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U.S. SENATE CLIMATE CHANGE CLEARING HOUSE

## United States Senate

October 9, 2014

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The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
S-221 United States Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
S-230 United States Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20150

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-146A United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Republican Leader McConnell, Chairwoman Mikulski, and Ranking Member Shelby:

In light of the ongoing Ebola crisis in West Africa, and its effects on the public health and national security of the United States, I believe it is critical for Congress to enact an Omnibus Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2015 which includes robust funding and flexibility for appropriate federal agencies to swiftly and effectively respond to this international health emergency.

As Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Assistance, Economic Affairs, International Environmental Protection, and Peace Corps, I am well aware of the potential threats to both public health and national security posed by infectious diseases and the importance of an immediate, coordinated, comprehensive and sustained response to combat those threats. It is imperative that the involved federal agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Defense and State Department, have adequate and predictable funding to support their current efforts and additional efforts that may be necessary as the full implications of this crisis are revealed.

As you know, the current Continuing Resolution includes \$88 million (\$30 million for the CDC and \$58 million for the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA)) in emergency funding to enable our nation's response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. I am concerned, however, that funding to the multiple federal agencies involved in the Ebola response could be interrupted when the Continuing Resolution expires on December 11, 2014. Disturbing the ongoing efforts in West Africa and surveillance efforts in the United States

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could have devastating and long-term public health and security implications. The most effective way to deal with this is to complete and pass an omnibus appropriations package in December that provides adequate funding and allows for a comprehensive, integrated and complete U.S. government response.

Unfortunately, we have seen what can happen when a continuing resolution expires and Congress fails to enact appropriations to keep the federal government funded and operating. Last October, after the operating continuing resolution ended and during the government shutdown, the CDC had a significantly reduced capacity in activities related to outbreak investigations and was unable to support state and local partners for infectious disease surveillance.<sup>1</sup> In the event of a government shutdown, it is also likely that the NIH would be forced to halt its work related to the development of Ebola medications and vaccines. If these sort of critical government functions are interrupted, diminished or reduced amid the current Ebola crisis, the impacts will be felt worldwide.

I believe an Omnibus Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2015 would be the most effective and responsible means of providing adequate and predictable funding to the multiple agencies involved in the Ebola response. Ensuring that the United States continues to mount a robust, coordinated and sustained response to the Ebola crisis is essential to containing this epidemic and reducing the health risks to American citizens.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
Edward J. Markey

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<sup>1</sup> Contingency Staffing Plan for Operations in the Absence of Enacted Annual Appropriations, Department of Health and Human Services, Fiscal Year 2014. Retrieved from [http://www.hhs.gov/budget/fy2014/fy2014contingency\\_staffing\\_plan-rev2.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/budget/fy2014/fy2014contingency_staffing_plan-rev2.pdf).