



United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Chairman Joseph I. Lieberman, ID-Conn.

**Nomination of Gregory B. Cade
to be Administrator of the United States Fire Administration
Senator Joseph I. Lieberman
March 15, 2007**

Good morning. Today we are considering the nomination of Gregory Cade to be Administrator of the U.S. Fire Administration. Welcome to you, Chief Cade. If confirmed, you will head an important, if perhaps not widely known, office at the Department of Homeland Security – the U.S. Fire Administration.

The Fire Administration provides federal leadership and support for the nation's fire fighters – good, able, courageous men and women across the country who represent the best public service has to offer. The Fire Administration promotes fire prevention and, in particular, works to reduce the loss of life from fires – including the tragic loss of life of firefighters, 105 of whom perished in the line of duty last year.

Through the National Fire Academy, USFA provides a wide range of training opportunities for firefighters and emergency medical services providers, from handling hazardous materials to implementing an Incident Command System. And, from its position within DHS, it helps ensure that fire fighters are integrated into the plans and preparedness to respond to disasters, whether natural or man-made.

Last year Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, which created a newly expanded, hopefully reinvigorated FEMA. As you know, under that Act, at the end of this month USFA will once again become a part of FEMA – as it was from 1979 through 2005. I look forward to your thoughts about how you see USFA fitting in with the new FEMA, and about the role USFA should play in improving national preparedness and response efforts. The fire services have critical disaster response experience – demonstrated for the world to see on September 11, 2001, but also demonstrated, for example, during the massive and highly coordinated response to the wildfires that periodically afflict the Western United States and elsewhere. This experience can serve as an important resource for the new FEMA.

I am also interested in hearing from you about the cuts in federal funding for the fire service. Once again, the Administration has proposed cuts in FIRE Act grants to first responders. This year, the President's budget would cut FIRE grants by an alarming 54 percent. I don't know how we can expect you who protect our homes and neighborhoods against fires and other emergencies – including large scale disasters - to continue the essential work you do without the proper equipment and the training you need. I would like to hear how you will advocate for the interests of those on the front lines who depend on those resources.

Finally, I want to hear your ideas about interoperability – specifically what can we do to ensure fire fighters have the tools they need not only to communicate among themselves in a disaster but to communicate with other first responders as well as state and local officials who may be involved in the response.

Chief Cade, you bring to this position more than three decades of experience in the fire service, including more than eight years as Chief of the Virginia Beach Fire Department and as that city's Emergency Services Coordinator. If you are confirmed, I will count on you to use that experience to make the U.S. Fire Administration a truly great resource for our firefighters and for our nation.

Thank you. Senator Collins.

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