2. The proposal to raise the maximum allowable grant for the AFG program to $10 million would more than triple the current maximum. Why is such a large increase needed? If the cap were significantly increased, would departments be able to afford the 15 percent match? 20 percent? Is the current structure of basing award sizes on jurisdictional population still appropriate today? If so, why?

A2. The proposed higher ceiling on allowable grant amount will permit larger cities to fully address some of their needs with a single grant.

For example, as part of a costing exercise for the Council on Foreign Relations, NFPA converted results of the first fire service needs assessment study into costs to prepare for hazmat and EMS services to deal with a chemical/biological agent attack, one of two homeland security reference incidents examined in the study. GAO studies estimated $1.3–$12.2 million (in dollars from the early 2000s, not adjusted for inflation) in equipment costs for a specialized response team for a city of 500,000 population. NFPA estimated additional costs for firefighters not involved in the specialized response team to safely deal with incidents before they are identified as chem/bio agent attacks. Those costs amounted to $30,800 per firefighter, and the median number of career firefighters for a city of 500,000 is 635, resulting in an additional $19.6 million. Training costs would be additional and significant.

This is just one example of a need that is high priority—both from the point of view of a city fire department and from the point of view of the homeland security of the United States—where the cost of filling the need would easily meet or exceed the new maximum grant ceiling.

Some departments would be able to afford a 15 percent or 20 percent match for a project of this size but could not afford the full cost themselves. The other departments would presumably apply for smaller, more affordable projects; there is no need for all or even most grants to come in at or near the cap.

And as this example illustrates, many projects have costs proportional to the number of firefighters, which tend to be proportional to the size of the civilian population protected. Therefore, basing award sizes on jurisdictional population makes good sense and will continue to make good sense.

Q3. What percentage of jurisdictions have enough qualified building and fire inspectors? In his testimony, Chief Jack Carriger of the National Volunteer Fire Council stated that between 2005 and 2007 applications for the Fire Prevention and Safety grants have dropped from $394 million to $191 million. What might account for this drop? What are the most effective activities in preventing fires and how can those activities be encouraged?

A3. According to the second fire service needs assessment, one-quarter of fire departments have no one to conduct fire code inspections. Less than half conduct fire code inspections using full-time fire department inspectors, building department inspectors, or inspectors from a separate inspection department, and even some of these departments assign part of their inspection workload to in-service firefighters.

In recent research projects, NFPA has been told by fire marshals from coast to coast that many communities are unable to provide annual fire code inspections to most of their properties subject to inspection because rising standards of certification for inspectors have forced them to discontinue use of in-service inspectors, thereby leaving them with too few inspectors to cover most of their properties. The use of FIRE grant program monies to provide training may improve this situation.

Based on these available facts, it seems clear that the answer to the question is that the percentage of jurisdictions with "enough" qualified building and fire inspectors is well below half. Clearly, the need is there and is still widespread. That does

not mean that every department with such a need will pursue any opportunity to fill that need immediately. Some departments may be unable to use the grant funds (e.g., inability to pay the matching portion; lack of available staff to supervise and execute the effective spending of grant funds) and some departments may see higher priority targets for grant funding.

There is a substantial literature on the evidence for effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of various fire prevention and fire loss prevention programs, much of it developed under the auspices of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through their Unintentional Injury programs. By far the most frequently cited effective program is distribution and installation of smoke alarms to needy homes (four to six million homes still have no smoke alarms). Smoke alarm distribution and installation programs have been at the center of the CDC's own grant programs and NFPA's outreach programs, whether funded by the government or by NFPA from its own funds.

Successful means of encouraging effective fire prevention activities is itself a type of program subject to evaluation. CDC is in the forefront of those sponsoring "translation research," in which researchers evaluate the relative effectiveness of different programs to apply interventions (e.g., smoke alarm installation) with proven effectiveness in a large and diverse group of additional sites. Fire prevention programs that involve technologies and products have been the subject of evaluations by the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Building and Fire Research Laboratory and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The USFA has also conducted evaluations of research, as have a number of private groups such as NFPA.

All of these agencies and organizations participate in a private, voluntary information exchange and coordination association called the Fire Safety Council, which was founded by CDC, CPSC, and the U.S. Fire Administration. This is only one of a number of existing or potential forums in which knowledge can be shared on how to encourage effective fire prevention activities. The House Committee on Science and Technology has jurisdiction over most if not all of these U.S. science agencies and could encourage continued close cooperation and information sharing, as well as continued and expanded use of this knowledge in grants decision-making.

Q4. In Chief Jeffrey Johnson's testimony, he offered the example of fire sprinklers as one where a coordinated research program would be useful in improving public safety. What other types of large research questions would Centers of Excellence address? How effectively is current fire research put into practice and how can this technology transfer be improved? Why would Centers of Excellence be more effective than simply increasing the amount of R&D funds available overall?

A4. A Center of Excellence offers the opportunity to assemble and maintain a critical mass of technical personnel empowered and directed to provide ongoing focus on an important set of problems. In the fire safety area, there are a number of existing agencies and organizations with commendable histories of contributions to fire safety research, but each arguably lacks at least one of the key elements that would be found in a Center of Excellence, including breadth of disciplines available to deal with all aspects of complex social-technological problems, depth of personnel needed for large and ambitious projects that can make transformational changes possible, and reliable long-term support needed to permit continuing focus.

Many of the agencies and organizations involved in fire safety research—for example, the NIST fire program, the Society of Fire Protection Engineers, and the NFPA Fire Protection Research Foundation—have conducted research prioritization workshops. Reviewing the results of these workshops leaves no doubt that there are an abundance of large research questions worthy of continuing focused attention, including:

- Materials with improved fire performance
- Technologies for detection, alarm or suppression (e.g., fire sprinklers, as cited by Chief Johnson)
- Improvements for higher reliability or lower cost
- Modifications for changing characteristics of society (e.g., an aging population) or relevance to more diverse populations (e.g., different cultures, different types of disability)
- Modifications for changing fire safety technologies to reflect changes in related technologies (e.g., battery-powered or hydrogen-powered automobiles)
- Improvements in scientific methods and related data to support design, engineering, review and evaluation in fire safety

- Improvements in ergonomic design, education for fire safety, design to accommodate patterns of human behavior, and engineering to provide better feedback to shape fire-safe behaviors (e.g., use of voice alarms to provide more information in emergencies, adding color to kerosene so it is not mistaken for water or gasoline)

Ideally, organizations and coalitions of organizations would be invited to propose Centers of Excellence, including a specification of the particular group of large research questions they would address and the capabilities of the proposed center with respect to such questions.

The flow of new research to revised product standards or regulations and to revised installation standards, primarily through voluntary consensus standards, seems to operate effectively. Each of the agencies and organizations cited above as having conducted research priority workshops and exercises has also studied ways to further improve technology transfer. The CDC translation research grants cited above have potential value as a technique to look systematically for ways to improve technology transfer.

The value of a Center for Excellence is its ability to successfully pursue large, ambitious, high-impact projects beyond the capabilities of existing entities. A Center for Excellence is a way to spend money more effectively in service to the nation's fire safety goals. It is not an alternative to an increase in the level of available funding but rather a different way of achieving maximum value from whatever funding level is provided.

Additionally, the effective translation of fire research into practice is impacted by a lack of inspectors. The American Housing Survey data indicate that roughly one-third of homes four years old or less had smoke alarms powered by battery only, although research has indicated the need for a more stable power source and most codes require hard-wired smoke alarms in new construction.

A separate challenge is the difficulty in getting newer, safer products in the hands of lower-income, higher risk populations who may not have the resources to buy new items. The poor may be more likely to have household items that predate the latest and safest standards. Their goods may also be at or beyond their useful life and consequently less reliable or safe. Programs similar to the cash for clunkers might help, e.g., trade in your old space heater for a major discount on one that is safer and more energy efficient.

Questions submitted by Representative Donna F. Edwards

Q1. Since the beginning of the 1990's, the number of people dying in fires each year has remained around 3,400. A disproportionate number of those people are poor and minority citizens. Why is this the case?

A1. The number of people dying in fires was 5,195 in 1990 and never fell below 4,000 until 1999. The fire death toll has only been around or below 3,400 in three years—2002, 2006, and 2007. (Figures have not been released yet for 2008.)

Regardless of the death toll, certain high-risk characteristics have been consistently identified, including very low or high age, socioeconomic deprivation (such as poverty and lack of education), use of certain substances (including cigarettes and alcohol), and race or ethnicity. Not all ethnic groups are high-risk; Asian Americans are statistically low risk and Hispanic Americans are of average risk. Blacks and American Indians have higher than average risk, but most studies have found that their higher statistical fire risk is largely a side effect of their correlated higher likelihood of socioeconomic deprivation. All or nearly all fire safety agencies and organizations devote resources to targeting high-risk groups and modifying effective programs to fit any special needs of high-risk groups.

Q2. What types of programs do the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants support to reduce the number of fatal fires? Can the circumstances that cause these fires be addressed with more education or is some other type of intervention needed?

A2. Fire prevention, broadly defined as prevention of fires or of serious losses from fires (such as deaths), can be accomplished in a number of ways—change products that function as heat sources, change the burning properties of materials and products commonly ignited in fires, change behaviors the lead to ignition or lead to worse outcomes when fires occur, better code enforcement, better detection and alarm, better suppression, better structural integrity and compartmentation, and so on. The Fire Prevention and Safety Grants can and have been devoted to programs along any of these lines. Any of these approaches *can* be effective or cost-effective; the question of whether the program *will* be effective or cost-effective depends on specifics and is best assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Public education has proven to be a useful fire prevention strategy. There are occasions, however, when we know what we should do and do something else instead or never get around to taking the positive steps we know we should take. The technologies that help save us from ourselves such as automatic shutoffs on coffee makers and irons can prevent tragic outcomes from predictable errors.

The leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries is cooking. A typical scenario involves unattended frying. There are products on the market that can prevent a stovetop from getting hot enough to ignite cooking oil or that will shut off the stove if motion is not detected within a certain period of time. Additional research is needed to ascertain consumer acceptance, reliability and effectiveness of these products before there is a mandate for their use. Even people who don't plan to leave cooking unattended may be distracted by a phone call, news story, etc. The discussions on texting while driving strongly suggest that people often violate their own sense of safe behavior. Effective fire prevention strategies include an understanding of the behavioral aspects as well as educational solutions.

Few fire problems need a particular type of intervention. Education is always an option. Engineering is not always an option, and when used, an engineering solution will often work better when reinforced with education in safe product use.

Thank you for the opportunity to address these questions. If you would like additional information or clarification in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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