

**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.

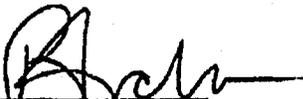
Sincerely,

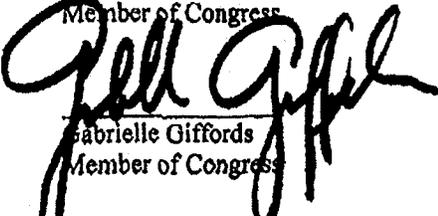
  
Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress

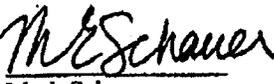
  
Mike Rogers  
Member of Congress

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

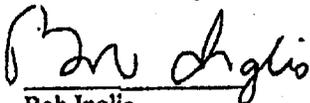


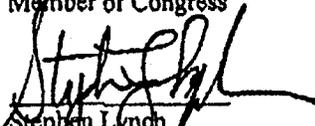
  
Paul Hodes  
Member of Congress

  
Gabrielle Giffords  
Member of Congress

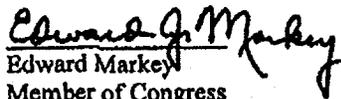
  
Mark Schauer  
Member of Congress

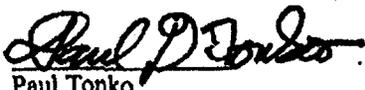
  
Michael Capuano  
Member of Congress

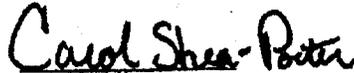
  
Bob Inglis  
Member of Congress

  
Stephen Lynch  
Member of Congress

  
Michael Turner  
Member of Congress

  
Edward Markey  
Member of Congress

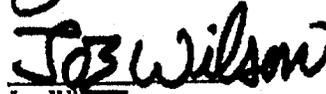
  
Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress

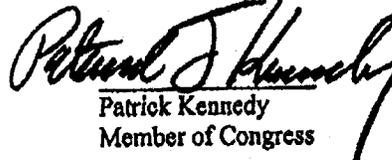
  
Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress

  
Marsha Blackburn  
Member of Congress

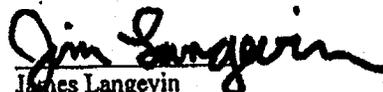
  
Heath Shuler  
Member of Congress

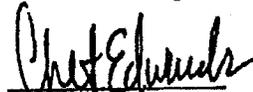
  
James McGovern  
Member of Congress

  
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