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**BEFORE THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND
COMMUNICATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**

COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND

APRIL 23, 2018

Good morning Chairman Donovan, Ranking Member Payne, Congressman King and Members of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications. We are pleased to testify before you today as representatives of the New York City Department of Emergency Management (NYCEM), the New York Police Department (NYPD) and the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) to discuss how essential federal funding is to support efforts to secure New York City, the surrounding region and high risk urban areas across the nation.

To begin, let us provide a sense of the scale and complexity of the mission in New York City. Homeland security in an urban setting is an immense challenge for first responders. With a population of over eight and a half million people, New York City has the highest population density of any major city in the country. Our region also includes a large number of high profile locations. The most recent addition, the Trump Tower, aside from a Presidential residence was recently was the site of a fire. The greater Tri-State region faces an ever-evolving landscape of security and disaster threats.

This post 9/11 environment has greatly expanded the role that the City's police, fire, and emergency management agencies do each day to keep people safe. For example, the mission of the FDNY is not only to respond to fires, but also respond to medical emergencies, public safety incidents, natural disasters and acts of terrorism. For the NYPD, this means constant vigilance given that New York City remains in the crosshairs of violent terrorists, more so than any other place in the world. In 2017 alone, NYCEM activated the City's Emergency Operations Center 14 times for a total of 107 days. That includes five winter weather events, two building vacates due to fires, two flash floods, an active shooter at Bronx Lebanon hospital, a heat emergency, the Port Authority explosion, and Hurricanes Jose and Maria.

In the past 15 years, there have been approximately two dozen terrorist plots against New York City, with targets such as Times Square, the Brooklyn Bridge, John F. Kennedy Airport, the New York Stock Exchange, the subway system as well as major synagogues and other sites. In most cases, they have been thwarted by the efforts of the NYPD and our local and federal partners. Tragically, in the last two years, four attacks have succeeded in striking our city; an explosion in Chelsea in which no one was killed; a white supremacist who murdered an African –American man with a sword as a “practice run” to a larger plot; a terrorist who drove a van into the West Side Highway Running Path which sadly killed 8 individuals; and an ISIS-inspired suicide bomber who set off a homemade explosive device at the Port Authority Bus Terminal subway station that injured three individuals and himself.

Working with our federal, state, and local partners, we meet these challenges through a matrix of specialized training, planning, equipping, preparedness programming, and information and intelligence sharing, all of which are made possible by federal Homeland Security funding. We have worked diligently to build and execute a protective strategy that has kept this City safe while protecting and upholding the constitutional rights and liberties accorded to those who live, work, and visit New York City.

September 11th forever changed how NYCEM, NYPD and FDNY view their missions and the world around us. Following that tragedy, NYPD recognized that we could not defer the responsibility of protecting this City from terrorist attacks to others, and we have continued to prioritize this ever-evolving peril. Soon after 2001, the NYPD became the first police department in the country to develop its own robust counterterrorism capacity. We have expanded our efforts to include international events, gathering intelligence far beyond our borders. Our work, however, cannot happen without the assistance and aid of the federal government.

Following the recommendations of a 9/11 Commission Report, the Fire Department leveraged Homeland Security grant funds to create and staff a state of the art Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at FDNY Headquarters. Today, this EOC serves as part of a network to manage complex emergencies and to share information by connecting with local partners like the NYPD and NYCEM, as well as the National Operations Center. Members of FDNY’s Rescue operations train with fire departments and first responder agencies from around the country, passing along specialized knowledge that we’ve developed here in New York. Urban Search and Rescue Team Task Force-1 and FDNY’s IMT have provided mutual aid after a number of natural disasters, including New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, Broome County, New York after Hurricane Irene, Florida after Hurricane Irma, Texas after Hurricane Harvey, and Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

Federal grant funding represents roughly 50% of NYCEM’s annual operating budget and is vital to our ability to run many of our finest initiatives, including the Ready New York public education program, CERT program, Continuity of Operations Program, Geographic Information Systems, Training and Exercises, Watch Command and Response, and Citywide Incident Management Systems planning. It also funds the Emergency Supply Stockpile, which provides supplies and services to support emergency sheltering for adults, people with special medical

needs, people with disabilities and accessibility and functional needs, children, infants, and companion animals. During a coastal storm, the stockpile can meet the needs of 70,000 individuals in designated evacuation shelters across NYC for up to seven days.

Over the years, the caliber of people we have been able to attract has played a major role in our ability to protect New York. We have hired civilian analysts who are experts in intelligence and foreign affairs. They study terrorist groups, trends, and methods of attacks. One of our most important institutional strengths is the remarkable diversity in our ranks. The NYPD is fortunate to have a deep pool of foreign-speaking officers. This has allowed us to build a foreign linguist program with more than 1,200 registered speakers of 85 different languages – Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Mandarin, Pashto, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu, to name just a few.

Before concluding, we would like to briefly discuss potential federal actions that would impact our emergency communications. As you know, the NYPD is the nation's largest police agency with law enforcement responsibility across the five boroughs. The Department receives nearly 10 million 911 calls annually and patrols approximately 306 square miles – which accounts for some of the most densely populated geography in the nation.

Since September 11th, we have greatly improved our radio communications for our personnel, many of whom are responding to crimes in progress. Losing the T-band spectrum would require significant financial investments to replace our existing radio infrastructure. Moreover, alternative spectrum has not been identified to facilitate this relocation, and it is not clear as to whether there is enough spectrum available to accommodate the largest metropolitan areas. The continuity for interoperable and operable communications is essential, and changes to the T-band system will impact Department operations and the risk of disruption will endanger public safety.

Additionally, while we certainly are encouraged by steps taken by the FCC to improve the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system, we urge the FCC to adopt rules that better allow us to respond to the full range of 21st Century emergencies. When the city issued a wireless emergency alert regarding the Chelsea Bomber in 2016 to every phone in the five boroughs, the millions of New Yorkers who wanted to help were given several lines of text with no picture. In this age of instant access to visual information via social media applications, we need to enhance our country's ability to rapidly, efficiently, and securely deliver comprehensive emergency information, including images, to the public. Pictures provide instant recognition and speak a universal language. They enable rapid response from every potential witness who could save countless lives through fast action. The lack of photographs and other multimedia highlights a weakness in the system and, in the face of emerging threats, the City needs to remain on technology's cutting edge by using public information systems to their fullest capacity to advance its emergency services and capabilities.

In closing, it cannot be emphasized enough how critically important federal grants are to empowering cities across the nation, New York City included, to evolve and stay ahead of emerging threats. Preparedness is a race against time to be ready for the next attack or extreme event. For context, understand that the events of 9/11 took place in 102 minutes, less time than this hearing. Every Federal dollar that flows to New York City improves our response so we can save the greatest number of people and pays dividends across the United States. We look forward

to a continued partnership with members of this committee and the Congress so that we are able to sustain existing capabilities and continue to adapt to new threats in order to protect the people of the New York City Urban Area.

Our philosophy is simple: we have to develop the best intelligence available, expand our partnerships, take protective measures to defeat whatever our adversaries might be planning next, react to neutralize all threats and prevent the loss of life.

New York enjoys the distinction of being the safest big city in America. It is also commercially vibrant, culturally diverse, and free. We can claim these successes are due, in no small measure, to the uniformed and civilian members of the New York City Department of Emergency Management (NYCEM), the New York Police Department (NYPD) and the New York City Fire Department (FDNY), and the assistance we have received from the federal government, which has been a vital partner in the face of an ever present threat.

We look forward to a continued partnership with members of this committee and Congress so that we are able to sustain existing capabilities and continue to adapt to new threats in order to protect the people of the New York City Urban Area. Attached to this joint statement are individual opening statements for NYCEM, NYPD and FDNY. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify today. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.



STATEMENT BY

ASSISTANT CHIEF JOSEPH W. PFEIFER
CHIEF OF COUNTERTERRORISM AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

BEFORE

THE HOUSE SUB-COMMITTEE ON
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND COMMUNICATIONS

ON

FEDERAL SUPPORT TO HIGH RISK URBAN AREAS

23 APRIL 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Donovan, Ranking Member Payne, Congressman King and Members of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications. My name is Joseph Pfeifer and I am the Chief of Counterterrorism and Emergency Preparedness for the New York City Fire Department. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the importance of federal support to High-Risk Urban Areas.

Homeland security in an urban setting is an immense challenge for first responders. With a population of over eight and a half million people, New York City has the highest population density of any major city in the country. Our region also includes a large number of high profile locations, including the United Nations and Trump Tower, which was the site of a fire very recently. The greater Tri-State region faces an ever-evolving landscape of security and disaster threats. This post 9/11 environment has greatly expanded the role that the City's police, fire, and emergency management agencies do each day to keep people safe. The mission of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) is not only to respond to fires, but also respond to medical emergencies, public safety incidents, natural disasters and acts of terrorism.

In the last six months alone, we've had to respond to two separate terror attacks. The first occurred in Lower Manhattan when a terrorist drove a pickup truck down a bike path killing eight people and injuring eleven others, and the second took place at the subway near the Port Authority commuter bus terminal when a terrorist set off a pipe bomb strapped to his body during the morning rush hour.

Working with our federal, state, and local partners, we meet this challenge through a matrix of specialized training, planning, equipping, preparedness programming, and information and intelligence sharing, all of which are made possible by federal Homeland Security funding. I'd like to highlight a few of the key programs today.

Following the recommendations of a 9/11 Commission Report, the Fire Department leveraged Homeland Security grant funds to create and staff a state of the art Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at FDNY Headquarters. Today, this EOC serves as part of a network to manage complex emergencies and to share information by connecting with local partners like the NYPD and NYCEM, as well as the National Operations Center.

When US Airway Flight 1549 crashed in the icy waters of the Hudson River, not only did we coordinate rescue operations from the Operations Center, but we also shared critical information. By comparing the manifest we received from LaGuardia Airport with everyone taken off the plane going through our medical triage and hospitals, we were the first to learn that all 155 passengers and crew were alive and rescued. That information was placed on the Homeland Security Information Network and immediately provided this fact to all in government including the President of the United States. Information is power if it is shared and delivered in real time.

In the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks, we developed an Incident Management Team (IMT) to manage and coordinate complex emergencies. DHS grant funds pay for the extensive training of IMT members, as well as full scale exercises, which the team participates in with partner agencies including NYPD and New York State Police. Last week, the IMT ran a Full Scale Exercise at an upstate training facility, partnering with the NYPD and the NYS IMT

to practice managing simultaneous large-scale incidents involving a building collapse and an Active Shooter.

We also created the FDNY *Center for Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness* (CTDP) to develop strategies, emergency response plans, intelligence products, educational programs and scenario-based exercises to improve the Department's response to terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other large-scale incidents. The work of CTDP has been on the front lines of preparing the Department, the City, and the Nation for new and emerging threats. Working with the NYPD, we developed a multi-agency plan outlining roles and responsibilities to respond to an Active Shooter Incident.

CTDP has also been working with the NYPD to address the growing threat of **Vertical Terrorism**, where terrorists attack high-rise buildings with semi-automatic weapons, explosives, and the use of fire as a weapon. CTDP conducted a recent study on this topic, which I have provided to the Committee. To prepare for such an attack, FDNY hosted a Vertical Terrorism Preparedness Workshop last year on the 63rd floor of the new 1 World Trade Center, with NYPD, NYCEM, the Port Authority of NY/NJ, the FBI, DHS, FEMA, building managers and Trauma Center doctors. As the threat environment changes so must first responders. This is the type of research and preparation that other first responder agencies across the country can learn from and use to improve their own response to Vertical Terrorism Incidents.

We also use Homeland Security grant funds to make smart investments in other core competencies such as building collapses, CBRN, and Mass Casualty Incidents. These funds have allowed us to develop and enhance our capabilities in search and rescue, hazardous material mitigation, Rescue Medic treatment skills, Marine Operations and Swift Water rescues.

A key innovation in the Department's response to mass casualty incidents was our formation of the Rescue Task Force, which is made up of first responders who have received specialized training to triage, treat, and transport victims during an Active Shooter incident. They are part of our response matrix and are proactively deployed at high profile events such as New Year's in Times Square and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

The Rescue Task Force depends upon NYPD for force protection so that FDNY medical responders can triage and stop the bleeding in order to save lives in a warm zone. Each member of the team is outfitted with ballistic protective equipment for protection and has completed hands-on training to apply tourniquets and clotting agents. But what are vital to this initiative are the joint full scale exercises between FDNY and NYPD that are conducted by CTDP. Only by working together as a team will we be ready for the next extreme event.

The resources that we've developed with Homeland Security funding work in concert with one another to provide a fast, thorough response and mitigation to threats and incidents. To give one example, when the pipe bomb went off at the Port Authority during rush hour, the Rescue Task Force was mobilized and responded to the scene. FDNY Re-breather units responded wearing a specialized Self-Contained Breather Apparatus, allowing them to operate underground for much longer than with standard issued equipment. FDNY Rescue and Squad Companies responded, drawing on their specialized training to respond to incidents underground and in confined spaces,

and carry rescue equipment and tools. FDNY Compressor Unit and Mass Casualty Incident pods were staged at the scene. HazMat and Tech Engine Units responded to conduct atmospheric testing for radiation and HazMat/WMD materials at the scene. Marine Operations ran ongoing stepped-up patrols of the harbor after the attack to conduct a survey of ships docked in the Port.

The resources that we have developed and maintain using Homeland Security funding are critical in serving not only the people of New York City, but the population of the entire region. Our Marine Unit is a regional asset that works with the United States Coast Guard to responding to incidents in waterways in and around New York. They respond to incidents in other jurisdictions, such as responding to massive fires in New Jersey. They have a pressurized cabin that allows the fireboats to disburse a chlorine vapor cloud or respond to the nuclear power plant at Indian Point.

Working with our Port Security Partners, we are preparing for a new type of active shooter incident, one of which could occur on the many water ferries that bring thousands of people to work each day. Our workshops have focused on not only of “Stopping the Killing” by law enforcement and “Stopping the Dying” by our medical personnel, but also on “Stopping the Drowning,” because we know people will jump in the water to escape from being shot. Such a comprehensive approach prepares us for the unthinkable.

Members of Rescue operations train with fire departments and first responder agencies from around the country, passing along specialized knowledge that we’ve developed here in New York. Urban Search and Rescue Team Task Force-1 and our IMT have provided mutual aid after a number of natural disasters, including New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, Broome County, New York after Hurricane Irene, Florida after Hurricane Irma, Texas after Hurricane Harvey, and Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

Preparedness is a race against time to be ready for the next attack or the next extreme event. The events of 9/11 took place in 102 minutes, less time than this hearing. Every Federal dollar that flows to the FDNY improves our response so we can save the greatest number of people and pays dividends across the United States.

We look forward to a continued partnership with members of this committee and the Congress so that we are able to sustain existing capabilities and continue to adapt to new threats in order to protect the people of the New York City Urban Area.

Thank you for allowing me to share FDNY’s experience on the topic of Federal Support to High-Risk Urban Areas and I am happy to answer any questions.