



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0523

April 23, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

I write in strong support of the application submitted by the Porterville Fire Department (PFD) for \$1,527,287.64 in funding from the Department of Homeland Security's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program. With SAFER grant funding, PFD will hire six additional full-time firefighters to address deficient staffing levels and enhance current response capabilities.

Located in the San Joaquin Valley, the City of Porterville spans 18 square miles and has a population of nearly 60,000 residents. PFD consists of 42 career and 11 volunteer firefighters and is responsible for staffing three fire stations with two engine companies, one truck company, one patrol unit, and one battalion chief. During 2020, PFD responded to 4,630 incidents, including 235 fires and 2,701 rescue and emergency medical service incidents, as well as 40 mutual aid requests and 66 automatic aid requests from surrounding fire departments.

Unfortunately, on February 18, 2020, two PFD firefighters died in the line of duty when responding to a fire at the Porterville City Library. Following this tragic incident, PFD commissioned a Serious Accident Review Team (SART) to report on the events that led up to the line of duty deaths, evaluate any deficiencies within the PFD, and issue key recommendations. The SART report was released on April 9, 2021 and concluded that PFD did not meet the minimum staffing levels outlined by the National Fire Protection Association 1710 standard. Further, the report recommends PFD increase minimum staffing levels to effectively and safely respond to the community's growing needs.¹

If awarded SAFER grant funding, PFD will hire six additional firefighters, ensuring that the department can staff at least three personnel with the first response engine, complying with NFPA 1710. The six new firefighter positions will provide two additional personnel per shift, allowing PFD to increase engine company staffing to three and the ladder company to four. In addition, the minimum daily staffing level will increase from 11 personnel to 13. Lastly, the City of Porterville will support PFD to continue funding the six additional firefighter positions upon conclusion of the grant performance period.

¹ <http://www.ci.porterville.ca.us/depts/Fire/documents/PFD-SART-Report.pdf>

Again, I strongly support this request of \$1,527,287.64 in grant funding submitted by the PFD to improve both the safety of my constituent firefighters and their ability to serve and protect the residents of Porterville and the surrounding areas. It is my understanding that PFD's grant application encompasses the intent of the SAFER program: to improve local fire department staffing and deployment capabilities to more effectively respond to emergencies. I respectfully ask for your thorough review and consideration of this application.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



KEVIN McCARTHY
House Republican Leader