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**Congress of the United States**  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0306

March 7, 2024

The Honorable Deanne Criswell  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Criswell:

I write regarding City of Benson Fire Department's (BFD) regional application for a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant under the Assistance to Firefighters grant program. BFD is applying jointly with neighboring fire agencies, including Mescal J-6 Fire District, Pomerene Fire District, and Saint David Fire District. Together, these districts represent the only fire and emergency medical services available to some of the most rural areas of my district in northern Cochise County. These agencies are either full volunteer, paid per call, or a combination of both, exemplifying the essence of service. Their commitment, sacrifice, and dedication to their community is held with the utmost appreciation, and I am proud to furnish a letter on their behalf.

Funding would allow these combination volunteer departments to purchase 66 new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatuses (SCBAs) and seven Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) packs, with the goal of improving safety standards for firefighters and emergency response units in the field. Newer generation SCBAs are lighter and smaller, increase first responders' mobility, reduce fatigue, and enable firefighters to work more easily in confined spaces, along with providing breathable air in the fire environment. The RIT packs would be used for firefighter rescues in hazardous environments, compatible with the proposed SCBAs. This proposal seeks to improve firefighter safety by replacing obsolete breathing equipment with newer equipment that complies with the National Fire Protection Association standards.

These four agencies serve a year-round population of approximately 11,000 residents. Seasonal visitors in winter months increase the population to approximately 17,000. Within their jurisdictions, the applicants have the responsibility of responding to incidents along Interstate 10, the Union Pacific Railroad, natural gas and petroleum pipelines, and electrical transmission lines. Along with these critical infrastructures, their response area borders a large wildland-urban interface, including state and federal lands. Through mutual aid and other initiatives, agencies in such rural areas frequently collaborate and share resources.

I commend these fire agencies for their vision to improve firefighter safety while serving their community, often in a volunteer capacity. As you make this important funding decision, I respectfully ask that you give Benson Fire Department's regional proposal full and fair consideration under all applicable rules and laws. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juan Ciscomani', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Juan Ciscomani  
Member of Congress