Benjamin Lincoln to Daniel Shays
Hadley, Mass., 30 January 1787

Whether you are convinced or not, of your error in flying to arms, I am fully persuaded, that before this hour, you have the fullest conviction on your own mind that you are not able to execute your original purposes.

Your resources are few, your force is inconsiderable, and hourly decreasing from the disaffection of your men. You are in a post where you have neither cover nor supplies, and in a situation in which you can neither give aid to your friends, nor discomfort to the supporters of good order and government. Under these circumstances, you cannot hesitate a moment, to disband your deluded followers. If you should not, I must approach and apprehend the most influential characters among you. Should you attempt to fire upon the troops of government, the consequences might be fatal to many of your men the least guilty. To prevent bloodshed, you will communicate to your privates that if they will instantly lay down their arms, surrender themselves to government, and take and subscribe the oath of allegiance to this Commonwealth, they shall be recommended to the General Court for mercy. If you should either withhold this information from them, or suffer your people to fire upon our approach, you must be answerable for all the ills, which may exist in consequence thereof.

To Capt. Shays & the other Officers commanding the men in arms against the Government of this Commonwealth.

CITE AS: W. W. Abbot, Dorothy Twohig et al., eds., *The Papers of George Washington: Confederation Series* (Charlottesville, Va., University Press of Virginia, 1987–), IV, 425.