

August 3, 2007

I-35W Bridge Somali Response Committee
504 Cedar Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55454

Honorable Senator Norm Coleman, R-MN
2550 University Avenue West, Suite 100 N
St. Paul, MN 55114

Dear Senator Coleman, Greeting of Peace "Assalamu Alaikum":

Imams and organizational leaders of the Somali Community in the Twin Cities extend their heartfelt condolences to your office and the city of Minneapolis over the tragic collapse of the I-35W Bridge. We feel a profound sense of grief on the loss of lives. The Qur'an says: "To God we belong, and to Him we return." (Qur'an 2:156). Our prayers and thoughts go to all the families who lost loved ones. We also pray for the speedy recovery of the injured. This tragic event has affected all the citizens of our State. These times of trial bring the best of human nature as we come together as one community. We especially salute your leadership and the heroic work of first respondents from Federal, state, county, and city departments.

The Somali community is particularly affected by the collapse of this important landmark in several ways:

1. Minneapolis is home to the largest Somali community in the State and there are Somalis among the victims.
2. The I-35W Bridge is in close proximity to the West Bank neighborhood, which serves as the hub of the Somali community in Minneapolis. Many of us drive through the bridge everyday and this is certainly a profound loss for all of us.

Senator Coleman, please be assured that our community is grateful to the city of Minneapolis and the State of Minnesota for embracing us. We are therefore, fully prepared to contribute in whatever we can to the healing process in this time of disaster.

Best regards,

Imam Abdisalam Adam, Director, Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Civic Center

Sheikh Abdirashid Hassanwali, Director, Abubakar As-Siddique Islamic Center

Saeed Fahia, Director, Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota

Hashi Abdi, Executive Director, Somali Action Alliance