Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 26, 2009

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
Office of the Secretary of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Gates:

We would like to commend the Army for their hard work in developing and fielding the Third Generation Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (GEN III ECWCS) for our soldiers. This system continues to play an essential role in ensuring the safety and health of our troops while bolstering their mission readiness and range of capabilities. For this reason, we are concerned by the lack of a clear funding path in the upcoming Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 budget.

We understand that the future requirement for GEN III ECWCS is currently being staffed as part of an update to the Core Soldier System CPD and appreciate your work to establish a formal requirement for this critical mission readiness gear. We are also pleased that the Army is in the process of developing fielding and sustainment processes for GEN III ECWCS that will be integrated into the Equipping and Sustainment Program Objective Memorandum requests for Fiscal Years 2012 and beyond.

However, there is no funding stream plan for FY 2011. Notably, all past and current funding for GEN III ECWCS have come through Supplemental budgets and we are very concerned that the Army will face a significant shortfall in GEN III ECWCS program funding if future supplemental funding legislation does not materialize. This condition creates deep uncertainty in an extremely delicate domestic textile supply chain. Without a known funding stream, the supply lines will close and restarting them will be costly and difficult, negatively impacting our nation's ability to properly equip our soldiers.

In an effort to ensure the continued and timely availability of GEN III ECWCS for our soldiers, we respectfully request that $256 million be allocated within the Army's FY 2011 baseline budget to fully fund GEN III ECWCS. In the past, the Army has expressed their intent to incorporate the program into the annual base budget. Fulfilling that commitment in the upcoming fiscal year is essential to ensure the future sustainability of the system for our nation's soldiers.

We sincerely appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to working with the Army to ensure the continued availability of this vital system for our men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,

Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

Mike Rogers
Member of Congress

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

OSD 12336-09

Paul Hodes
Member of Congress

Gabrielle Giffords
Member of Congress

Glenn Nye
Member of Congress

Mark Schauer
Member of Congress

Michael Capuano
Member of Congress

Bob Inglis
Member of Congress

Stephen Lynch
Member of Congress

Michael Turner
Member of Congress

Edward Markey
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress

Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress

Heath Shuler
Member of Congress

James McGovern
Member of Congress

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

Patrick Kennedy
Member of Congress

William Delahunt
Member of Congress

James Langevin
Member of Congress

Chet Edwards
Member of Congress