

STATEMENT

OF

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BEFORE  
THE

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COMMUNICATIONS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Staten Island, New York

“Securing Our Communities: Federal Support to High-Risk Urban Areas”

Submitted  
By

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## **Introduction**

Good morning, Chairman Donovan, Ranking Member Payne, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am Thomas DiNanno, and I serve as the Assistant Administrator for Grant Programs at the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). On behalf of Secretary Nielsen and Administrator Long, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the critical role of the Department's homeland security grant programs in assisting the Nation, particularly the Nation's high-risk urban areas, in preventing, preparing for and responding to terrorist attacks.

Over the past 10 years, the American people have been called upon to respond to and recover from a number of devastating, if not catastrophic, natural disasters and terrorist attacks: Hurricane Sandy in 2012, which affected much of New Jersey, New York City, and Staten Island; the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing; the 2015 shooting in San Bernardino, California; and the 2016 pipe bomb attacks in New York City's Chelsea neighborhood and Seaside Park, New Jersey.

More recently, Americans have endured the natural devastation of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and manmade acts of violence, including the October 2017 Las Vegas shooting; this year's recent school shootings in Parkland, Florida and St. Mary's County, Maryland; the October 2017 truck attack in New York City's Hudson River Greenway; and the December 2017 detonation of a pipe bomb in New York's Port Authority Bus Terminal. Out of deference and respect, we must also acknowledge that we are only a few miles from the site of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Last December, the President released his "National Security Strategy," which provides a road map to better protect the homeland, including guidance on responding to the needs of the American people in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack. The Strategy aims to build a national culture of preparedness and resilience in conjunction with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners and jurisdictions to enable them to prepare and respond to whatever hazards they may encounter. Fostering preparedness and building resilience is also at the heart of FEMA's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan.

During any type of incident, state and local first responders play critical roles in keeping our communities safe. In the face of various hazards and threats, FEMA is committed to ensuring that our communities have the resources needed to prevent, prepare for, mitigate, and respond to a wide range of incidents.

Since its inception, DHS, through the Preparedness Grant Programs, has provided funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, as well as transportation authorities, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector, to improve the Nation's readiness in preventing, protecting against, and responding to terrorist attacks. These grant funds address the Nation's immediate security needs, enhance public safety, and protect lives and property.

## **Homeland Security Preparedness Grant Programs**

Since 2002, DHS has provided more than \$50 billion in preparedness grant funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, non-profits, and other community organizations. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 alone DHS distributed over \$1.6 billion in preparedness grant funds—with more than \$1 billion in funding provided under the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP), which includes the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), and Operation Stonegarden (OPSG).

In addition to the HSGP, other FEMA preparedness grant programs, including the Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP), the Port Security Grant Program (PSGP), Intercity Passenger Rail (Amtrak) Program, and the Intercity Bus Security Grant Program (IBSGP) support efforts to protect the traveling public, secure critical infrastructure and key resources and enhance the security of transportation routes, transit systems, and port facilities.

Together, these programs support the development, sustainment, and delivery of core capabilities essential to achieving the National Preparedness Goal of a secure and resilient Nation.

Among these preparedness grant programs, several have provided significant assistance to high-risk urban areas. These include:

- The Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP), which includes both the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) and the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). Since FY 2002, the SHSP has provided over \$11.2 billion to the various states and territories to build and enhance preparedness and response capabilities. Similarly, since FY 2002, UASI has provided more than \$9.4 billion to designated high risk urban areas.
- The Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP) which, since FY 2002, has provided over \$2.1 billion to the Nation's largest urban mass transit systems to enhance the security of these systems and better protect the traveling public.
- The Port Security Grant Program (PSGP) which, since FY 2002, has provided more than \$2.6 billion to enhance the security of the Nation's major ports and maritime trading and commercial centers.
- The Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) which, since FY 2007 (the first year in which the program was funded), has provided over \$182 million to individual nonprofit organizations located in designated urban areas and determined to be at particular risk of terrorist attack. This funding is used to enhance the security of their facilities and their members.

## **Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)**

Although the Nation's high-risk urban areas may benefit from a number of the preparedness grant programs, the principal preparedness grant program supporting high-risk urban areas is the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). Under UASI, funds are provided to address the unique planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise needs of high-threat, high-density urban areas. UASI funds assist in building an enhanced and sustainable capacity to prevent, protect

against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism. In FY 2017, \$580 million in UASI funds were allocated to the 33 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) identified as high-threat, high-density urban areas.

As mandated by the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended, and to ensure limited UASI funds are allocated to the cities with the highest risk, the Department conducts yearly risk assessments of the Nation's 100 most populous MSAs. These risk assessments are based on three major factors: the relative threat, vulnerability, and consequences from acts of terrorism faced by each MSA. Threat scores are derived from intelligence data compiled by the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis. Vulnerability scores take into consideration information regarding targeted infrastructure that terrorists are deemed more likely to attack, as well as border crossings by air, land, and sea. Finally, consequence scores consider an MSA's population, economic, national infrastructure, and national security indices. The results of these risk assessments, including the scores and relative ranking, inform UASI eligibility and the Secretary's funding allocation decisions.

Over the past year, the Department has conducted a comprehensive review of this risk assessment process to ensure it is keeping pace with evolving threats. Of note, the Intelligence Community has highlighted the interest and intent of terrorists, including Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs), to strike soft targets, including public events, mass gatherings and other locations where large crowds congregate. The intelligence community assesses that the threat is more dispersed and not necessarily limited to large urban areas. To address the current threat to soft targets, including crowded places and large public gatherings, FEMA has worked with the Department's Office of Operations Coordination to better incorporate Special Events Assessment Rating (SEAR) data, which is processed to attribute events to each participating state, territory, and MSA, into the vulnerability component of the methodology. The modifications to the FY 2018 risk assessment methodology are driven by the emerging threat environment, as identified by the intelligence community, and from extensive stakeholder feedback, to ensure that the resulting risk scores most accurately reflect a state or urban area's relative risk.

Today, we are situated in the midst of two of the Nation's major UASIs. New York City, along with Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties in New York, comprise the New York City Urban Area. Newark and Jersey City, along with Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic and Union Counties in New Jersey, comprise the Newark – Jersey City Urban Area. Since FY 2002, the New York City Urban Area has received over \$2.3 billion in UASI funds. And, since FY 2002, the Newark – Jersey City Urban Area has received over \$404 million in UASI funds.

Both of these urban areas have used these funds to secure and protect their citizens, as well as critical assets and resources. Using UASI funds, the Newark – Jersey City urban area has undertaken the Newark – Jersey City Business District Infrastructure Protection Initiative. This initiative is securing critical areas of Newark's and Jersey City's business and downtown districts through increased monitoring and surveillance, enhanced lighting and security fencing at critical sites, and bollards to regulate traffic and protect structures. Similarly, the New York City urban area has used UASI funds to initiate a Domain Awareness System, which utilizes a variety of means, including physical barriers and enhanced surveillance, to better secure key areas of

Manhattan, including the financial district, Times Square, Grand Central Station and Penn Station.

The Newark – Jersey City urban area has also used UASI funds to secure and protect the region’s drinking water and water treatment facilities. In 2016, the Newark –Jersey City urban area embarked on and completed a project to harden 13 water treatment and 12 wastewater treatment facilities located within the UASI region against attack. Many of these facilities lacked basic physical protective equipment and were therefore vulnerable. Utilizing UASI funds, all 25 sites have received funding to harden their facilities, including fencing, video assessment systems, and access card systems.

Further, New York City deployed numerous UASI-funded assets in response to the October 31, 2017, terrorist attack in Manhattan’s Hudson River Greenway, including a Bell 429 helicopter utilized by the New York Police Department’s Special Operations Division to provide aerial video surveillance. This asset enabled real-time assessments that assisted command and control coordination. Other UASI-funded assets deployed in the Hudson River Greenway response included cameras, sensor equipment, mapping systems, and aviation life support equipment worn by responding aircrews.

During the December 11, 2017, pipe bomb attack at New York’s Port Authority Bus Terminal, preparedness grant funds contributed to the successful response and apprehension of the suspected bomber. The Port Authority Police Department’s counterterrorism teams, as well as members of the New York National Guard’s Task Force Empire Shield apprehended the suspect and quickly controlled the situation. Both units, as well as their patrol activities, were supported with UASI funds, as well as funds from the SHSP.

### **Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP)**

High-risk urban areas also benefit from funding allocated to mass transit systems under the Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP). Under the TSGP, funds are used to enhance the physical security of transit systems as well as provide “on the ground” law enforcement patrols. TSGP funds are awarded on a competitive basis directly to the Nation’s highest risk transit systems.

In FY 2017, the TSGP provided \$88 million to 26 urban transit systems. This included over \$16 million to New Jersey Transit, \$2.3 million to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and \$20.9 million to New York’s Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

In the New York and New Jersey urban areas, TSGP funds have been well used. Using \$2 million of FY 2014 TSGP funds, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey upgraded security at New York’s Port Authority Bus Terminal by installing 35 surveillance cameras. This camera installation was the second phase of a larger, multi-year TSGP funded project that enhanced the terminal’s security by, among other things, upgrading the Port Authority Bus Terminal’s Operations Center with enhanced video monitoring systems and state of the art video management systems.

Using \$1.8 million in FY 2013 TSGP funds, the New Jersey Transit Corporation established and continued directed law enforcement patrols, including canine units, throughout the system. TSGP funding enabled New Jersey Transit to continue proactive efforts in advancing its terrorism prevention and detection programs, which are critical to the protection of the mass transit systems serving the New York/New Jersey metropolitan region.

Also providing critical support to the New York and New Jersey urban areas is the Port Security Grant Program (PSGP). The Port of New York – New Jersey is the largest port on the east coast of the United States and receives 12 percent of the international goods arriving into the United States, which equates to 85 million metric tons of general cargo that ultimately reaches an estimated 35 percent of the American population. The Port of New York – New Jersey consists of 240 miles of shipping channels as well as numerous anchorages and port facilities. Maintaining the security of the Port of New York – New Jersey is an essential part of maintaining the overall security of the New York – New Jersey urban area.

In FY 2017, the New York – New Jersey port area received over \$20 million in PSGP funding. From FY 2010 through FY 2017, over \$145 million in PSGP funds have supported security enhancements throughout the port area. These security enhancements have included increased surveillance systems, installation of security barriers such as fencing and traffic and entry control devices, and specialized training in security awareness and specialized response, including response to incidents involving improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers. In FY 2017, the New York City Police Department utilized PSGP funds to establish a Unified Command Center to serve port facilities and deployed six specialized Radiation Detection Launches for port patrols.

### **Nonprofit Security Grant Program**

A smaller, but nonetheless significant program for its recipients, is the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). The NSGP competitively awards grant funding to assist nonprofit organizations that are considered to be at high risk of terrorist attack and located within one of the specific UASI-designated urban areas. NSGP provides up to \$75,000 to nonprofit organizations for training and physical security enhancements, including fencing, surveillance systems, security systems, and lighting. It is also designed to promote coordination and collaboration in emergency preparedness activities among public and private community representatives, as well as state and local government agencies.

From FY 2007 through FY 2017, over \$182 million in NSGP funds was awarded to 2,591 nonprofit organizations across the Nation. Over that same period, more than \$20 million has been awarded under the NSGP to 291 nonprofit organizations within the Newark – Jersey City urban area. Similarly, from FY 2007 through FY 2017, over \$45 million has been awarded under the NSGP to nonprofit organizations within the New York City urban area.

A prime example of NSGP funding put to use locally is the FY 2017 grant awarded to the Beth Rachel School for Girls, located in Brooklyn, New York. The Beth Rachel School is a day school with an enrollment of nearly 1,000 students. NSGP funds enabled the school to improve its overall security by enhancing its surveillance system with upgraded closed circuit television

capabilities, and new motion sensors, facial recognition software, and automatic alarms. The School also utilized NSGP funds to replace windows with shatter resistant glass and reinforced frames.

Also in FY 2017, NSGP funded security enhancements at Beth Medrash Govaha in Lakewood Township, New Jersey. Unfortunately, Lakewood Township was the site of several acts of anti-Semitic vandalism in 2017, including the defacing of a holocaust memorial. With an enrollment of over 6,000, Beth Medrash Govaha is one of the Nation's largest Yeshivas. The installation of a NSGP-funded surveillance system not only enhanced the facility's overall security, but led to the identification of an intruder who was observed committing an act of vandalism.

### **Law Enforcement and Terrorism Prevention and Support for Fusion Centers**

Per Section 2006 of the *Homeland Security Act*, FEMA ensures that at least 25 percent of grant funding appropriated for State Homeland Security Programs and UASI is used for law enforcement terrorism prevention activities, including support for state and local fusion centers.

Fusion centers, a critical component of our Nation's homeland security and counterterrorism architecture, provides grassroots intelligence and analytic capabilities within the state and local environment. Fusion center investments represent approximately seven percent of the total annual funding made available under UASI and SHSP. Fusion center funding is reported by the states, and based on recent reporting over \$60 million dollars in UASI and SHSP funds were dedicated to fusion center support nationwide in FY 2016. For the FYs 2012 through 2016, this total amounts to more than \$309 million.

Under both the SHSP and the UASI, states and urban areas are required to invest preparedness grant dollars into activities supporting their designated fusion centers. States and urban areas must submit a consolidated investment justification describing the performance areas the funding is intended to support based on the Fusion Center Assessment administered annually by the Department's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A). Each proposed project included in the fusion center investment justification must align to, and reference, specific performance areas of the Assessment that the funding is intended to support. In working with states and urban areas on fusion center support, FEMA maintains a collaborative relationship with I&A. I&A is the government's executive agent for coordinating engagement with and support to fusion centers and serves as the subject-matter experts on fusion center-related priorities and activities. In turn, FEMA administers and manages preparedness grant programs that make funding available to state and local authorities to increase and sustain the operational capabilities and performance of their designated fusion centers.

### **Strategic Priorities**

The most important lesson from the challenging disasters of 2017 is that that the most successful system is federally supported, state managed, and locally executed. Particularly over the past year, grantees have tested many practices, programs, and ideas that are more appropriately implemented at the state and local level. These experiences have informed FEMA's 2018-2022

Strategic Plan, which seeks to: 1) Build a Culture of Preparedness; 2) Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters; and 3) Reduce the Complexity of FEMA.

Each of these goals represents a major undertaking, and FEMA will not be able to accomplish them without the help of the entire community. While FEMA plays an essential role in achieving this vision of a prepared and resilient Nation, meaningful improvements will occur only when we work in concert across federal departments and agencies, as well as with leaders from state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

#### Build a Culture of Preparedness

Resilience is the backbone of emergency management, and the most successful way to achieve disaster resiliency is through preparedness. Building a “Culture of Preparedness” within our communities and our governments will support a national effort to be ready for the worst disasters – at the individual, family, community, state, local, tribal, territorial, and Federal levels.

Everyone should be prepared when disaster strikes. To be prepared, however, we must all understand our local and community risks, reflect the diversity of those we serve, and foster partnerships that allow us to connect with a diverse Nation. People who are prepared will be able to act quickly and decisively in the face of disasters, thereby preventing death and injuries, minimizing loss of property, and allowing for a more rapid and efficient recovery.

#### Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters

Catastrophic disasters, including low- and no-notice incidents, can overwhelm government at all levels and threaten national security. They are life-altering incidents for those affected, causing a number of fatalities and widespread destruction. Catastrophic disasters, whether natural or manmade, disrupt lives and hurt our communities, both economically and socially. Readiness is critical for FEMA and our partners to ensure that the response and recovery missions are appropriately executed and successful.

This goal builds on preparedness and focuses us on enhancing our collective readiness, which is dependent on emergency managers who execute the mission on behalf of Federal and state, local, tribal, and territorial governments. This requires a scalable and capable national incident workforce that can adapt to a changing risk landscape, integrate with our partners at all levels, and communicate and coordinate effectively in every situation.

#### Reduce the Complexity of FEMA

FEMA must be a modern agency that can adapt to public and governmental priorities, while creating and using innovative solutions for the emergency management mission. A simplified FEMA streamlines survivor experiences, simplifies processes and policies for disaster staff, and improves stewardship of federal taxpayer dollars.

Connecting with a wide array of experts and stakeholders including academia, religious leaders, and representatives of all types of whole community partners is key to this effort. FEMA will focus on identifying ways to weave preparedness into people’s everyday lives, connecting with individuals at places they frequent, and incentivizing positive behavior change using tools like



grants, training, and exercises. Furthermore, the Agency will continue to encourage programs that train and empower responders. FEMA will continue to work with its Federal, state, local, tribal, territorial and other community partners, as well as with Congress, in furtherance of these goals.

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Payne, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for this opportunity to discuss the assistance provided through the preparedness grant programs, especially assistance that supports the Nation's high risk urban areas. It is the local responders who are first on the scene that are the most critical partners in preparing for and responding to attacks. FEMA is honored to support first responders through the implementation of these programs, and I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.