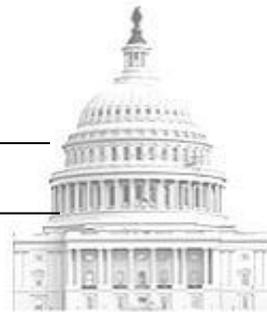




INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA – UAW



DENNIS WILLIAMS, President GARY CASTEEL, Secretary-Treasurer

VICE PRESIDENTS: CINDY ESTRADA • JIMMY SETTLES • NORWOOD JEWELL

March 14, 2016

IN REPLY REFER TO
1757 N STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
TELEPHONE: (202) 828-8500
FAX (202) 293-3457

Dear Senator:

In Flint, Michigan and throughout the nation, there has been justifiable outrage over the decisions made by state elected and appointed officials in the handling of the water crisis. These individuals put cost savings ahead of the health of the residents and ignored Flint's duly elected local representatives. For the UAW, this man-made, preventable catastrophe hits home, as many of the victims are our active members and retirees. Thousands have been poisoned and several deaths are suspected due to extended and excessive exposure to contaminated toxic water. The full impact will not be known for decades and the effects will plague the children of Flint for generations to come. To make matters worse, Congress and the State of Michigan have failed to tackle the crisis by refusing to fix the infrastructure so that residents could have safe water, or help the victims get the aid they need.

I am deeply disappointed that the Senate has reportedly chosen to end the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) program to pay for the Flint emergency aid package. The bipartisan ATVM program was signed into law by President Bush and helped create or save over 35,000 jobs at facilities in nine states. The real impact is much greater, as the Center for Automotive Research estimates that every assembly plant job supports 9 to 12 others at suppliers in the surrounding community. The economic impact of the industry extends far beyond the plant where the motor vehicle is physically assembled. Automakers, suppliers, dealerships, and the local businesses that support them are responsible for more than 7 million jobs—more than any other manufacturing sector.

The ATVM program played an important role in fueling the resurgence of the auto industry that led to record sales last year. Despite this success, the auto industry and its workers face significant challenges in the years ahead. Auto makers and suppliers continue to move jobs to Mexico for cars and parts sold in America. ATVM funds should be utilized to create incentives for keeping work in the U.S. rather than moving it to Mexico. These are jobs that could be used to strengthen domestic manufacturing and employ people in Flint. The program should also be used to help the industry comply with CAFE standards that become dramatically more stringent over the next several years.

It is troubling that some Senators are insisting on spending cuts to pay for an aid package and are choosing to address this disaster differently than many emergencies in the past like Super Storm Sandy and Hurricane Katrina. Many Senators who oppose providing emergency aid to Flint voted to provide tens of billions of dollars in tax cuts to profitable corporations without insisting on an offset.

Every state in our country has experienced emergency disasters and the Congress has often taken action to declare a disaster emergency, Congress should use its authority to declare Flint a major disaster so that FEMA can respond quickly and disperse much-needed federal aid just as it has in the case of severe storms, flooding, and fires in Utah in 2012. I urge the Senate to put politics aside and pass an emergency aid package for the people of Flint immediately.

Sincerely,

Dennis D. Williams, President
International Union, UAW