

Iowa Delegation Presses for Additional Resources for Byrne/JAG and COPS Programs

The Iowa Congressional delegation is working to secure additional funds for Iowa law enforcement from the Byrne/JAG and COPS programs. The delegation asked Attorney General Michael Mukasey to give priority consideration to applications for Byrne/JAG and COPS grants from the state and local law enforcement agencies hit by the floods.

WASHINGTON - The Iowa Congressional delegation is working to secure additional funds for Iowa law enforcement from the Byrne/JAG and COPS programs. The delegation asked Attorney General Michael Mukasey to give priority consideration to applications for Byrne/JAG and COPS grants from the state and local law enforcement agencies hit by the floods.

"This is a preliminary step to make sure that Iowa law enforcement impacted by the floods isn't disadvantaged in the application process," Grassley said. "Byrne and COPS grants are a vital lifeline for law enforcement and in these extreme times we need special consideration of Iowa applications given the extent of the damage and the extra resources needed."

"Our first responders and law enforcement personnel have implemented smart, forceful and strategic methods to deal with this historic disaster in our state," said Harkin. "I urge the Administration to act now so that Iowa's law enforcement have the resources they need to keep our state safe during this crisis."

"Our local law enforcement agencies in Iowa are working the front lines, and while, they are doing a great job, they will need priority consideration with Byrne/JAG funding," said Boswell.

"Throughout the state, local law enforcement and first responders have been critical in ensuring public safety during these floods, I want to thank them for their selfless dedication to protecting the people of Iowa," said Loebsack. "We must ensure that every resource necessary is available for the men and women who so proudly protect our communities, schools, and families as we begin to recover and rebuild from this disaster."

"As I've visited eastern Iowa communities impacted by the Floods of 2008, I've seen firsthand how the disaster has impacted first responders' facilities and equipment. We need to make sure law enforcement has the resources they need to get the job done," Braley said.

"Law enforcement agencies need to be able to deal with all threats to the safety and security of our citizens," said Latham. "When that threat is a natural disaster, such as the recent flood, law enforcement agencies are often overwhelmed. We must make sure they have the resources available to address this threat head-on in the coming weeks."

"Throughout this disastrous flood, Iowa's law enforcement personnel never hesitated to respond above and beyond their duty. And Iowans' respect for the Rule of Law has never wavered through these times. Our state and local law enforcement should have the full support of the federal government. I support Byrne/JAG and COPS grants and they are an excellent way for the federal government to respond to these unprecedented floods," King said.

Here is a copy of the text of the letter signed by Senators Chuck Grassley and Tom Harkin and Representatives Tom Latham, Leonard Boswell, Steve King, Bruce Braley and Dave Loebsack.

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June 18, 2008

Via Electronic Transmission

Original via USPS Mail

The Honorable Michael B. Mukasey

Attorney General

United States Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20535

Dear Attorney General Mukasey:

As members of the Congressional delegation representing the state of Iowa, we request your assistance in ensuring that resources are available for state and local law enforcement in Iowa as part of a Federal response to the recent catastrophic floods. These recent floods have caused massive destruction and devastation across Iowa and the President has declared over 30 counties eligible for Federal disaster assistance. With flood waters continuing to rise along the Mississippi River and communities in Southern Iowa, it is possible that more could be added to that list in the future.

The historic flooding across Iowa has caused tremendous damage to both state and local infrastructure, including law enforcement agencies. Despite these losses, the response from first responders and law enforcement has been exceptional. However, because of the sheer magnitude of this disaster, law enforcement resources are being stretched and it is yet unclear what final damage to law enforcement infrastructure, such as police stations, jails, and communications networks has occurred or will occur.

Accordingly, we ask that the Office of Justice Programs-which oversees the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne/JAG)-and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office-which oversees COPS grants-provide priority consideration to state and local law enforcement applications from partner agencies affected by the recent floods. Because the FY2008 grant award deadlines are fast approaching, we also request special consideration for applications which may be delayed or require amendment to incorporate new requests to replace lost or damaged equipment due to the floods. Furthermore, should additional congressional appropriations for the Byrne/JAG program be made in the FY2008 Supplemental Appropriations bill, we request that priority be given to any flood affected law enforcement agency applying from Iowa.

As you are aware, both the COPS program and the Byrne/JAG program provide vital assistance to state and local law enforcement partners by way of federal grants. These grants are a vital lifeline for state and local law enforcement and provide funding for everything from communications equipment, computers, law enforcement equipment and vehicles, as well as funding for multi-jurisdiction task forces. While we understand that funding for the Byrne/JAG program was reduced in FY2008, it is our hope that the Department of Justice will take all steps available to see that applications for assistance to affected Iowa communities are receiving priority consideration.

In closing, we thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter and would appreciate any assistance that can be provided to Iowa law enforcement agencies impacted by the floods.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley

Tom Harkin

Bruce Braley

Dave Loebsack

Tom Latham

Leonard Boswell

Steve King