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May 3, 2006

Secretary Michael Chertoff
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Honorable Michael Chertoff:

As you know, the Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security Subcommittee held a April 10th field hearing in New Orleans entitled "Katrina and Contracting: Blue Roof, Debris Removal, Travel Trailer Case Studies." The Department of Homeland Security was represented by Tina Burnette, Deputy Director of Acquisitions for Katrina. I appreciate your cooperation with the hearing as we discussed serious problems regarding how the Department of Homeland Security is managing the over \$100 billion appropriated for the Gulf Coast recovery.

Ms. Burnette was on the first panel of the hearing. After she delivered her testimony and answered the questions during the first panel's deliberations, I was disappointed to see Ms. Burnette leave before the second panel was heard. During this second panel, the subcommittee heard testimony from local elected leaders, local industry experts, and a government auditor. This was a missed opportunity for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to receive direct feedback from local officials. As you know, the Department of Homeland Security has come under tremendous scrutiny. Listening to the concerns of local players who are on the front lines of questionable policy decisions made in Washington, D.C. can only help the Department better serve the Gulf Coast recovery process.

In the future, I would appreciate your help in ensuring that Department witnesses fully participate at the hearings in which they appear.

Sincerely,



Tom Coburn
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Financial
Management, Government Information, and
International Security