

C. Michael Sobol, Alderman
48 Blue Ridge Assembly Drive
Black Mountain, NC 28711
828-669-2017
fivesobol@bellsouth.net

Catherine Patterson
Program Director AFG
DHS/FEMA
800 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20472-3620

Dear Ms. Patterson:

First, I and lots of others in our town, wish to thank you for NOT awarding us the safer grant last year!! I have enclosed a copy of the letter I wrote last year outlining many of the reasons why we did not wish to receive the grant and this position is still the same and has even more support of the town's citizens. We encourage you to bestow this on a community who needs and can afford the tax increase that is necessary to pay for these 6 new firemen. Our citizens have already had a tax increase of over 10% this past year- without the grant- and if you award this grant, we will be looking at another tax increase in these hard times.

We are very proud of our fire department!!! We have and will continue to provide them with the best equipment and support systems. That is why I support our volunteers and wish to include in our upcoming budget \$30,000.00 to \$40,000.00- if we do not get this grant- to help pay these brave volunteers for the fuel they use and a good stipend for each training session attended as well as each call they respond to. This has been for years the base of our fire department!! This is the foundation of the Black Mountain Volunteer Fire Department and we need to expand that support!!!

With the economy in such disarray and other towns laying off city workers, including firemen, our best and safest approach is to not only attract more volunteers but retain them. In the event we would have to layoff firemen, we would have well trained and competent volunteers to step up and keep us safe.

Last, we have had very little growth in the past year and do not anticipate much for the next 5 years. There has been an increase in call volume, but only a slight increase in fire related response calls. Even with the increase in call volume, when you break it down into calls per day, it is only about 5 calls per day- not very high!!

Thank you for your time and please let the committee see this letter.

Sincerely yours,

C. Michael Sobol

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March 1, 2010

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