



COMMISSION ON THE PREVENTION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION PROLIFERATION AND TERRORISM

July 8, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2803

Dear Senator Reid:

We urge you to fund the FY 2010 budget for the Department of Health and Human Service's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) at a minimum of \$1.7 billion in the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund for BARDA's advanced research and development mission. This amount would help to mitigate the consequences of a biological attack, identified by the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism as the nation's most likely WMD threat in our report, *World at Risk*.

BARDA is one of the most important biodefense organizations in the United States. This funding would be a critical down-payment to prevent an act of bioterrorism from becoming a major disaster — a bio-Katrina. As you'll see below, in addition to being a critical national security matter, the investment would yield significant social and economic benefits to the country.

Congress established our bipartisan Commission to take a forward look at the grave threat that WMD proliferation poses to our country.

In December 2008, the Commission unanimously concluded that, unless the world community acts decisively and with great urgency, it is more likely than not that a weapon of mass destruction will be used in a terrorist attack somewhere in the world by the end of 2013 — and that a biological attack is more likely than nuclear. This conclusion was publicly affirmed by then Director of National Intelligence, Adm. Michael McConnell.

BARDA is one of our nation's first lines of defense against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear public health threats, supporting the development of new drugs, vaccines, and other medical countermeasures. As these medical products have no commercial market — the government is the sole customer — finding private investors is nearly impossible. For this reason, public investment in BARDA is necessary.

