

July 27, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C., 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Vice Chairman Shelby:

The Appropriations Committee has a storied history of bipartisanship, and I appreciate the manner in which we have maintained that tradition under your distinguished leadership. My predecessor Senator Robert C. Byrd, a Democrat from West Virginia, worked closely with Senator Ted Stevens, a Republican from Alaska, for the benefit of their states and the country as a whole, setting aside petty party differences in order to ensure the viability of the federal government and the people it serves. I have always shared that deep sense of responsibility, and I strongly believe that we work better when we work together.

Unfortunately, I write to you today to express my deep disappointment that the Committee is in jeopardy of deviating from that bipartisan tradition in the Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) process this year. Specifically, I am regretful that we have not found a reasonable path forward to honor the request that I submitted on behalf of the Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority (KCEAA) for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) appropriations bill. I write to you today to clarify my intent with that request and resolve any underlying questions regarding my strong support for KCEAA.

This year, I received a request from KCEAA, a nonprofit organization created by the Kanawha County Commission to provide emergency ambulance service to the citizens of Kanawha County, for funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Community Facilities grant program. KCEAA performs this mission exceptionally well, and was a particularly invaluable partner during the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many organizations in rural America, KCEAA needs financial help to reach its goals. Specifically, KCEAA approached my office with a proposal to build four designated stations across Kanawha County in the communities of South Charleston, St. Albans, Marmet, and Dunbar through USDA's Community Facilities grant program. Due to the vast coverage area and terrain issues in my state, these stations are absolutely necessary to provide adequate response times to West Virginians in need. In keeping with my constituents' request, I submitted the request for funding for all four stations to the Agriculture, Rural Development, and FDA Subcommittee.

Prior to submitting this request, my staff followed the guidance of the Agriculture, Rural Development, and FDA Subcommittee, which explicitly states, "In order to determine whether a

project is eligible, your office or the applicant is required reach out to your state RD office.” My staff reached out to the West Virginia Rural Development office on April 28, 2022, again submitting the request for all four stations for their consideration. Unfortunately, we received guidance from our State Office that only the Marmet station was eligible for USDA funding. In order to comply with subcommittee guidance, my staff subsequently refocused the official request on the Marmet station but made clear that I was – and continue to be – requesting funding for all four stations. Specifically, the justification in the formal request submitted to the Committee states:

“KCEAA currently has 12 designated areas for stations, including four areas that need a permanent station established: South Charleston, St. Albans, Marmet, and Dunbar. Due to the needs for permanent stations in these areas, KCEAA has already begun to develop the Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority Station Project and just need financial help to complete it.”

Unfortunately, despite the clear, written record of my desire to secure funding for all four stations, I have been informed that my CDS request for funding for these four stations is now invalid. I am both surprised and disappointed that the Committee seems to have adopted a policy that undercuts the foundational trust and collegiality that has always been a hallmark of the annual appropriations process. Therefore, to ensure my constituents get the representation they deserve this fiscal year, I will amend my official request on my website to make it explicitly clear that I formally requested and continue to support funding for all four stations in Kanawha County.

I appreciate your distinguished leadership, and I look forward to working with you throughout the FY23 appropriations process. If you have questions regarding this or any of my other requests, please contact Seth Gainer on my staff at (202) 228-6688.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator