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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

March 13, 2003

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

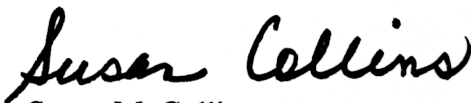
We are writing to express our support for efforts to reach beyond the Washington Beltway as you procure information, technology, and other resources for the Department. At the same time, we support ensuring that scarce homeland security tax dollars are used most effectively.

We understand that the Department is not accepting solicitations for products and services at this time, and that the best way to propose use of a product or service is to contact the appropriate affiliated agency. As you begin the process of coordinating the cost-effective procurement and integration of key systems, such as those related to information management and research and development, we urge you to take steps to utilize all our nation's resources, especially those outside of the Washington Beltway. A diverse procurement program will promote competition, strengthen local economies, and ensure that the new Department receives the best America has to offer.

We also support ensuring that scarce homeland security tax dollars are used effectively. To that end, we offer our help in making sure that the Department implements significant safeguards against fraud, waste, and abuse in the procurement process. Given the current budget situation and the importance of homeland security funding, we must take every possible step to ensure that homeland security dollars are used effectively.

With respect and appreciation, we look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
Chairman



Joseph I. Lieberman
Ranking Member