United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 9, 2003

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Ridge,

We are writing to express our deep disappointment over your Department's decision to exclude the Detroit metropolitan area from the first round of Fiscal Year 2003 grants for large urban areas to prepare for and respond to threats or incidents of terrorism.

As you may know, not only is the Detroit metropolitan area the eighth largest in the country it is also home to the largest U.S.-Canadian border crossing in the nation. More than 40 percent of all U.S.-Canada trade passes through Michigan/Ontario borders. The Ambassador Bridge is the busiest border crossing in North America with approximately 13 million crossings a year and the Detroit-Windsor tunnel is the busiest passenger vehicle tunnel on the northern border with roughly nine million crossings annually. In addition, these two border crossings were so backed up soon after September 11th, that Federal officials asked local law enforcement from Southeast Michigan to help staff these checkpoints, without reimbursing them.

In addition to the sheer volume of immigration and commercial traffic, the Administration has viewed the Detroit metropolitan area as a possible haven for terrorists. In fact, the FBI and the U.S. Attorney took extraordinary measures since September 11th to interview hundreds of people in the Detroit metropolitan areas because of potential ties to terrorist organizations or terrorists.

Given all of this, your Department's decision not to include Detroit in this initial round of funding appears to be a significant mistake. Southeastern Michigan cannot meet its homeland security duties without a true partnership from the Federal government. And several of the other cities included in the first round of grants have not been cited as potential terrorist targets and are not located near an international border crossing.

We hope you will consider revisiting this decision.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow



Carl Levin