

THE  
NEW ENGLAND  
COUNCIL

January 30, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the New England Council, I am contacting you to urge your support for additional appropriations added last night to the Joint Funding Resolution for a number of New England priorities and to ask that you strongly consider additional funding for a number of other priorities that are important to the New England region as you and your colleagues move to finalize FY 2007 appropriations.

With a final decision coming soon on components of the Joint Funding Resolution to fund the federal government for the remainder of FY 2007, the Council thought it appropriate to take this opportunity to remind you of several programs that are particularly important to the New England region and that are in critical need of additional funding in the current fiscal year. Under the plan outlined by the Appropriations Committee Chairmen last night, we were pleased to note that some of these programs are due to receive additional funding:

***National Institutes of Health***

Since New England's economy gains strength from the healthcare and higher education sectors, the region is especially sensitive to the level of NIH funding. Each New England state had at least one institution recently ranked in the NIH's top 100 funded institutions. Level funding of NIH over the last several years has required New England institutions to cut back their research programs – setting back research efforts significantly and affecting high-skilled jobs that are the lifeblood of the region's economy. We are pleased that the Funding Resolution calls for an additional \$619.5 million for the NIH in FY 2007.

***Amtrak***

Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, the high-speed line that connects Boston to other central economic hubs like New York and Washington, is the most heavily traveled rail corridor in the nation and serves to attract employees and businesses, which in turn bring investment and growth to the region. Unfortunately, the system has been consistently plagued with structural deficiencies and underfunding, with some of the most significant infrastructure needs in New England. Under the terms of the Funding Resolution, additional funding is restored so that Amtrak will not receive a cut in funding from FY 2006 that would have put critical infrastructure repair projects on hold.

***LIHEAP***

As you know, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is especially important for providing home heating assistance in New England, where we have more heating degree days than other parts of the country yet have almost no natural energy resources of our

own. As such, New Englanders face significantly higher home heating costs than those in other parts of the country, especially for home heating oil and natural gas. The Council urges additional funding for LIHEAP, as its appropriations level has not kept up with inflation over the years.

### ***SCHIP***

At a time when one of our nation's greatest challenges is providing affordable healthcare for more of its citizens, one of the great success stories in providing health coverage to millions of American children – the SCHIP program – is facing funding shortfalls in three out of six New England states over the next few months. An infusion of new funding would allow this program to continue to provide coverage for a large number of our region's children through the end of the fiscal year.

### ***Community Health Centers***

Another program on the front line of providing healthcare to some of our citizens most in need, community health centers are increasingly found nationwide, but they were originally concentrated in the Northeast and enjoy widespread support from throughout our region's healthcare community for their role in serving the underinsured and in helping keep healthcare costs and ER visits down. These crucially important facilities can ill afford static funding at a time when healthcare inflation threatens their ability to fulfill their mission. A much-needed \$206.9 million increase for community health centers is included in the Funding Resolution, including \$25 million in additional funding for existing health centers.

### ***Competitiveness***

The New England Council shares the concerns of so many about the ability of the United States to compete globally, and our concerns are even more pressing in New England, home of some of the world's leading innovators. More investment is needed at the federal level to support efforts to improve the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education pipeline. Federal funding of departments and institutions that contribute significantly to the advancements of research and development and to the New England region's innovation economy is also critical. We are pleased that both the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy's Office of Science are both scheduled to receive additional funding in the Joint Funding Resolution.

Once again, as final decisions are made on FY 2007 appropriations, I urge your support for programs that are especially important to the New England region. As always, if you have questions or concerns, or if I can be of assistance on this or any other issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very Truly Yours,

James T. Brett  
President & CEO