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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515–3222

March 3, 2009

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CAPT Tom Carney
Director, Navy Appropriations Matters Office (FMBE)
1000 Navy Pentagon (4C355)
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

Dear Captain Carney:

I am requesting an update on the status of tent and shelter funding included in the Marine Corp budget in the Fiscal Year 2009 Department of Defense appropriations bill (P.L. 110-329). Specifically, I request the current status and the plans for placing orders with the $1,600,000 designated for "Rapid Deployable Shelters (RDS) or Modular General Purpose Tent System (MGPTS) III" in the Operations and Maintenance section of the Marine Corps budget.

My intention with requesting these funds during the appropriations process was to assist the Marine Corps in meeting current need for the RDS or MGPTS Type III tent systems. There is an identified need at individual bases for RDS systems and recently Marine Corps Systems Command announced a need of 9,000 general purpose medium shelters to TentNet participants. Unfortunately, while a clear need for tents and shelters has been identified, the Marine-wide solicitation process continues to face delays.

The companies that make these tents and shelters, including Johnson Outdoor Gear, which is located in the district I represent, are deeply impacted by the inconsistent and unpredictable funding process. The lack of consistent funding has already led to layoffs in the district I represent and may lead to the shutting down of highly-skilled production lines, which would be costly for both business and government. The tent and shelter industry employs a highly-skilled workforce and the start-up time to rebuild and train a new production line is costly, as is the process of reestablishing the supply chain to meet production needs when orders are finally placed.

It is critical that $1,600,000 is used in the current fiscal year. If identified orders for tents and shelters are left unfilled it will further jeopardize critical jobs and substantial economic benefits to local economies like Binghamton, New York. I stand behind the need to provide our Armed Forces with tents and shelters that are critical to our military operations and national defense objectives and ask that you work with me to ensure they are provided as needed.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to call upon me for further information.

Sincerely,

Maurice D. Hinchey

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