Benjamin Lincoln to Governor James Bowdoin
Hadley, Mass., 30 January 1787

I have had many applications from towns pretty much in the language of those made to your Excellency and Council. I have given them all the same answer, that I cannot suspend our operations, and if they wish to prevent the shedding of blood, they must apply to Shays to disband his troops. He is recieving daily supplies of provisions, and some few recruits. It will be difficult, if not impossible to put an end to such disorders, unless a Rebellion is declared to exist. Shays and his abettors must be treated as open enemies; the sooner it is done, the better: for if we drive him from one strong post, he flies to another; In these movements he could not be supported, if he was not comforted by the many disaffected in the Counties.

I hope the General Court will not hesitate, but come to the point at once; and act with that decision and firmness, which in my opinion a regard to the well being of the State so manifestly demands.

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, 426–27.