Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

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 shear 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
United States Senator

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Bruce Braley
United States Representative

Dave Loebsack
United States Representative

Tom Latham
United States Representative

Leonard Boswell
United States Representative

Steve King
United States Representative