



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

Providing leadership for the fire and emergency services since 1873

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March 18, 2009

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano,

With every change in Administration, the opportunity presents itself for stakeholders to give feedback and input to the incoming decision-makers regarding positions of importance to them in the federal government. We, the 1,550 members of the Fire and Life Safety Section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), are pleased to have the opportunity to provide such input.

The main focus of our group of fire service leaders is public education and advocacy for fire prevention, and thus, we are writing to you today to encourage you, when making your choice for the U.S. Fire Administrator, to take a hard look at each candidate's record to ensure that he or she has been a strong proponent of both throughout his or her career.

In 2006, property loss alone due to fire in the U.S. totaled \$13.6 billion dollars, as reported by the National Fire Protection Association. An even more shocking statistic for that year is the estimated monetary equivalent for the deaths and injuries due to fire, totaling \$43.1 billion. Based on these stark and tragic numbers, we cannot stress enough that fire prevention and public education must always remain at the top of the U.S. Fire Administrator's focus, mission and responsibilities.

We know that the IAFC has submitted the names of several highly-qualified individuals for your consideration and we know that any one of them will fulfill our expectations and desire to have a strong voice for public education and fire prevention. We fully trust that President Obama and you will select the candidate who is best qualified to serve the American people during the next four years, and we assure you that the members of the Fire & Life Safety Section of the IAFC stand ready and willing to work hand-in-hand with the incoming Fire Administrator.

Sincerely,

Chief Thomas J. Lariviere
Chair, Fire & Life Safety Section
International Association of Fire Chiefs