

HOW PREPARED IS THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION FOR THE NEXT DISASTER

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
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WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2013

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT,
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:02 p.m., in room SD-342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Mark Begich, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senator Begich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BEGICH

Senator BEGICH. Thank you very much, Congresswoman. How are you? I apologize. Unlike the House, at times, you never have hard votes that people are confused on their positions, and so I apologize for being delayed. We are still in the middle of a vote as I speak right now. We are trying to get the right number of votes. I will leave it at that, and I apologize. We were down there working it.

Let me make my comments. I will try to be quick and brief. And then I will turn it to the Congresswoman. I know you have been patiently waiting, so I appreciate that very much.

The hearing, again, comes to order. Good afternoon. Welcome to this hearing of the Subcommittee on Emergency Management, Intergovernmental Relations, and the District of Columbia (EMDC).

Today, I want to explore and examine the disaster response and coordination of the Federal, State, and local entities in the National Capital Region (NCR). We appreciate you all being here and your willingness to participate in this discussion. This is an important topic as we sit in our Nation's capital. We must remember Washington, DC. and the surrounding region is under near constant threat.

I would like to take a brief moment to thank the emergency responders who work to keep the capital and surrounding region safe from harm. They deserve our thanks for their service. The sheer size of this metropolitan area, which includes significant national security infrastructure, multiple State and local governments, and broad scope of threats, makes this for a unique and complex coordination challenge.

And to broaden this discussion to the national level, from the recent terrorist bombing at the Boston Marathon to natural disasters like the wildfires burning across the country, it is critical for the Federal Government to look proactively at our disaster response capabilities and coordination with State and local agencies instead of reactive once a disaster has occurred.

Although the National Capital Region is unique in many ways, improving coordination and communication in emergency operations is a challenge that exists in most major metropolitan areas across this Nation. Specifically in my own home State of Alaska, we do a good job on Federal, State, and local coordination for disaster preparedness and being prepared for any type of disaster.

The University of Alaska, for example, of Fairbanks, held successful emergency management exercises which tested emergency responders and Emergency Operations Centers' (EOCs) capabilities should the campus be a target of violence. Volunteers from nearby Eielson Air Force Base joined, a great example of civilian and Air Force members working together.

In March, the Alaska National Guard's 103 Civilian Support Team held an exercise to test its ability to respond to a chemical, biological, radiological threat to Southeast Alaska's commercial fishing and agriculture industry. Many participants, including the Coast Guard, U.S. Army, Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Sitka Fire Department—this drill went very well and tested the interoperability among very diverse stakeholders.

And Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), in my home town of Anchorage just last month did an exercise to prepare for incidents including aircraft malfunctions, injured personnel, or terrorist attacks were held. After the exercise, service members from different JBER entities were pleased with the successful operation and said it helps solidify relationships and remind people what exactly to do in an emergency.

When it comes to emergencies, preparation is key, and response exercises in Alaska, the Lower 48 States, and the National Capital Region are essential to saving lives when disaster strikes. And throughout the disaster preparation exercise and mitigation process, we must continue to look for ways to streamline efforts to reduce costs, and I believe in this time of declining budgets and fiscal uncertainty, we must find more efficient ways of strengthening our interagency partnerships.

It is no secret we can do more to modernize our approach to disaster response. I think we can all agree this will be better accomplished by coordinating all Federal, State, local, and private sector efforts to adequately support but not replace local operations.

As a former mayor, I know that cities and local governments are well positioned to understand their individual concerns and vulnerabilities. I think you will agree the private sector should not be an afterthought, but should be involved in the local planning, training, and exercising that leads up to successful response and missions.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses about the work in the Nation's Capital Region. This area is fortunate to have the

immense resources of the city, State, and Federal Governments, but we know there are changes coming and more work to be done.

Recently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced a proposal to move the National Capital Region's coordination office from FEMA headquarters here in Washington to FEMA Region 3, located in Philadelphia. As most of you probably know, this office is the key player in coordinating Federal entities through its chairmanship of the Joint Federal Committee. It has come to my attention that FEMA did not adequately consult with the stakeholders from the National Capital Region or congressional authorizers or appropriators before making this decision. I have some real concerns about this and hope, moving forward, that FEMA will be more responsive to my requests for information and hope they will work with the National Capital Region stakeholders to discuss unresolved concerns.

Again, before we start, again, I want to thank all the folks that will be lining up, and let me first introduce Congresswoman Norton. Thank you very much for being here. We appreciate you for being very patient. I apologize.

TESTIMONY OF THE HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Ms. HOLMES NORTON. Well, no apology necessary, Mr. Chairman. I just hope you get the votes.

Senator BEGICH. Well, we are one short. We are working on it.

Ms. HOLMES NORTON. I want to thank you for this hearing and for inviting stakeholders from the region to come, in addition to me. I may be wrong, Mr. Chairman, but I do not believe that there has been a hearing on this office since the office was set up after September 11, 2001, when we created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). So it is about time.

Of course, all are aware of the unprecedented attack—and I am going to summarize my testimony and not read it to get through it quickly—the unprecedented attack on this region, on the Pentagon itself, and we believe but for the brave residents who took down the plane in Pennsylvania that the Capitol itself would have been attacked. The first time we were attacked on our own shores in this way, it shook the Congress in ways that it had never felt before.

Since that time, I am very pleased that we have not been faced with an attack or anything close to it, and that has a lot to do with the way in which we have proceeded with homeland security. But this office was not set up just to prepare for, respond to terrorist attacks. It also, of course, has the same mission that the Department of Homeland Security has, to deal with natural disasters, and, Mr. Chairman, as you must know better than I, in this country, we have far more natural disasters than, I am pleased to say, we have terrorist attacks.

Here, we have had, for example, since September 11, 2001, the so-called Snowmageddon, the worst snow anyone can recall—

Senator BEGICH. I experienced that.

Ms. HOLMES NORTON. You were here then.

Senator BEGICH. Yes, I was here. [Laughter.]

Ms. HOLMES NORTON. Not to mention the earthquake. Who ever heard of an earthquake in this region?

The entire region is affected. It is a region without walls. So major disasters and terrorist attacks that occurred, for example, in Virginia essentially occurred in the District of Columbia. Our first responders were in Virginia. We have to prepare as if the attack occurred precisely in a particular jurisdiction.

The region was picked out for a special office for a reason that should be clear. An attack on the region is an attack on the Nation itself because this region is the seat of the Federal Government, of all of its headquarters, agencies, and many secure officials. And it was felt that after going through 9/11, the least we should do would be to coordinate and have an office to coordinate our preparedness, our response, our recovery from natural and, heaven forbid, terrorist disasters.

Mr. Chairman, I must tell you, I was stunned to receive word from my staff that there were some officials from the Department of Homeland Security who wanted me to take a call about how they were about to move the office that was set up to protect the National Capital Region to another region altogether, to Philadelphia. I refused to take that call. I had not been consulted. For someone from the Federal Government to call and say, this is what we intend to do and we just thought we ought to let you know it did not seem to me to be the appropriate way to consult with Congress, and so I tried to find out whether other Members of Congress or stakeholders had been consulted and could not find that they had.

So, I wrote to the appropriators, who I knew were considering the Homeland Security appropriation, and asked for language which they have now included in their appropriation, barring any kind of move, until the Congress is satisfied that any such move would not jeopardize the National Capital Region.

I am very concerned, Mr. Chairman, of the failure of this office to follow the quite explicit mandate in the statute, for example, to coordinate the activities for disaster preparedness related to the entire region. We have not seen much evidence of that. And the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, which I cite in my testimony, indicates that the office, the National Capital Region Coordinator Office, views its duty as to act as a coordinator for other Federal agencies instead of coordinating with the regional officials, the stakeholders, the people who run the counties and—there is only one big, large city, the District of Columbia—the ones who would have to respond to an attack. And the GAO makes a number of recommendations that I summarize in my testimony.

Mr. Chairman, the statute is very clear, that we set up this office because we have a region that has a large city. It has small towns. It has huge counties, like Fairfax and Montgomery. It has land or terrain, vastly different. The whole point was not to tell a region what to do, but to coordinate with the stakeholders in the region so as to prepare for attacks. And we do not know how the office got off to coordinating with Federal agencies. We have no objection to that. Our objection is to the failure to follow the statute and the coordinating mandate of the statute.

Mr. Chairman, in light of the recent attack in Boston, we could not be more serious about this office. The point of this office is to

help the region expect the unexpected, and we are not going to be able to do this, we are not going to be able to share on these matters as we should if the coordinator is not coordinating. It is important that the coordinator have a direct relationship also with the Secretary. This is, after all, the National Capital Region.

So I urge you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of this important Subcommittee to work with other Members of the House and Senate and the appropriators to ensure that the National Capital Region Office addresses the needs that Congress created it to meet and that it consults continually with Congress, and especially concerning any proposed changes.

May I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BEGICH. Congresswoman, thank you very much. And I will tell you, also as an appropriator—I sit on both here, in the Appropriations Committee and on the Subcommittee on Homeland Security, so you can rest assured.

When I was mayor, the city's size, geographic size, was 1,900 square miles, so you can imagine the many different areas we had kind of—it was unified, but it still had communities within that considered themselves small town cities, even though they were part of the same municipality. So we ran our Emergency Operations Center with all the different agencies and private sector in a coordinated manner, not a, "this is what we want to do," because we had far-flung communities 50 miles away, almost, that were still in our city.

So when you think about the logistics, and I am very sensitized to what you have just described in your testimony, and you can rest assured in the role I have here, but also the role I have in the Appropriations Committee as the language we have been able to put into the bill, we will be hearing your message clear.

Ms. Holmes Norton. Well, thank you very much for that. I did not know you were a member of the Appropriations Committee, as well, Mr. Chairman, and I certainly appreciate having your watchful eye on both these Committees.

I must say, this is a city 10 miles square, so when you tell me a city 50 miles—

Senator BEGICH. Nineteen-hundred.

Ms. HOLMES NORTON. But, I tell you, that is a city the size of this region.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Ms. HOLMES NORTON. So I think you can understand exactly what I am talking about.

Senator BEGICH. Very good. Again, Congresswoman, we greatly thank you for being patient, and your testimony, and your representation for the area here.

You are right, I think this might be one of the first times this office has had a hearing. We have tried to be very active in this Committee around emergency preparedness, but also the D.C. region issues. As you know, we moved a couple judges out and a few other things because we want to become very active, but also a participant in making sure the D.C. region has what they need.

And this is one area where I think, my former mayor roots are coming out. The fact that why local stakeholders are not included is a surprise to me. So that is why we wanted to have this discus-

sion, and also talk about what you said very clearly, and that is it is not just about the terrorist attacks. We hope none happen. But it is the natural disasters that are more frequent, may they be storms, may they be earthquakes, snow, floods, the list is long, and we have experienced—since I have been here, I have to say, in 4½ years, I have seen more disasters here from snow and trees falling down and power out for a week in this region, and it is actually somewhat surprising to me.

So, being Chair of this Committee, maybe I can at least lend a little bit of help and support.

Ms. Holmes Norton. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you very much, Congresswoman.

Let me move to the next panel, if we could, and we will let the transition occur here. Staff will do their magic by putting names up there and then you will know exactly where you are sitting. Again, we want to thank all of you for being very patient, and I apologize because the issue that is on the floor is one that I am actively involved in, so I am getting e-mails in regards to our activity, so I apologize.

As everyone sits down, I will do a quick introduction and then we will just kind of go down the row here, if that is OK.

Christopher Geldart is the Director of the District of Columbia's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, serving as the Homeland Security Advisor to the Mayor and Emergency Management Director. Again, we appreciate you being here today.

We also have Kenneth Mallette, who is Executive Director of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency and is responsible for coordinating the State's response in any major emergency or disaster and coordinating the integration of Federal grant programs and others.

Barbara Donnellan is the County Manager of Arlington County, Virginia, representing the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, where she serves as Chairwoman of the Chief Administrative Officers Homeland Security Executive Committee. You all have long titles.

James Schwartz is the Fire Chief of the Arlington County Fire Department, a very short title and it is self-describing. Chief Schwartz has been in Arlington County for more than 27 years.

Let me, if I can, just start with you, Christopher, and if you can keep your testimony as tight as you can, and then we will go into some questions. But I appreciate you all being here today.

TESTIMONY OF CHRISTOPHER T. GELDART,¹ DIRECTOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. GELDART. Thank you, sir. Good afternoon, Chairman Begich. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss incident response coordination in the National Capital Region and how we work with public and private partners at all levels of government to enhance regional preparedness.

Specifically, I would like to discuss the unique character of the NCR, as the Nation's Capital, home of hundreds of thousands of

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Geldart appears in the Appendix on page 27.

Federal employees, a hub for mass events like marathons, demonstrations, ceremonies, and Presidential Inaugurations, and a major target for manmade and natural disasters. I also appreciate the opportunity to highlight the critical nature of special event planning and our efforts in regional coordination in preparedness and response.

I would like to add some context to the District of Columbia's role within the National Capital Region. The 68 square miles of the District is home to approximately 632,000 residents. It is the destination for 17 million visitors annually, the center of all three branches of government, and headquarters to 12 of the 15 executive cabinet level Federal agencies. The District of Columbia hosts a plethora of special events every year, and each is subject to a full and individual preparedness and response effort.

I chair the Mayor's Special Events Task Group, which brings together all District public safety entities and relevant Federal agencies to address public safety and other logistical concerns surrounding special events. Annually, the group coordinates over 100 special events, including the Presidential Inaugurations. More than 800,000 people attended the 2013 Presidential Inauguration, and in 2009, 1.2 million attendees set the record for largest attendance for any event in Washington, DC's history.

We also know very well the kind of public safety plan that goes into marathon events, like the Boston Marathon. The District holds multiple races each year, including the Marine Corps Marathon, the Nike Women's Half Marathon, and the Nation's Triathlon.

In addition to our unique character as a special events hub, the District of Columbia is a nucleus for Federal employees. More than 300,000 Federal employees work in the District of Columbia every day. This character creates a distinct synergy between the Federal Government as an employer and the emergency planning and response efforts we do as a city. Because of this synergy, the District of Columbia must maintain a close working relationship and continuous link with Federal entities, such as the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in order to coordinate information such as governmental closings, liberal leave, early dismissals, shelter in place, and evacuation.

The region has developed people, processes, and tools necessary to effect a coordinated incident response. For threat and warning, the region has invested in four Fusion Centers, the Washington Region Threat Analysis Center, the Maryland Coordination Analysis Center, the NCR Intelligence Center, and the Virginia Fusion Center. The Directors of these Fusion Centers have regular meetings to share pertinent information, best practices, and joint intelligence projects. We closely coordinate joint threat assessments for inauguration planning, Fourth of July, and any special events that warrant collaboration.

For situational awareness, the District's Joint All Hazards Operations Center housed at the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, is a 24/7 Emergency Operations Center that facilitates the District and assists in coordinating regional situational awareness. During an incident, the NCR, through the region's Emergency Managers, uses the Incident

Command System as a primary means for coordinating responses from the Incident Commander on the ground through the region's EOCs.

The region has also developed inherent capabilities for interoperable communications, both data and voice, which enables a highly coordinated response amongst jurisdictions. In addition, the region performs mutual aid operations on a daily basis and has the means to scale mutual aid for larger disasters. The NCR has developed unique capabilities, including nine Type 1 bomb squads, swift water rescue, and HAZMAT teams and associated equipment. The region has also outfitted every firefighter in the NCR with two sets of personal protective equipment.

The region has developed the capability to track patients throughout an incident, from initial triage all the way through unification to their families, and to assist in managing hospital bed numbers. The region is also working on the ability to link our Computer Aided Dispatch systems.

The region conducts numerous training and exercises to ensure these capabilities can perform to standard, health and medical point of distribution exercises, Incident Command System drills, functional exercises, and communication training. We recently conducted a 4-day exercise that tested our response capabilities in the event of a ten-kiloton improvised nuclear device detonation. This exercise tested the close coordination amongst regional partners at the State, local, and Federal level.

In addition to the people, process, and tools for preparedness and response to be effective, the NCR also requires unique administrative and collaborative efforts. Two critical entities in this are the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the National Capital Region Coordination Office, each with distinct yet complementary functions. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), serves as a convener of the participating NCR governance bodies and the responders that work for them across the region.

MWCOG has a key role in providing information sharing and coordination during incident response, convening conference calls for senior leaders across the region. For example, MWCOG conducts snow calls prior to predicted snowstorms to allow the region's leadership to discuss potential action plans and develop clear regional understanding of response needs. MWCOG is a liaison for these calls, not an agenda setter or decisionmaker, but it is a pivotal role.

In the past, the National Capital Region Coordination Office has provided the key connection and coordination point with the local Federal entities in the NCR, those agencies with buildings and employees within the National Capital Region which would be affected by a natural or manmade disaster in the region. The office has a pivotal role like MWCOG in coordination during a response. For example, during a number of real world and planned special events, the NCRC Director has convened key DHS and FEMA officials with Regional Homeland Security advisors and Emergency Management Directors, Governors, and mayors to share information and action plans. The NCRC's Watch Desk within the National Watch Center is pivotal and singular in providing Federal agencies

and their Emergency Operations Centers with information from the Regional Operations Centers.

Having held positions in the NCR for the last decade, and as a current Homeland Security Advisor and Emergency Management Director for the District of Columbia, I believe that the region has come a long way in producing the capabilities and capacity to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from events that could affect our region. Our unique region has formed organizational structures that, though still developing, have enabled a District, a State, and a Commonwealth, and three branches of Federal Government to plan, train, and respond together in an effective manner.

From an emergency management perspective, the NCR is one of the most challenging regions in the country. The region will continue to have challenges going forward, and as the Director of DC's Emergency Management Agency, I feel confident in the relationships and professionalism of my partners from all levels of government in responding to and meeting those challenges.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you very much. Kenneth.

TESTIMONY OF KENNETH J. MALLETT,¹ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MARYLAND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. MALLETT. Thank you, Chairman, and on behalf of Governor Martin O'Malley, I want to thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts regarding preparedness and response capabilities in the NCR.

As you indicated earlier, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency is the lead agency in our State for coordinating preparedness efforts and responses to major events. Our local police, fire, and emergency medical services are often the first to respond to emergencies, but when their resources are exhausted and they need additional capabilities, they turn to the Maryland Emergency Management Agency for assistance.

Maryland works very hard every day with local and regional response partners to strengthen the NCR's ability to respond. I serve on the region's Senior Policy Group, along with Homeland Security Advisors and the heads of emergency management for Maryland, Virginia, and my counterpart, the District of Columbia, as well as the Director of FEMA's Office of the National Capital Region Coordinator. This group meets regularly to identify gaps in the region's response capabilities, sets targets and goals, evaluates the progress and participates in preparedness exercises and training.

As an Emergency Manager, situational awareness is among our most important responsibilities. Thanks to strategic investments of Homeland Security grants within the region, the response agencies are able to share real-time information on emergency response activities through our Web-based emergency management software system. We monitor the region's roadway conditions using a system known as the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS). Our public health responders use a biosurveillance tool called ESSENCE to detect the presence of biological agents and other infectious public health threats.

¹ The prepared statement of Mr. Mallette appears in the Appendix on page 36.

Every jurisdiction in the NCR has systems in place to push emergency information to the public through text messages, social media, and traditional public communications means.

The NCR jurisdictions also recognize the importance of preparedness training and exercises to ensure that first responders and executive leaders are ready when events and disasters occur. Last year, Maryland Emergency Management Agency helped lead a series of workshops throughout the NCR to identify specific emergency level response training and preparedness needs. The resulting training and exercise plan will help us build the specialized skills needed to respond to terrorist attacks or natural disasters in the future.

Active engagement with Federal agencies in the NCR is critical to the region's ability to effectively respond. As you know, for more than 10 years, FEMA's Office of the National Capital Region has served as a single point of contact for the NCR local emergency managers to help them coordinate response plans with the hundreds of Federal departments, agencies, and offices that operate in their jurisdictions, including at least 23 in Maryland.

As home to the Nation's Capital and many Federal assets that are critical to maintaining continuity of government, the NCR should continue to have access to FEMA resources that are dedicated to meeting the region's preparedness needs. Although I am pleased that the Office of the National Capital Region will continue to have a presence in the region, I believe that the Office will be better able to serve the NCR's jurisdictions by being able to report to and draw resources from the highest levels within FEMA headquarters.

It is not difficult to imagine the attacks of this year's Boston Marathon happening at any one of the major public events that draw thousands of participants to the National Mall each year. The tools and capabilities that Boston effectively deployed in response to the bombing—interoperable voice systems, specialized bomb and the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) detection equipment, and information sharing platforms—are similar to the response capabilities that the NCR has invested its resources for the past 10 years.

Although we can never predict with complete certainty how emergency events will unfold, the NCR is well positioned for responding effectively to notice and no-notice events.

Mr. Chairman, again, thank you for allowing me to testify.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you very much, Kenneth. Barbara.

TESTIMONY OF BARBARA DONNELLAN,¹ COUNTY MANAGER, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA, AND CHAIR, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS HOMELAND SECURITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Ms. DONNELLAN. Good afternoon, Chairman Begich, and thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon.

As you have stated, for the last 2 years, I have served as Chair of the Chief Administrative Officers Homeland Security Executive

¹ The prepared statement of Ms. Donnellan appears in the Appendix on page 41.

Committee at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, COG. In this role, I have worked closely with the Senior Policy Group to manage homeland security programs in the National Capital Region. I am very pleased to be here with my colleagues from the region because our homeland security coordination work is detailed and continues throughout the year. All of us have become not only colleagues, but good friends. We know these relationships are critical to enhancing the safety of this region.

The terrorist attacks of 2001 required us to reassess how we were working together to address the security needs of the NCR. There is no doubt that as the seat of Federal Government, we will continue to be a high-priority target for those who seek to do harm.

Additionally, the unique nature of the NCR, which spans two States, the District of Columbia, 14 local jurisdictions, and nearly 240 Federal agencies, requires the full integration of Federal, State, regional, and local efforts. To accomplish this integration, we established a regional governance structure to coordinate planning, emergency management operations, and funding across the NCR. Importantly, this structure has also provided for enhanced coordination with the private and nonprofit sectors. They are important partners in our preparation efforts.

Working through COG and in coordination with the Office of National Capital Regional Coordination (ONCRC), we have developed one of the most robust regional homeland security programs in the Nation. Guiding our work is the NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan. Initially, it was developed in 2006 and it was updated in 2010. It provides the strategic framework for our efforts and our investments.

The NCR's Strategic Plan identifies four goals. One, to ensure the interoperability of communication capabilities. Two, to enhance information sharing and situational awareness. Three, to enhance critical infrastructure protection. And four, to ensure the development and maintenance of regional core capabilities.

Flowing from this Strategic Plan, we have developed an NCR Investment Plan to accomplish our strategic goals. We have an Annual Work Plan to guide our investments, and we are continuing to work on a Performance Measurement Plan to monitor and evaluate our progress.

After every major event, not only across this country but, indeed, throughout the world, we are constantly reevaluating our plans and our capabilities to assess our ability to prevent, respond to the threats that we face each day. Each event provides us with an opportunity to ask the important question: Are we prepared for this type of an event, and how would we respond to it if it occurred? This evaluation includes not only manmade disasters and events, but natural ones, as well. We in the NCR have seen our share of those in the last few years, as was mentioned—the earthquake in August 2011, followed by Hurricane Irene several weeks later, the derecho, and then Hurricane Sandy. These events also teach us important lessons and help us to identify areas where additional attention is required, particularly in the area of critical infrastructure protection.

I want to thank Congress for recognizing the Federal role required for our region and for providing Federal funding to support

the significant investment in regional emergency management programs that have been vital to our work. This funding has been critical as we seek to address the unique homeland security and emergency management needs of our region. You continue to direct support to the essentials for maintaining and continuously improving the readiness of the NCR.

An issue of considerable concern to the local jurisdictions in the region is the future of the ONCRC and FEMA's announcement to reorganize the Office program delivery and communication functions. We understand that FEMA has agreed to put the plan on hold in order to receive input from its regional partners. We look forward to this opportunity to work together to develop the best design for the ONCRC to meet the goals of this region, consistent with the congressional intent.

In closing, I would like to emphasize again that because of planning, coordination, and exercises we have sponsored, as well as our cooperation with the Federal, State, and community partners, the NCR is significantly better prepared for the next emergency and all other threats and hazards that may come our way.

Again, I would like to thank you for holding this hearing today and for your continued support for the NCR. We look forward to continuing work with this Committee and the Congress to meet the homeland security needs of our region. I am very pleased to answer any questions.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you very much.

Thank you again, all of you, for being here today. James.

TESTIMONY OF JAMES H. SCHWARTZ,¹ FIRE CHIEF, ARLINGTON COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your interest and attention to preparedness efforts in the National Capital Region. I also appreciate the opportunity to be here today representing the first responders of the National Capital Region as we work to secure the region for our citizens, businesses, and visitors.

I would like to note, as you have heard from some of my colleagues, that the region has a very special set of working relationships among the different disciplines and different governments here. We use those relationships every day of the week, and it is those relationships that have been and will be leveraged for the next event that we might experience here, whether it be a Boston-like attack, a coastal storm, or something more catastrophic.

The National Capital Region is well versed in managing large-scale events, from those that occur without warning to those that involve the coordination of dozens or even hundreds of agencies in support of national special security events.

On September 11, 2001, the Arlington County Fire Department was the lead agency for the response to the attack on the Pentagon. I served as the Incident Commander in a unified command effort recognized nationally and internationally as a model of intergovernmental and interdisciplinary collaboration. The success of that

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Schwartz appears in the Appendix on page 52.

response was the result of many lessons learned from previous tragedies in the region, including the importance of mutual aid, the need for joint planning, and the use of the Incident Command System, which after September 11, 2001, became national doctrine.

Since September 11, 2001, the NCR has developed hundreds of new regional capabilities, most of which have been enhancements to the foundation of resources and services funded by local governments throughout the region. Allow me to provide a few examples of ways the NCR has improved its preparedness for a host of hazards.

With regard to mass casualty incidents, we have deployed a total of 23 Mass Casualty Response Units, each carrying supplies for between 50 and 100 victims. We have also deployed 10 ambulance buses throughout the region. These buses are capable of carrying 20 non-ambulatory or 25 ambulatory patients. And all of these resources are used in the region through a Mass Casualty Incident Plan applied the same way in each of the jurisdictions.

The region has also implemented, or is in the process of implementing, a patient tracking system that, as you heard from Mr. Geldart, will assist in the distribution of patients and the tracking of those patients from incident scene all the way through medical care and assist in the family reunification process.

The region has embarked on the implementation of Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC), which seizes on the lessons of combat medicine for trauma care learned in the fields of Afghanistan and Iraq and adapts them for civilian use. TECC has already been taught to several fire and EMS departments in the region, and as we speak, thousands of law enforcement officers are being taught the techniques and being equipped with individual kits that can be used when they or a fellow officer are injured.

In a further effort to prepare for the unthinkable, we have studied the 2008 Mumbai attack and some departments have developed a capability for EMS personnel to enter an area where casualties from an active shooter may lay before the gunman is subdued. This capability includes the use of TECC and the extraction of victims to a casualty collection point where more advanced medical procedures can be provided out of harm's way.

Again, as you heard from Mr. Geldart, the NCR is the home to seven local and two State bomb teams. Unique among this effort in the National Capital Region is that these teams are highly integrated. They are interoperable, with standardized equipment and procedures, and they provide backup to each other through the region's system of mutual aid.

While these and many other resource capabilities represent significant capacity, it is important to observe that these discrete capabilities are useful only when deployed under an effective Incident Management System. The region's successful response to the 9/11 attacks was largely due to two factors: The Incident Command System was already well understood in the region and practiced daily for smaller incidents, and key leaders, especially at the operational levels, had grown to know and trust each other. This continues today.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that the NCR has made significant improvements to its preparedness efforts, especially over

the last 12 years. It is worth acknowledging that there is more to be done, and each investment that we make must be regularly evaluated for its currency, and we must continue to ensure that the capabilities that we have developed are well maintained and can be properly executed when necessary. The strength of the NCR continues to be the strong relationships that have existed and continue to be fostered in recognition of the special nature of our region.

Again, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest on this topic today and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you again, all of you, for your testimony. I have a few questions, but I again thank you for doing this.

Let me, if I can, maybe—this is kind of a general question, maybe for any of you to answer. I know when I was mayor, we did something that I thought was very successful and actually kind of increased our capacity of emergency response, and I think you have all identified it is not just terrorists but it is all the other pieces that are somewhat more frequent, which we do not like, but the fact is they are more frequent, these natural disasters.

We set out on a course to train every single one of our municipal employees in emergency preparedness in the sense of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training and some other additional training. CPR was the core, and then if someone wanted to advance up, we would do that. We had 3,000 employees, and the goal was that we could turn the dial very quickly for those that were available to at least have some training that we did, and CPR was the first, to make sure that everyone had that training.

In any of your regions, are you experimenting with anything like this, or have done something like this? I just think about how many government workers live in this region, and when there is a disaster—one I remember distinctly is the snow disaster, when people just were stuck on the freeway and some people just got out of their cars. To me, that was crazy, but that was what people did. But, any thought on that, how to activate so everyone is kind of a partner, but not one you can call on them when you want? Does anyone want to comment on that?

Mr. GELDART. Sure. I will take a stab at it.

Senator BEGICH. OK, maybe start. Sure.

Mr. GELDART. So, Mr. Chairman, in the District of Columbia, we have 32,000 employees at the District Government level. Many of them do CPR training, and our D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Service is going around and doing that and we are rolling it out even more. So that is the start point. We also have many that are trained to come work within our ICS structure, so within the EOC and other areas to help out, as well.

We do specialty bomb training and situational awareness training, just general awareness, because our Department of Public Works (DPW) crews, our Department of Transportation (DOT), Traffic Control Officers (TCOs), are out on the street all the time when we are doing special events. So we utilize, and Cathy Lanier, our Chief of Police, pushes that out there to them, to have a watchful eye.

Senator BEGICH. Got you.

Mr. GELDART. Is there something that does not look right? What does a suspicious package look like? What does a suspicious individual look like? And they really become eyes and ears for the Metropolitan Police Department in that sense.

And it is a great point you bring up, though, sir. We had Joe Bruno and Kelly McKinney come down from New York City to brief the region on the after-action from Hurricane Sandy and what they did well and what they think they could have improved on, and one of the things they mentioned in there was the amount of training, and I think New York is something crazy like 300,000 employees—

Senator BEGICH. It is unbelievable.

Mr. GELDART [continuing]. Or something like that, but all of them are, to a certain extent, trained, but also become volunteer workers, if you want to call it that, emergency workers—

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. GELDART [continuing]. For the city when something bad happens. So it is a very good point and I think that is being picked up by a lot of the municipalities right now.

Senator BEGICH. Very good.

Any additional comments? Barbara.

Ms. DONNELLAN. Just a couple thoughts. That is a very ambitious goal, to get the CPR for that. We have close to 3,700 employees, as well, and I would say that we do not do it to that degree, but what my staff is involved in is incident command.

Senator BEGICH. Mm-hmm.

Ms. DONNELLAN. So we do train them so that when we set up for an emergency, I have people from all walks of life—

Senator BEGICH. All the different agencies are involved.

Ms. DONNELLAN [continuing]. Every single agency involved, and then they have to retrain different teams—

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Ms. DONNELLAN [continuing]. Because you need more than 24 hours if it should continue on.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Ms. DONNELLAN. So we do that. But in addition to that, we have a robust volunteer program where we train the community as the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the citizens in the community to help us to go out and do that.

Senator BEGICH. Yes.

Ms. DONNELLAN. And the other thing is, we are doing more of this, and Jim can talk to what he has just mentioned to me about teachers, but another way of thinking about it is the active shooter issue. Houston had done an incredible tape on how to respond to active shooter in a workplace—

Senator BEGICH. Mm-hmm.

Ms. DONNELLAN [continuing]. And we modified that tape, because it is a little bit scary, and put a nice introduction to it to say, unfortunately, we live in these times and it is important for you to know this information. We hope it never happens. And I was anxious about putting that out to the entire workforce, but I did. And when I got responses back, they were thrilled to have that knowledge on how to respond. And sometimes it is just the training and the thinking that goes into the beforehand that helps employ-

ees think about things and how they can help the community, as well.

Senator BEGICH. That is great. We actually have a bill that I have introduced—the President has taken it up in one of his packages—on mental health first aid for, basically, individuals within educational environments—universities, K through 12, post-secondary—and the whole goal is that they get the skills. I actually took this idea from what they do in Memphis, I think it is Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) where we got the idea to train our police officers on emergency response when someone has a mental illness, because you may have a different kind of response. And in the school setting—

Ms. DONNELLAN. Absolutely.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. It is a whole different situation. And the idea is to deaccelerate the situation as quickly as possible, protect the people that are there. And the idea of this mental health first aid, which has been endorsed by many of the mental health groups, the White House has picked up on it—we put some funding, actually, in the appropriations bill this cycle to try to push that out to the schools to give some tools. And it is not to say, here is how it should be done, but here are some resources to schools to prepare your teachers or others not to be the manager of the incident, but understand how to deal with an incident when it may occur in your classroom or in your setting. And it is for police officers, first responders, educational institutions. And so it is very interesting that you are doing that.

Ms. DONNELLAN. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. Any other quick comment on that? Kenneth, and then I am going to jump to another couple questions.

Mr. MALLETT. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Just one thing is that, as you are familiar with, the Community Emergency Response Team program, this is the last year that FEMA will be funding that program, and it has been a very successful program, not only for local jurisdictions, but many—

Senator BEGICH. Can I interrupt you? How long has FEMA been funding that, do you recall right offhand?

Mr. MALLETT. Since 2003, I think.

Senator BEGICH. Two-thousand-three. And this is their last fiscal year—

Mr. MALLETT. Fiscal year.

Senator BEGICH. This Fiscal Year we are in right now—

Mr. MALLETT. Is the last year that they are going to fund that program. But we have really taken that program to not only the public sector, but also the private sector. Many large businesses are putting together Community Emergency Response Teams. And so it has been a very effective program and we are going to try to use some State and local funding. But that is one of the most successful programs. And also COOP, Continuity of Operations, where we are teaching people to take on not only their primary role, but also a secondary role during emergency response.

Senator BEGICH. Would you all agree that funding that FEMA has utilized for the CERT teams have been helpful?

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Very much so.

Ms. DONNELLAN. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. Very much so. I mean, it is always—with our tight budgets—everyone has them—but it seems like the limited amount of money that goes through that program augments what you are doing locally, the private sector as well as State. So you think that money is a helpful piece of the equation.

Mr. MALLETT. Absolutely.

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. Let me ask some specific ones, and then let me kind of focus for a minute on Mr. Geldart and the District of Columbia, and that is, tell me—you kind of mentioned it, but I want to get more specific here—with the utility folks, do you do joint training? They are always the ones we hear about on the radio, not necessarily in D.C., I would say in Maryland and Virginia. But do you have joint training exercises for how they can respond in case of a disaster, natural and/or manmade, terrorist? Any—

Mr. GELDART. Yes, sir. So, Mr. Chairman, we started post the de-recho, under the Mayor's leadership, did a task force that looked at how do we start to deal with the issue, specifically with inside the District of Columbia, of power reliability and resiliency for storms and for other things. That has run its course. We have a report that came out from that we are working with the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) on. They are our sole provider for power inside the District of Columbia.

However, we started a process off of that in working with the power companies that started back about a year ago now, where we sat down with the operations folks on the power company side, those that do restoration, those that bring in the crews when we have large-scale disasters and large-scale outages, and we sat down with them to start the dialogue to say, look, we are missing something here between the emergency management folks, those that are working response on the government side, and you all on the private sector side. Something is not happening, because we can be doing a better job.

And so we sat down with them and we came up with a couple of areas where we thought it could really make some improvements, in which we had a discussion-based exercise held at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments with all of not only the members here within the NCR, but then also actually going up the 95 corridor all the way up to New York City, because the power providers—

Senator BEGICH. Right. It is the whole grid.

Mr. GELDART [continuing]. Do not know those kind of boundaries. Right. So we took it in a true regional context, the I-95 Corridor Region, and sat down with them and basically came up with two areas. One involves fleet movement for mutual aid response from within the power companies themselves.

Senator BEGICH. Mm-hmm.

Mr. GELDART. So, wherever they get trucks from and crews from and things like that, that will come in to do the repairs.

Senator BEGICH. Got you.

Mr. GELDART. How do we help them, from a public sector perspective, get their people here quicker—weigh stations, toll booths, all those kinds of things they have to traverse through the region to get to the most affected areas. So how can we, as the public sec-

tor, those that own those toll booths and those weigh stations and other things, how can we help them move quicker? That was one thing we are taking on.

The second one was the power companies provide an Emergency Liaison Officer to us in our Emergency Operations Centers. They should be able to give us much better information on estimated time for recovery, when we can be back up, what exactly is down, and a better coordination of—we do well on this, but a better coordination of what are our key, most important things we need restored and when, so our prioritization list.

Senator BEGICH. I just have an additional question on the utility one, and then I have just a thought on snow, and I am going to then move down.

Mr. GELDART. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH. But on the issue on the utility, you folks in the District of Columbia are now doing underground—you are on some pathway to do undergrounding, if I recall this right. Is that—

Mr. GELDART. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH. And I know in Anchorage, what we did many years ago required the utility, which they get cost recovery through their rate structure—I think it is 4 percent a year for our utility lines—because we were finding with heavy snow or weather conditions—icing, mostly—

Mr. GELDART. Right.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. That the lines could come down instantaneously or create other situations. We have been very successful in that, and new construction—

Mr. GELDART. Right.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. Is all required underground.

Mr. GELDART. Absolutely.

Senator BEGICH. Can you just give me a little flash point on that—

Mr. GELDART. Sure.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. And what is going on there.

Mr. GELDART. And that was a very big part of the conversation, and there is a full plan within the—

Senator BEGICH. Utility companies hate it, because it costs them money. I know that, but—

Mr. GELDART. They were actually—

Senator BEGICH. They understand the repairs are better, to have them not have to go out there in freezing cold weather, so—it is a mixed view, I know, sometimes.

Mr. GELDART. Sure. The bigger issue really is, it is easier for them to run a line and put a new pole up than to dig it underground.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. GELDART. So you will have less, potentially, frequent power outages, but potentially longer time for recovery because they have to find where it is underground. So there is a tradeoff and all.

Senator BEGICH. Except, I would say, the new, and they call them Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems—

Mr. GELDART. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. Unbelievable technology.

Mr. GELDART. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH. And today, they can track them—I know we do this, because we have to——

Mr. GELDART. Right.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. With weather conditions. Our depths are probably much deeper——

Mr. GELDART. Right.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. There than where we have to plant those lines here, water, sewer, and others.

Mr. GELDART. Right.

Senator BEGICH. The SCADA systems are unbelievable now.

Mr. GELDART. And that is a huge help——

Senator BEGICH. So, is that moving along at——

Mr. GELDART. Yes, it is.

Senator BEGICH. So you feel like there is acceptance? Everyone is participating? They recognize——

Mr. GELDART. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. This is a long-term value.

Mr. GELDART. And so there is a long-term plan that has come out of that and how we are going to do it and where do we start to do undergrounding, and then took into account those areas that you start to do that work on, when you start to do that, where does it become fragile and where should we work on first, vice second, in case of emergencies and things like that, so——

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. GELDART [continuing]. We have looked at that.

Senator BEGICH. Let me throw out one thought and then I am going to go down the line here, and I am going to watch our time. And again, I apologize. We started late. This is just one—coming from snow—I never thought I would actually be in this position to be able to say this, so you are here, I am here. This is a great opportunity.

So, I experienced a snow—it is very unique how you manage snow here, not necessarily you, but——

Mr. GELDART. Right.

Senator BEGICH. Let me just pause there for everyone's own thought on that. But it always surprises me, when we had that big snowfall, and we had a couple others, but that one big one, the way snow removal occurs, which causes more problems for emergency vehicles and other things. And it seems logical, because we—and I say “we” collectively in the District here—if there is a snow coming, we send people home. I mean, basically, everyone starts to abandon the city. And what is unique about that is every government parking lot is now empty.

Why do we not have a plan that says, for citizens, like Zone 6, Zone 3, whatever, these are your designated parking locations in a snow disaster. So, they are empty. Do not park on the street. You will park in this area, because mostly it is in this dense zone here. So, then the snow removal can move much quicker, because in some cases, it took a week because you had to wait for it to melt.

Mr. GELDART. Sure.

Senator BEGICH. And every day, I walked by these empty parking lots and it just made no sense. Is that something—because those are federally controlled—is there something we can help you

with, with the General Services Administration (GSA)? It just seems those massive parking lots, and they are empty and everyone is jammed up on the—I call it the war for the parking spaces, because you shovel it all out——

Mr. GELDART. That is right.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. And then you have someone standing out there——

Mr. GELDART. That is right.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. Protecting your parking space because you know someone might sneak in. It is the most amazing thing. But then trash stops getting picked up. Emergency vehicles become very problematic.

Mr. GELDART. Sure.

Senator BEGICH. Is there a thought there, or are you thinking of that, or is there something we can help you with our friends at GSA that sometimes I know is—we have to have long conversations at times with them.

Mr. GELDART. Sure, and——

Senator BEGICH. I am being polite. Any thought there?

Mr. GELDART. Sure. That is—using the Federal parking lots would be a great idea, either for the cars or the snow, either way you want to do that.

Senator BEGICH. Right. Yes.

Mr. GELDART. But it really does come down to, those are not our areas.

Senator BEGICH. OK.

Mr. GELDART. And we cannot authorize——

Senator BEGICH. But is it an asset that, if you are in this region——

Mr. GELDART. That would be great.

Senator BEGICH. Because I am just thinking of all those cars, they could all park in there. And I saw an emergency vehicle. I said, there is no way if someone had a heart attack, I mean, your vehicles, your paramedics, or your fire truck, forget it. Paramedic, maybe——

Mr. GELDART. Right.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. Because of the dimension of the vehicle. But forget a fire truck.

Mr. GELDART. We have actually—there has been a lot of work that has been done since that large snowfall in the way in which we do snow removal throughout the city. Bill Hallin, who runs our Department of Public Works, has done a lot of good work with his folks. We actually have a—they call him the Snow Czar—a gentleman that is what his job is.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. GELDART. And he is actually up in at Emergency Management Institute (EMI), teaching something on that right now to other cities, on some of the changes that they have done. So I think they have looked at that. The thought of using Federal parking lots——

Senator BEGICH. And it is just temporary. You move the cars off——

Mr. GELDART. Sure.

Senator BEGICH. You are there until your street is cleared. Then you can go back and park there.

Mr. GELDART. Sure, and the one thing that I have learned in being in the job here and being in the region, getting the availability to use the parking lots may become a lot easier than convincing people that they need to park there instead of right in front of their homes, so——

Senator BEGICH. I understand, where they cannot get to their home because they have four feet of snow——

Mr. GELDART. Right.

Senator BEGICH. But just a thought. And if it is worthwhile and your Snow Czar or you think it is of value, please let me know——

Mr. GELDART. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH [continuing]. And I would be happy to followup. It is always—literally, I walked past them. I thought, my God, there is a lot of real State there that is sitting there. And I, of course, was thinking, well, it is Federal jurisdiction. They probably cannot touch them. And yet they are fenced off and locked down. It makes no sense. So just a little food for thought.

Mr. GELDART. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH. Let me, if I can, go to a couple, and Barbara, you had mentioned this, and all of you kind of mentioned this, but what do you think in regards to the Federal grants that we are issuing, and you noted one that is a concern. We just had a hearing on Federal grants and how that is working. Any of you could really answer this, but I know in some of your testimony, you talked a little bit about it.

But do you think the grants are successful? Are we or you measuring them in a way that we can really determine, these grants are working? As you know, there is criticism from some of my colleagues that we give these grants, we do not know what the results are, and they want more. Do you think we have—and, really, anyone could answer this—the right tools in place, or should we look at some additional tools to determine the effectiveness of the multiple grants that we give out. Even though it is a diminishing amount, and I recognize that, is there something we could do better here from FEMA or partnership with the stakeholders on this?

Ms. DONNELLAN. It is interesting. We have spent the last couple years at COG trying to really figure out what is the right thing to be spending money on and how this grant could be best utilized based on how we have used it in the last number of years. And this year, particularly, we did not fund everything that came through that was asked for in past years. We wanted more information and what is the data to justify certain things. And also, I have been having a conversation with my local counterparts to say, as Federal funds diminish, what really is sustainable that we must continue to have funding for that we may have to pick up if there is no Federal funds?

The difficulty, though, is there is always going to be needs that have not been met yet——

Senator BEGICH. Correct.

Ms. DONNELLAN [continuing]. Such as cybersecurity or things like that we are beginning to embark on a little bit more——

Senator BEGICH. Mm-hmm.

Ms. DONNELLAN [continuing]. Which has to do with power grids and different things like that, as well.

But one of the things that I think the Chief might talk to is—that FEMA could do, and you mentioned something earlier which I thought was interesting, was the mental health, kind of response to that. What would be helpful is if we could know what best practices are throughout the country that are really successful so that you can say, well, this Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) fund really makes sense to use for these certain things, and that when we have success, like there are a number of things that we have done that we think are really credible and really would be helpful in instances, we can share that information.

Or if there is something that is a total failure, why—no one tells us and says, well, that failed in three other cities. You should not do it. That would be helpful, as well.

Senator BEGICH. So, FEMA kind of supplying kind of the best practice list.

Ms. DONNELLAN. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. Chief.

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Yes, Mr. Chairman. What I would say is what we have somewhat lost sight of is the fact that the original intent of these grants was not just to help resource local governments in service to their communities, but to create, really, a nationwide architecture of preparedness—

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. SCHWARTZ [continuing]. So that both vertically and horizontally, we were more connected in developing an adequate system of prevention, response, recovery.

Senator BEGICH. Can I give you a thought there, just to interrupt you—

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Sure.

Senator BEGICH. And that is, I am thinking of when I was mayor, my friend Martin O'Malley was mayor, and I remember when Hurricane Katrina happened, we could not—he had a heck of a time trying to get the coordination, because they wanted to bring supplies from Maryland down South and he just gave up and decided just to go do it, which I thought was great. And mayors did that.

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Right.

Senator BEGICH. We just said, we could not—well, what is the best way to do this and how to create this, and that really did not exist then, a national—

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Well, in that particular instance, it was the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) that people were trying to work through, and I give a lot of credit. EMAC has refined a lot of the obstacles that I think were—

Senator BEGICH. Right, but that is part of the overall national architecture, is that right?

Mr. SCHWARTZ. It is certainly—yes. It is an acknowledgement that resources in Maryland may end up in Louisiana—

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Or resources in California need to go to Texas.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. SCHWARTZ. But to Ms. Donnellan's point, the ability for, whether it is a UASI jurisdiction or just a State administering their statewide grant programs, to know what has been successful or what has not been so successful would be extremely useful. It would create much more efficiency. We might not be wasting money on very good efforts that we simply do not know have already been tried somewhere else.

Senator BEGICH. Mm-hmm.

Mr. SCHWARTZ. I think as importantly, FEMA could identify some priorities, in consultation with the stakeholders, and incentivize through the grant programs—as an example, the patient tracking program that I talked about.

Senator BEGICH. Yes, that is interesting.

Mr. SCHWARTZ [continuing]. To the best of my knowledge is fairly unique. Nobody else in the country has tackled this yet.

Senator BEGICH. No, I was going to say, I am unfamiliar until you brought it up.

Mr. SCHWARTZ. And, quite frankly, we tried it once and it did not work. So we spent some money and did not get the results that we wanted. We went back, retooled it, and I think we have hit that sweet spot now. The ability of other jurisdictions to take what we have done, perhaps incentivized by FEMA—FEMA says, look, this grant cycle, we really want to—we are going to earmark a portion of our grant money for people that pursue patient tracking projects, and here is an example of where it was example—

Senator BEGICH. Got you.

Mr. SCHWARTZ [continuing]. Go talk to the National Capital Region, or something, a different kind of project that might have been created in another area of the country. Where does that information get shared and how do we really take advantage of what has been successful and, quite frankly, again, what has not panned out quite so successfully.

Senator BEGICH. It is an interesting idea. I know when I participated as mayor to the U.S. Conference of Mayors that we shared a lot. Mayors will sit down, because we have to deal with this stuff. When I was mayor, there was no one else to go to. You were it.

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Yes. And do not get me wrong. There are a lot of professional groups that do share that information.

Senator BEGICH. Yes, but FEMA seems like they could have a real role here, is what you are saying.

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Correct. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. Kenneth, did I see you wanted to say something on that?

Mr. MALLETT. Yes, Mr. Chairman. One of the things that is probably going to be a challenge, as we have seen through a lot of, especially last year, the national-level exercise that FEMA sponsors, is this concept of mission ready packages—

Senator BEGICH. Mm-hmm.

Mr. MALLETT [continuing]. So that these issues—so if a county or a city, and you as a former mayor want to send, or Governor O'Malley when he was a mayor of Baltimore City, hey, I want to send resources to Louisiana, have a mission ready package that is available that is prepackaged—

Senator BEGICH. That they can just push right out the door.

Mr. MALLETTE. And just goes, a package that includes not only the resources, but the stuff that first responders and myself, as a former first responder, do not want to deal with, is the administrative nightmare that goes with that. And so when you have this mission ready package, it is to produce resources, but it is the cost tracking of the resource so that we can then backtrack through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact to be able to ultimately pay for that.

Senator BEGICH. Very good. Christopher, and I apologize, you are probably the last person to speak, only because our time is tight and I already am now again backed up, but go ahead.

Mr. GELDART. I just wanted to——

Senator BEGICH. Yes.

Mr. GELDART [continuing]. Pick up on a little bit of what Jim said, because I think he is right on. The purpose of these grants really was to build that national capability. The Federal Government has capabilities to do certain things.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. GELDART. They do not have a Federal Fire Department. They do not have Federal teams that we are building at the State, and the State does not have the teams that we are building at the local level. It is just kind of the way the process works.

So, looking at how do you measure the successful expenditure of these funds, or how do you look at it being successful going forward, I think that is really it. I mean, we are not running into anything new on the disaster front.

Senator BEGICH. Mm-hmm.

Mr. GELDART. You have a hurricane. You are getting flooded. You are getting wind and water.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. GELDART. If you have a terrorist attack——

Senator BEGICH. It is pretty standard to know what you are begging.

Mr. GELDART. You pretty much know the consequences of these things.

Senator BEGICH. Yes.

Mr. GELDART. So, looking at the measurement of the capability that has been built and which it can be shared nationally, I think, I would agree with Jim wholeheartedly with that. And EMAC is not the sole answer, because as a city, when New York City was going through its trials and tribulations with Hurricane Sandy, here I am a city and I have the mission ready packages put together and I know Joe Bruno up there, the Emergency Manager——

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. GELDART [continuing]. And I am calling him and telling him, I want to send you this stuff, and I can send it to you. Just get your stuff through EMAC, because the District is the only major metropolitan area that is a signatory to EMAC.

Senator BEGICH. Got you.

Mr. GELDART. So I can send that. But if I need that from New York City, they cannot send to me. And until the State says, that team from inside New York City now is a State asset somehow,

that is the only way they can EMAC that to me. That is why the Conference of Mayors is so on, how do I send stuff city to city?

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. GELDART. And I was in Maryland when Mayor O'Malley sent stuff down to——

Senator BEGICH. So you know that experience.

Mr. GELDART. I was part of the State team that helped him get that EMAC mission to do it. So it is a problem that still exists out there, and we have come to John Madden, who is now the Chair——

Senator BEGICH. Yes.

Mr. GELDART [continuing]. Who is the President of NEMA——

Senator BEGICH. From Alaska, yes.

Mr. GELDART [continuing]. Who I am going to be out in your area with him next month.

Senator BEGICH. Oh, good.

Mr. GELDART. And we have talked to him about how do big cities help other big cities and not so big cities when things like this happen, because EMAC does not work for everybody.

Senator BEGICH. Well, I would say this to all of you. I have some more questions, but I will probably send some of these to you. But I would be very anxious—the danger was for the Chairman of the full Committee to put a former mayor as Chairman of this Subcommittee, because I lived this for many years, and I will just throw one last idea, which I know some cities are doing.

We worked an agreement with Home Depot, Sam's, Lowe's, for the first 72 hours. We gave them a Stock Keeping Unit (SKU) list, a list of product they cannot sell until we determine to release it, because what was happening, as you know, in disasters, people, oh my God, they go in and buy every piece of plywood that you might need. So we actually have a list, a predetermined pricing so there is no gouging or anything, but also a predetermined list, and as our first responders determine they do not need a certain product level, they let the Emergency Management Team know, of the private sector in our EOC, to cut those loose. We did this probably about 9 years ago, 10 years ago, and it has worked very well.

One of the best parts of it is, as you know at the private sector, they keep an inventory better than anyone in the world. They know exactly where everything is at any time, where it is on the road. They have it GPS-ed all the way down. And we determined to use their warehousing capacity to supplement our work, and it did not cost us a dime. There were agreements we just signed as a community member. So there is no retention fee or any of that some people might think you have to have.

And I think there is a lot of innovation out there. And you are right, we know what is coming, water, wind. We know. It is just what we do with the assets.

And I think what we are going to try to do here is, with this Office, again, having this hearing, is to try to understand what their role should be in a more expansive way, understanding they did not engage with stakeholders at the level they should have, and finding—and I like some of these ideas of what more can they do to make a difference for not just this region, but for the rest of the

country in regards to emergency response. So your information, your testimony is helpful and I really appreciate that.

We will keep the record open for 14 days. I will submit some additional questions, I hope you do not mind answering. It will be helpful for us.

And you should not hesitate, as people in this region, that if you see areas that we could help, maybe the crazy parking lot idea I have or whatever it might be, you should not hesitate to let us know and we will do what we can, because for all the reasons you all stated in each one of your testimony, the amount of assets that we have here as a public, and as Congresswoman Norton said, I mean, it is an unbelievable place and we have to do everything we can, and it is a big court. I mean, when you described how many different communities and cities, I just was a mayor. Nineteen-hundred square miles was a lot, but we only had 300,000 people, so it was somewhat easier, and this is much more complicated with the layering that goes on. So, please do not hesitate to work with our Committee as you see ideas that we should be exploring with FEMA or just the regional efforts that we are doing.

Thank you all very much for being here today. This meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:12 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X



Statement of
Christopher T. Geldart
Director

District of Columbia
Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency

Before the
United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental
Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal
Workforce, and the District of Columbia

Hearing Title:
"How prepared is the National Capital Region for the next disaster?"

Wednesday, July 31, 2013
2:00 p.m.

Dirksen Senate Office Building
Room 342

Good afternoon Chairman Begich, Ranking Member Paul, and Subcommittee Members. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss incident response coordination within the National Capital Region (NCR), and how we work with public and private partners at all levels of government to enhance regional preparedness. Specifically, I will discuss our unique character both as the Nation's Capital for hundreds of thousands of federal employees, a hub for mass events like marathons, demonstrations, ceremonies and presidential inaugurations, and a major target for man-made and natural hazards. I appreciate the opportunity to highlight the critical nature of special event planning and regional coordination in preparedness and response.

National Capital Region Coordination
Pre-Incident Coordination

I would like to add some context to the District of Columbia's unique role within the NCR. The District is 68 square miles and home to approximately 632,000 residents. It is a destination for 17 million visitors annually, the center of all three branches of government, and headquarters to 12 out of the 15 executive cabinet-level federal agencies.

The District of Columbia hosts a plethora of special events every year, and each is subject to a full and individual preparedness and response effort. This constant special event planning effort is so large that it requires a designated coordinating body, led by the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA). I chair the Mayor's Special Events Task Group, which brings together all District public safety entities and relevant federal agencies to address public safety and other logistical concerns surrounding special events.

Annually, the group coordinates over 100 special events, including presidential inaugurations. More than 800,000 people attended the 2013 Presidential Inauguration and in 2009, the 1.2 million attendees set a record for the largest attendance of any event in Washington, D.C.'s history; it was also the largest attended presidential inauguration in United States history.

We also know very well the kind of public safety planning that goes into marathon events, like the Boston Marathon. The District hosts multiple races each year – including the Marine Corps Marathon, the Nike Women's Half Marathon, and the Nation's Triathlon. Respectively, each year, these events draw approximately 23,000, 15,000, and 5,000 participants and tens of thousands of spectators. In addition, the District of Columbia is a regular destination for organized mass gatherings that can draw hundreds of thousands of attendees.

In addition to our unique character as a special events hub, the District of Columbia is a nucleus for federal employees – more than 300,000 federal employees work in the District every day. This character creates a distinct synergy between the federal government as an employer and the emergency planning and response efforts we do as a city – an evacuation of federal buildings puts thousands of employees on District streets. Because of this synergy, the District of Columbia must maintain close working relationships and a continuous link with federal entities such as the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in order to coordinate information such as government closings, liberal leave, early dismissals, and shelter in place.

In addition to local, state and federal partnerships, pre-incident intelligence is cornerstone to NCR coordination. Intelligence efforts are implemented through four fusion centers - the Washington Regional Threat and Analysis Center, the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center, the NCR Intelligence Center, and the Virginia Fusion Center. The directors of these fusion centers have regular meetings to share pertinent information, best practices, and joint intelligence products. We closely coordinate joint threat assessments, such as for inauguration planning, the Fourth of July and any special events that warrant collaboration. The region also has a planning program management office where planners come together to share and develop coordinated plans for priorities such as resource management and special needs populations.

Coordinated Incident Response

The District's Joint All Hazards Center, housed at the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, is the region's 24/7 emergency operations center that facilitates District and regional situational awareness. Among other things, the Center disseminates emergency communications such as D.C. Alerts and the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System messages. It also serves as the control point for the Washington Area Warning System.

During an incident, the NCR, through the region's emergency managers, has adopted the Incident Command System (ICS) as a primary means for coordinating responses. All first responders are trained in the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and key personnel that staff the region's emergency operations are further trained in ICS response principles. This

training is conducted through the Urban Area Security Initiative - funded NIMS officers in each jurisdiction.

The region has also developed inherent capabilities for interoperable communications, data and voice, which enables a highly coordinated response among jurisdictions. In addition, the region performs mutual aid operations on a daily basis, and has the means to scale mutual aid for larger disasters through agreements that have been developed through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC). Additionally, the NCR developed capabilities include nine Type 1 Bomb Squads, swift water rescue and hazmat equipment and personnel. The region has also outfitted every firefighter in the NCR with two sets of personal protective equipment.

On the health and medical front, the region has developed the capability to track patients throughout an incident – from initial triage all the way through unification to their families – and to assist in managing hospital bed numbers. The region is also currently working on the ability to link our Computer Aided Dispatch systems, which will reduce response times and streamline mutual aid.

The region has conducted a number of exercises to ensure that these capabilities can perform to standard, including health and medical point of distribution exercises, incident command system drills and functional exercises, and communications training. Recently, HSEMA and the Maryland Emergency Management Agency with FEMA's national Incident Management Assistance Teams conducted a four-day exercise that tested our response capabilities in the event

of a ten kiloton improvised nuclear device (IND) detonation. This exercise required close coordination among regional partners at the state, local and federal level.

As stated, the approximate 300,000 federal employees that work in the District are part of the larger federal workforce that lives and works in the NCR. A critical element of regional coordination is communicating with these hundreds of thousands of employees. In the past, the Office of National Capital Region Coordination (NCRC) has been the entity tasked with coordinating the federal government presence in the regional planning and governance structures of the NCR. Specifically, the office convened the NCR Joint Federal Committee, worked with federal building owner/tenants, and coordinated with OPM on workforce status, situational awareness, and information sharing.

Looking Forward

What I have described is a broad picture of the roles, capabilities and processes employed throughout the NCR for preparedness and response. The other critical component in this effort is the administrative and collaboration management piece. Currently, this component is led by the MWCOG and NCRC, each with distinct yet complementary functions.

MWCOG serves as a convener of the participating NCR governance bodies and the responders that work for them across the region. The MWCOG governance structure consists of an Emergency Preparedness Council (local elected officials, federal officials, and private sector entities), Senior Policy Group (homeland security advisors and emergency management directors from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia and the Director of NCRC), Chief

Administrative Officers (county leadership from the MWCOG membership), and the Regional Emergency Support Functions (RESFs) (organizations of police chiefs, fire chiefs, public health officials, and others from across the region). MWCOG provides meeting support and program management functions to the RESFs across the region, and its leadership participates with the governance bodies to develop strategic plans, program area focus, and project management for preparedness projects and capability development.

In addition, MWCOG has a key role in providing information sharing coordination during incident response, such as convening conference calls for senior leaders across the region. These calls include the chief administrative officers, as well as the homeland security advisors and emergency management directors from across the region. For example, MWCOG conducts “snow calls” prior to predicted snow storms to allow the region’s leadership to discuss potential action plans and develop a clear regional understanding of response needs. MWCOG is a liaison for these calls – not an agenda-setter or a decision-maker – performing the vital role of convening high-level responders for collaborative action. MWCOG also facilitates the key function of organizing the after-action products that allow the region to learn from coordinated incidents and improve capabilities.

In the past, the NCRC has provided the key connection and coordination point with the “local” federal entities in the NCR – those agencies with buildings and employees within the NCR, which would be affected by a natural or manmade disaster in the region. The NCRC works through the NCR Joint Federal Committee to forward preparedness efforts across the federal workforce and all three branches of government. The Office also has a pivotal role, much like

MWCOG, in coordination during a response. For example, during a number of real world and planned special events, the NCRC director has convened key DHS and FEMA officials with regional homeland security advisors, emergency management directors, governors and mayors to share information and action plans.

The Office has also conducted several senior official exercises involving the Mayor, Governors, and DHS Secretary to ensure that in the initial hours of an event, the NCR's message on critical protective actions and response measures are common across federal, state and local jurisdictions. Though the NCRC has no role in dedicating resources, administering FEMA programs, or controlling assets from the federal government, its coordination role, its understanding of the NCR, and its ability to bring the right people together at the right time is invaluable.

The NCRC's Watch Desk within the National Watch Center is pivotal and singular in providing federal agencies and their emergency operations centers with information from regional operations centers. Without the NCRC, this regional coordination information currently has no other means of dissemination. There exists a federal Concept of Operations that delineates the roles in coordination and notification responsibilities of the NCRC, the National Watch Center, the FEMA Region III, and the DHS National Operations Center for the first six hours of an incident in the NCR. The development of this Concept of Operations was necessary to show the importance of information flow in the Nation's Capital. The ability of the NCRC director to quickly and directly engage the DHS Secretary and the FEMA Administrator at the onset of a

major event in the NCR is critical to ensuring the safety of the federal workforce and the unity of response efforts in the NCR.

Having held regional positions in the NCR for the last decade, and as the current homeland security advisor and emergency management director for the District of Columbia, and the State Administrative Agent for the NCR, I believe that the region has come a long way in producing the capabilities and capacity to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from events that could affect our region. Our unique region has formed organizational structures that, though still developing, have enabled a district, a state, a commonwealth and three branches of federal government to plan, train, and respond together in an effective manner.

From an emergency management perspective, the NCR is one of the most challenging regions in the country. The region will continue to have challenges going forward, and as the director of the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, I feel confident in the relationships and professionalism of my partners from all levels of government in responding to and meeting those challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony, and I look forward to any questions.

Kenneth J. Mallette
Executive Director, Maryland Emergency Management Agency
Maryland Department of the Military

July 31, 2013

**Testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Emergency Management,
Intergovernmental Relations, and the District of Columbia: “How Prepared is the National
Capital Region for the Next Disaster?”**

Chairman Begich, Ranking Member Paul, and members of the Subcommittee on Emergency Management, Intergovernmental Relations, and the District of Columbia:

My name is Ken Mallette and I serve as the Executive Director of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency. On behalf of Governor Martin O'Malley, I thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts regarding preparedness and response capabilities in the National Capital Region (NCR) and the challenges of fostering an environment that supports emergency response coordination and information sharing.

There are few – if any – other regions in our nation that understand the challenges of building, maintaining, and coordinating response capabilities across state, local, and federal lines as well as the NCR. In our region, we have two states, the District of Columbia, dozens of local jurisdictions and municipalities, as well as hundreds of federal agencies, facilities, and offices that share a dense network of roadways, transit systems, and utility infrastructure. Our interconnection means that when an emergency occurs in one jurisdiction, it does not take long for the effects to be felt throughout the entire region.

Maryland works every day with our local and regional response partners to strengthen the NCR's ability to respond to an emergency. I serve on the region's Senior Policy Group along with the Homeland Security Advisors and the heads of emergency management in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, as well as the Director of FEMA's Office of the National Capital Region Coordinator. This group meets regularly to identify gaps in the region's response capabilities, set targets and goals, review progress made on response capabilities and preparedness initiatives, evaluate their effectiveness, and participate in preparedness exercises.

Additionally, the Senior Policy Group makes funding decisions on homeland security grant programs for the NCR along with the region's Chief Administrative Officer's Homeland Security Executive Committee. To help us make these decisions, we rely on the NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan, which identifies preparedness goals for the region and the target

capabilities that will allow us to achieve these goals. Members from both of these groups participate in the region's Emergency Preparedness Council, which brings public safety leaders together with locally elected officials to share information on preparedness and align response priorities. At the responder level, the region is served by multiple cross-jurisdictional work groups that represent the region's law enforcement, fire, public health, transportation, sheltering, information technology, and other emergency response disciplines. These groups meet regularly to identify the region's preparedness needs, implement projects or initiatives to fill those gaps, report progress to the Senior Policy Group and Chief Administrative Officers, and participate in training and preparedness exercises.

The value of meeting regularly with peers and colleagues to share information on emergency response preparedness and capabilities cannot be overstated. The inclusive planning structure that we have in the NCR means that our public safety leaders know each other by name, are comfortable working together, and know how to contact each other. When an emergency is pending or is in progress, we are able to share and obtain situational awareness, make informed decisions to secure their jurisdictions, execute mutual aid agreements, and perform other critical tasks.

As emergency managers, situational awareness is among our most important responsibilities. In a large geographic area that spans multiple jurisdictions such as the NCR, knowing what is happening, where it is happening, and what is coming next can be especially challenging. Thanks to strategic investments of homeland security grant funds, the region's response agencies are able to access and share real-time emergency response information. In Maryland and in the NCR, we rely on an internet-based, emergency management system to share information and updates on real-time emergency response activities with our local, regional, and federal response partners. We monitor the region's roadway conditions using the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System. Our public health responders use a bio-surveillance tool called ESSENCE to detect the presence of biological agents or other infectious public health threats. And every jurisdiction in the NCR has systems in place to push emergency information to the public through text alerts, social media, and traditional public communication means.

NCR jurisdictions also recognize the importance of preparedness training and exercises to ensure first responders and executive leaders are ready to respond when disasters occur. Last year the Maryland Emergency Management Agency helped lead a series of workshops throughout the NCR to identify the specific emergency response training and preparedness needs of the region's first responders, including fire and emergency medical services, law enforcement, public health, emergency managers, mass care, and many other disciplines. The resulting Training and Exercise Plan will serve as a roadmap for the NCR to accomplish its training and exercise goals for the next two years, help responders develop specialized skills, and bring them in contact with partners in neighboring jurisdictions or other response disciplines.

Maryland also aggressively pursues emergency response training and exercises for all of its first responders. As in the NCR, Maryland Emergency Management leads annual workshops in Maryland's other regions to identify the training and exercise needs that help local first responders address local hazards and risks. We conduct similar workshops for state response agencies and holds quarterly Cabinet-level tabletop exercises for the State's executive leadership. After each real-world emergency or large exercise, we conduct an After Action Review to identify corrective actions and develop an implementation plan to ensure response plans and emergency Standard Operating Procedures reflect these valuable lessons-learned.

Most Urban Areas face similar challenges in sharing information and coordinating emergency response across multiple jurisdictions with separate police, fire, and emergency medical services. In the NCR, these challenges are magnified by the high number of state and local response agencies, multiple sets of response plans, policies, and statutes that serve individual jurisdictions, and the presence of more than 200 federal agencies and hundreds of thousands of federal employees who live and work in the region. The traffic congestion that affected the region on January 26, 2011 – after federal agencies released workers during a snow and ice weather event – demonstrates the importance of coordinating emergency response plans among federal and state agencies and local emergency response agencies, consulting with local partners on response decisions, and sharing real-time information.

Establishing close working relationships between jurisdictions and response agencies before a disaster occurs and conducting regular preparedness training and exercises are the best defense against the forces and habits that often lead cities and states to respond to emergencies and make decisions in silos and without coordination. By regularly meeting to discuss regional goals and evaluate response capabilities, responders and executive decision-makers in NCR jurisdictions are able to identify gaps in response plans or problems ahead of time and implement corrective actions. During emergencies we know the specific individuals in neighboring jurisdictions who are able to provide information, mutual aid, or other resources.

Active engagement with federal agencies is critical to the region's ability to effectively respond to emergency incidents in the NCR. As with all states, Maryland works with FEMA's regional administrative office on issuing presidential emergency declarations prior to pending emergencies, deploying federal resources to affected areas, and gathering damage assessment data for public and individual assistance funds. Outside of emergency events, FEMA's administrative regional office provides technical assistance and guidance on managing homeland security and preparedness grant programs and on complying with FEMA requirements. We participate in FEMA-sponsored regional emergency response planning initiatives and training exercises with our state partners to identify shared planning goals, exchange information on changes and updates to statewide response plans, and sharpen our emergency response skills.

FEMA's Office of the National Capital Region Coordinator (ONCRC), on the other hand, performs a unique policy and preparedness-oriented role. This office was created to help coordinate emergency response plans developed by federal agencies with local jurisdictions in the NCR. It serves as a single federal point-of-contact for the NCR's local emergency managers to help them coordinate response plans with the federal agencies that operate in their jurisdictions and convene planning meetings and initiatives between federal agencies and local jurisdictions.

For more than 10 years, ONCRC has provided a key capacity to state and local partners in the NCR. Although it does not make homeland security spending decisions, ONCRC formally participates in the NCR's Senior Policy Group as well as many of the regional response working groups and provides these groups with the federal perspective on setting homeland security goals for the region and a federal perspective on the emergency planning conducted in the region.

As home to the Nation's Capitol and many of the federal assets that are critical to maintaining continuity of government, the NCR should continue to have access to FEMA resources that are dedicated to meeting the region's preparedness needs. Although I am pleased that ONCRC will continue to have a presence in the region, I believe that ONCRC would be better able to serve the NCR's jurisdictions by being able to report to and draw resources from the highest levels within FEMA Headquarters.

It is not difficult to imagine the attacks on this year's Boston Marathon happening at FedEx Field in Prince George's County, a Presidential Inauguration, or any one of the many other public events that draw thousands of participants to the National Mall each year. Despite the severity of injuries inflicted on hundreds of Boston Marathon runners, family members, and friends, the fact that the bombings resulted in just three fatalities speaks to the high level of preparedness that Boston's first responders, executive leaders, and residents have developed.

The tools and capabilities that Boston deployed in response to the bombings on April 15, 2013 – interoperable voice radio systems, specialized bomb and CBRNE detection equipment, communication and information-sharing platforms, and constructive working relationships between public safety and public officials – are similar to the response capabilities that the NCR has invested its resources and efforts in building for the past decade. Although we can never predict with complete certainty how emergency events will unfold, the NCR is well positioned for responding effectively to terrorist attacks.

Going forward, our job as a region will be to maintain these capabilities while we receive decreasing support from homeland security grant programs. My colleagues in the Senior Policy Group and the region's Chief Administrative Officers understand that relying on federal funds to

maintain our response capabilities is not a sustainable, long-term solution. Each year, as we evaluate the effectiveness of our homeland security investments, we look for ways to maintain the specialized equipment, tools, personnel and other capabilities with local and state resources. While these efforts are on-going, there is no doubt that as a region we continue to rely on federal support to help us maintain our preparedness for the next disaster.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

**THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
A LEADER IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

STATEMENT BY:

**BARBARA DONNELLAN, COUNTY MANAGER
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA**

**CHAIR, HOMELAND SECURITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS COMMITTEE
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT,
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, AND THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA**

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENT
AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

JULY 31, 2013

Chairman Begich, Ranking Member Paul, and members of the Committee. I am Barbara Donnellan, County Manager of Arlington County, VA and the current Chair of the Homeland Security Executive Committee of the Chief Administrative Officers Committee (CAOs) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Because the Council had maintained public safety, mutual aid, and planning programs for most of its history, it was recognized as the best-equipped organization to coordinate the region's preparedness activities for terrorist threats after they surfaced more than a decade ago. Our Board of Directors immediately assumed a major role by assembling a Regional Emergency Coordination Plan in 2002. We followed that achievement by developing one of the most robust regional homeland security initiatives in the nation. Our program involves local elected officials, first responders, and business and community groups, as well as federal and state officials.

I am very pleased to be here with my colleagues from the region. Because our homeland security coordination work is very detailed and continues throughout the year, all of the officials in the region have become not only colleagues but good friends. We know these relationships enhance the safety of the region.

I also want to thank this Congress and those Members of Congress who have preceded you since 2001 for supporting the significant investment in regional emergency management programs that have been vital to our work. As you may know, the CAO Committee is made up of City and County Managers and the Senior Policy Group (SPG) is made up of senior state officials from emergency

management/homeland security. They bring together many regional stakeholders to help them prepare for, mitigate, and recover from all hazards, including terrorist activities, weather-related events or other natural or man-made disasters. Because of the federal funding you have provided, local officials who work with me on the CAOs committee, along with the SPG, have been able to guide and assist our first responders, coordinate the efforts of elected officials and emergency managers, and provide systems to alert and protect the public.

The cities and counties in the National Capital Region have long maintained substantial public safety and security programs to protect their residents. We continue to do so and have expanded our efforts in recent years. However, funding through the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) has been especially important to the National Capital Region because, as you know, we are a metropolitan area that must coordinate its response across two states and the District of Columbia. Since the horrific attack on the Pentagon on 9/11, this region and other parts of the country have continued to experience instances of domestic terrorism, several hurricanes, tornadoes and severe storms, and countless high profile demonstrations.

I would now like to share some of our experiences. We have learned lessons from every incident that has occurred and, based on those lessons, continuously improved our capabilities to protect the region:

- After 9/11, our regional partners used lessons learned from our response to the Pentagon incident to inform the investment decisions we made for the use of both local tax funds and funds received through federal grants. We

used UASI and State Homeland Security Grant Funds to *train and equip first responders* and to purchase alert and warning systems for the community.

- Using real-world experiences like Hurricane Isabel to inform our investment decisions, we have used UASI funds to increase regional planning and coordination, including the development of the *NCR Regional Emergency Coordination Plan* and the *NCR Mutual Aid Operations Plan*.
- Our experiences with the Anthrax attack that involved letters sent to Members of Congress and media in D.C., New York, and Florida in 2001 led to UASI investments in bomb squads, *secure and interoperable communications, information sharing, and situational awareness in the region*.
- These investments produced *NCR Net*, a secure fiber optic network connecting the National Capital Region (NCR) jurisdictions; *Essence*, a public health surveillance system; and the installation of *chemical/biological sensors and cameras at Metro System entrances*.
- Terrorism incidents throughout the country led to UASI investments in *automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS)*, which have improved our law enforcement capabilities.
- Lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and other emergency situations led our region to use UASI funding for investments in the *Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS)* that informs evacuation decisions.
- After the snow and ice storm on January 26, 2011, we used UASI funds to further enhance the RITIS system. Now, through the *Metropolitan Area*

Transportation Operations Center (MATOC) information is shared with emergency managers, other regional offices, and residents throughout the region on a 24-7 basis.

- In the wake of the same storm, the region also established a *Virtual Joint Information Center (V-JIC)* to provide up-to-the minute information about disasters to local officials and the public. The region's public information officers use, maintain, and update the V-JIC regularly.
- In addition, the region's local officials will soon have access to a new dashboard project—a tool that quickly summarizes the most important information for officials—that is housed at the District of Columbia's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA).
- One of the most useful tools in the National Capital Region is our First Hour Checklist, which guides local officials and emergency managers through the important steps to take immediately after an emergency. This was a tool developed by the SPG and the CAOs. Personally, I used it during the earthquake that struck this region in August 23, 2011. We coordinated two regional conference calls that day—one very shortly after the incident and another at 9 p.m. that night that included representatives from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the General Services Administration (GSA).
- The region's early warning water security monitoring system is one of our most innovative programs. We have monitoring sites located throughout the region that alert appropriate officials if there is a problem with the water so that they can take action to address the situation and prevent a possible tragedy.

- This year, the region will begin work on an equally important project: the need to ensure cyber security, or the safety of digital data and computer systems that have become such an integral part of our everyday lives. We will be conducting a cyber-security exercise later this year.
- The June 29th Derecho Storm that impacted the region on June 29, 2012 caused similar issues to what a cyber-security event may cause. This required governments to work with the private sector to restore 9-1-1 service to the region. Close coordination with the private owners of critical infrastructure, such as power, communications, and other sectors has continued to improve as a result of the lessons learned from the Derecho storm.
- We have used UASI and other grant funding to assess 31 acute care hospitals in the National Capital Region and neighboring Virginia counties and to improve the back-up power and water capability at a majority of those facilities.

In summary, the support which Congress has provided has enabled local officials in our area to significantly advance the preparedness of the entire region. Our Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) and our Strategic Plan for NCR are key products for our success. Our investment in traffic and weather information sharing systems, text alert messaging system to inform the public of emergencies, installation of chemical and biological sensors and cameras in the Metro system, and expansion of a secure fiber-optic data network for local use are all critical improvements we have made because of the support we receive through UASI.

The entire National Capital Region continues to pursue increased capabilities so it can meet the full spectrum of homeland security and emergency management

needs. Your continued direct support to this region is essential for maintaining and continuously improving readiness in the NCR, in recognition that local governments are the major emergency services provider to the 240 federal departments and agencies in the NCR.

I assure you that we will do everything possible to protect our citizens at the local level. We are currently updating our NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan to insure that we continue to address the most urgent needs of the region in the coming years.

With that said, an issue of considerable concern to local jurisdictions in the region is the future of the Office of National Capital Region Coordination (NCRC), currently housed within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Recently, FEMA announced plans to reorganize the office's program delivery and communications functions. As the Subcommittee is aware, NCRC was established in Section 882 of the 2003 law that created the Department of Homeland Security. Sec. 882 details the duties of this important office, for which the Council of Governments was a very strong advocate over a decade ago. Of critical importance to us is a very high level presence here in the NCR that can insure emergency preparedness, communication and coordination among the 240 federal agencies in the NCR, and with local, state and other regional partners.

We understand that FEMA has agreed to put its recently proposed reorganization plan on hold in order to receive input from regional partners. We look forward to this opportunity to work together to develop the best design for NCRC to meet the needs of the NCR, consistent with the purpose and intent of Section 882.

In closing, I would like to emphasize again that because of the planning, coordination, and exercises we have sponsored, as well as our cooperation with federal, state, and community partners, the National Capital Region is significantly better prepared for the next emergency and all other threats and hazards that might come our way. We are constantly learning, revising, and updating our plans, processes and procedures based on actual emergency situations.

I will be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

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ACRONYM LIST APPENDIX TO:

**STATEMENT BY BARBARA DONNELLAN
JULY 31, 2013**

Acronym	Term
ARC	American Red Cross
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CAO-HSEC	Chief Administrative Officer Homeland Security Executive Committee
CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Explosive
COG	Council of Governments (see also MWCOG)
CIP	Critical Infrastructure Protection
CI/KR	Critical Infrastructure / Key Resources
DC	District of Columbia
DC HSEMA	District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Administration
DHS	United States Department of Homeland Security
DC HSEMA	District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Administration
EPC	Emergency Preparedness Council
ESF	Emergency Support Function (see also R-ESF)

Acronym	Term
ETOP	Exercise and Training Operations Program
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GSA	United States General Services Administration
HSGP	Homeland Security Grant Program
ICS	Incident Command System
IMT	Incident Management Team
MATOC	Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Center
JFC	Joint Federal Committee
MD	State of Maryland
MWCOG	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
NCR	National Capital Region
NCRC	Office for National Capital Region Coordination
NIMA	National Incident Management System
OPM	United States Office of Personnel Management
NIPP	National Infrastructure Protection Program
NRF	National Response Framework
NSSE	National Security Special Event
R-ESF	Regional Emergency Support Function

Acronym	Term
RICCS	Regional Incident Communications and Coordination System
RPWG	Regional Program Working Group
RECP	Regional Emergency Coordination Plan
RITIS	Regional Integrated Transportation Information System
SPG	Senior Policy Group
SAA	State Administrative Agent
TCL	Target Capabilities List
UASI	Urban Area Security Initiative
VA	Commonwealth of Virginia
V-JIC	Virtual Joint Information Center

STATEMENT BY:

**James H. Schwartz, Chief
Arlington County Fire Department
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA**

**BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT,
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, AND THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA**

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENT
AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

JULY 31, 2013

Chairman Begich, ranking member Paul, members of the Subcommittee, I am James Schwartz and I currently serve as the Chief of Arlington County fire and EMS. I would like to thank the Subcommittee for this opportunity to share with you some of the preparedness efforts here in the National Capital Region. I would like to note that the region has a special set of working relationships that are used every day of the week and it is those relationships that have been and will be leveraged for the next event we might experience whether it be a Boston like attack or a coastal storm. The National Capital Region is well versed in managing large scale events from those that occur without warning to those that involve the coordination of dozens or even hundreds of agencies in support of a National Special Security Event.

On September 11, 2001 the Arlington County Fire Department was the lead agency for response to the attack on the Pentagon. I served as the incident commander in a unified command effort recognized nationally and internationally as a model of intergovernmental, interdisciplinary and inter-jurisdictional collaboration. The success of that response was the result of many lessons learned from previous tragedies in the region including the importance of mutual aid, the need for joint planning and the use of the Incident Command System which after 9/11 became a national doctrine for incident management across all professional disciplines, jurisdictions and levels of government.

My work in regionalism goes back to my early career as a member of the Northern Virginia Fire and EMS automatic aid system whereby the jurisdictions of Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax County and Fairfax City have been sharing response resources since 1975. Almost 40 years ago we essentially eliminated the jurisdictional boundaries for the purposes of better response to our communities and better safety for our responders. Today that automatic aid system includes the original jurisdictions and has added Prince William and Loudoun Counties as well as the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. Each of these jurisdictions also participates in the NCR Mutual Aid Plan that includes the District of Columbia and the suburban Maryland jurisdictions of Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties. Under the auspices of the Council of Governments (COG) various professional committees such as fire and police chiefs, emergency managers and health directors meet monthly to discuss regional coordination and preparedness and, as importantly to forge the relationships that prove so valuable during a crisis.

In a further example of regional preparedness it should be noted that the National Capital Region was the first in the nation to develop a regional CBRN response capability when the public safety professions and jurisdictions of the metropolitan area established the nation's first civilian CBRN response team known then as the Metropolitan Medical Strike Team (MMST). In the wake of the 1995 sarin attack on the Tokyo subway, the NCR jurisdictions brought together a team of 120 responders from hazmat, EMS, and law enforcement as well as medical professionals to deliver specialized response capabilities not available in any agency or jurisdiction at the time. The team had specialized equipment for hazardous material detection, mass casualty decontamination and medical care to better prepare the NCR for a possible

attack on our subway. That effort, developed in 1995, was a catalyst to one of the most successful federally sponsored preparedness programs in recent memory, the Metropolitan Medical Response System which, until approximately one year ago, served 124 metropolitan jurisdictions across the nation. The MMST was for many years forward deployed during the State of the Union Address and for Presidential Inaugurations.

Following the September 11 attacks, the region amplified its efforts at regional collaboration. There continues to be a significant effort to evaluate risks to the region and learn from incidents here and elsewhere in order to make the best possible investments in preparedness. Allow me to provide several examples of ways the NCR has improved its preparedness for a host of hazards. These examples would also play a significant role in a response to a Boston like incident.

- On September 11, 2001 virtually the only mass casualty supplies in the region were located at the Reagan National and Dulles Airports. To assist with patient care at the Pentagon those units were deployed but proved insufficient due to the limited amount of supplies and the unfamiliarity that most of the regions responders had with the equipment. Based on that lesson the region undertook a project to improve our mass casualty response capabilities. Through a combination of local funds and federal grants the region now has 23 mass casualty response units and ten medical ambulance buses to support the response to a mass casualty incident. Each mass casualty unit carries enough supplies to care for between 50 and 200 victims. The medical ambulance buses each are capable of transporting 20 non-ambulatory patients or up to 25 ambulatory patients.

These vehicles and the equipment carried are standardized to ensure interoperability and ease of maintenance. The units are deployed throughout the National Capital Region and available to any jurisdiction in the region for a crisis or as a pre-staged asset for a special event. The operation of these assets is governed by standard operating procedures that were developed in a collaborative fashion with representatives from around the region. Finally, each of the jurisdictions that house these units is responsible for vehicle maintenance and its readiness for response.

- In terms of patient care the region has embarked on the institution of Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) which seizes on the lessons of combat medicine for trauma care learned in Afghanistan and Iraq and adapts them for use on a civilian populace. TECC has already been taught to several fire and EMS departments in the region and as we speak, thousands of law enforcement officers are being taught the techniques and are being equipped with individual kits to be used if they or a fellow officer are shot. In a further effort to prepare for the unthinkable, we have studied the 2008 Mumbai attack and some departments have developed a capability for EMS personnel

to enter an area where casualties from an active shooter may lay before the gunman is subdued. This capability includes the use of TECC and extraction of victims to a casualty collection point where more advanced medical procedures can be provided.

- Again taking from the lessons of September 11 the region has initiated an important project on Patient Tracking. In the aftermath of 9/11 it took several days to locate all the victims that had been transported from the Pentagon to area hospitals. This has serious implications for patient identity, family reunification and the ability for law enforcement to locate witnesses. Today, throughout the region we have deployed handheld devices that enable EMT's and paramedics at an incident scene to scan the triage tag of a victim and to enter basic information on the pre-hospital care and identity of the victim. This information is transmitted to a regional hospital coordinating center where the distribution of patients to the region's hospitals is coordinated so that no facility becomes overloaded. Note that in this context the three sub-regions operate their own version of a hospital coordinating center but the three centers all coordinate with each other.
- The NCR is home to seven local and two state bomb teams. The teams are highly integrated and interoperable through standardized equipment and procedures. Each team operates with the same equipment, tools, robots and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and provides mutual support to each other through our mutual aid system. Three of the regions teams are designated as the highest level capability (FEMA Type I) and can function as stand-alone teams; the other four achieve that designation when paired with a hazardous materials team.

Under the joint leadership of the regions fire and police chiefs the bomb teams coordinate through a regional organization called Metrotech. This organization has developed a strategic plan that guides operational capabilities to include electronic countermeasures, underwater disposal, and the coordination of bomb disposal with SWAT operations.

While these and many other response capabilities represent significant capacity it is important to observe that these discreet capabilities are useful only when deployed under an effective incident management system. On 9/11 the NCR established the model for regional incident management utilizing a unified command structure that included assets and organizations from local, state and federal government, some coming from as far away as the west coast. The success of that effort was largely due to two factors; the Incident Command System was well understood and practiced daily throughout the region for smaller incidents, and, key leaders, especially at the operational levels, had grown to know and trust each other. This continues today.

Throughout the region local agencies handle a variety of incidents large and small. Incident command is established for virtually all of them with local authorities using capabilities inherent to their organizations and calling for mutual aid as necessary. Because many incidents are both complex and may extend over many days the NCR created a multi-disciplinary Incident Management Team (IMT). The team is designated as FEMA Type III and consists of members from the fire, police, public health and emergency management agencies throughout the NCR. The NCR IMT is used to staff special events and to augment a jurisdictions command capacity in the event of a large incident. The IMT has also been deployed during region wide events to support operational planning. IT has also been utilized to provide situational awareness during long term threats such as the outbreak of pandemic flu in 2011. Also, in 2010, FEMA used the NCR IMT at the National Response Coordination Center during the Haiti Earthquake.

In closing I would like to emphasize that the NCR has made significant improvements to its preparedness efforts especially over the last 12 years. It is worth acknowledging that there is more to be done and each investment we make must be regularly evaluated for its currency and we must continue to ensure that the capabilities that we have developed are well maintained and can be properly executed when necessary. The strength of the NCR continues to be the strong relationships that have existed and continue to be fostered in recognition of the special nature of our region.

Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to your questions.

STATEMENT OF PETER CRANE

Counsel for Special Projects, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (ret.)
 before the
Subcommittee on Emergency Management, Intergovernmental Relations,
and the District of Columbia
 of the
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
 July 31, 2012

I appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement to the record of this Subcommittee's hearing on the critically important question of "How Prepared is the National Capital Region for the Next Disaster?" The Subcommittee is scheduled to hear from several state and local officials, including the chief of the Arlington County Fire Department.

State and local emergency responders unquestionably have a crucial role to play in emergencies of all kinds, including matters normally under federal jurisdiction, such as radiological events, my area of professional experience. We saw an example of this in March 1975, during the Browns Ferry fire, at that time the most serious accident ever at an American nuclear power plant. (I joined the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as a lawyer just a few days later.) The hero of that near-disaster was the local fire chief of Athens, Alabama. Rejecting the advice of those who for hours had done nothing to put out the blaze, as they believed that water should never be used on an electrical fire, the chief said that he was prepared to take a hose and go in alone. His bravery and initiative saved the day.

Likewise, the Three Mile Island accident in March 1979 illustrated the crucial importance of close coordination between State, local, and federal authorities in managing radiological disasters. The Governor of Pennsylvania, Richard Thornburg, and the NRC Chairman, Joseph Hendrie, were having to make decisions *ad hoc* over the phone, in particular, on whether an evacuation should be ordered.

It is therefore somewhat puzzling that in addition to the state and local officials here today, there are not also representatives of the Federal Government on the witness list for today's hearing. FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security, at the very least, would seem to be obvious candidates. I assume that their absence means only that the Subcommittee intends to take testimony from them at a future hearing.

I would like today to draw the Subcommittee's attention to one specific aspect of planning for radiological emergencies. That is potassium iodide, commonly referred to in scientific shorthand as KI. This chemical, the same one used to iodize salt, can if taken in time saturate the thyroid gland with a harmless form of iodine and block the absorption of harmful radioactive iodine, which might be released in a nuclear power plant accident or an act of terrorism. Radioactive iodine, if absorbed by inhalation or ingestion, can cause thyroid cancer, especially in children. Some 7000 cases of thyroid cancer in the former Soviet Union have occurred to date, a consequence of the Chernobyl disaster of 1986, and the numbers are likely to go on rising.

Potassium iodide first came to widespread public notice in the United States during the Three Mile Island accident in 1979. The drug had been approved by the Food and Drug Administration just the year before as "safe and effective" for use in radiological emergencies. The problem, however, was that with the actual emergency at hand, there were no supplies of the drug to be had. Around midnight, an executive of a St. Louis drug company was awakened by a call from an FDA official, asking him to start up the production line as quickly as possible. At three in the morning, production of the drug began, and 24 hours later, the KI was delivered to the Harrisburg area.

As it turned out, no significant release of radioactive iodine occurred, and the drug was not needed, on that occasion. Nevertheless the event served as a wakeup call. The Kemeny Commission, investigating the TMI accident, recommended that KI be stockpiled around every nuclear plant, and the NRC readily agreed, promising that it would require KI to be stockpiled in the vicinity of every nuclear plant.

Then, however, the NRC did nothing for several years to fulfill this promise. In 1983, with public attention having long since turned elsewhere, the agency announced that it

had decided that because serious nuclear accidents were so unlikely, stockpiling KI was not cost-effective. It therefore withdrew the commitment it had made in 1979. The promise that KI would be in place around every nuclear power plant remains unfilled to this day, 34 years later.

The major lessons learned from Chernobyl included not only the susceptibility of children to radiation-caused thyroid cancer, as noted above, but also the safety of KI when administered on a mass scale. In Poland, 18 million doses of KI were given out, 10 million of them to children. The Poles believe that the drug was critical to their success in avoiding an upsurge of childhood thyroid cancer of the sort that occurred in the former Soviet Union.

My own particular interest in this area derives from the fact that I have been a thyroid cancer patient for 40 years. The disease is among the most treatable of cancers, but it can have major impacts on the quality of life, especially for pediatric patients. Since KI is safe, effective, and cheap, it makes sense in my view to make sure that it is available in the event of a radiological emergency, whether caused by an accident or an act of terrorism.

Early in 2001, the NRC granted a rulemaking petition, filed by me in my private capacity, and agreed to offer KI to the states, at no cost, and to require states to at least consider its use as part of radiological emergency planning. The NRC was offering KI for the population within a ten-mile radius of nuclear plants.

In 2002, in response to the 9/11 attacks, Congress passed, and President Bush signed, legislation to expand the availability of KI to a 20-mile radius around nuclear plants. The interagency group that maintains the Strategic National Stockpile added potassium iodide to the list of medications kept in reserve for emergencies.

In 2004, a Congressionally commissioned report on KI by the National Academies of Science confirmed that in an actual radiological emergency, the need for KI might exist beyond the 10-mile radius in which NRC then offered it. Nevertheless, the NRC, which had opposed the 2002 legislation, fought bitterly to keep it from being

implemented. The upshot was that President Bush's Science Advisor issued a decision holding that stockpiling of KI was unnecessary beyond the 10-mile radius, and declining to implement the law.

As a result, the officials charged with maintaining the Strategic National Stockpile felt that they had no choice but to remove potassium iodide from the SNS in 2009. This is, to my knowledge, the only aspect of this country's readiness for dealing with acts of terrorism where our preparedness today has actually been **reduced** from where it was five years ago. Everywhere else, the Government has worked to improve our preparedness for disasters; here it has worked to lessen it.

The question that persons new to this subject may be asking is this: what objection could there possibly be is the basis for the opposition to KI? What is so wrong with having it available, just in case, for use in emergencies?

Perhaps the clearest and most forthright answer came from the NRC's senior adviser for preparedness, quoted in an October 22, 2007 article in *USA Today* ("White House may stop plan for anti-radiation pills"). This person was quoted as saying that the NRC "opposes broad distribution of the pills because the best way to eliminate risk is to make sure people don't eat contaminated food." The article continued:

She also says the NRC is concerned about undermining the reputation of the nuclear industry. "It's always a concern that if you expand the distribution (of the pills), you don't have confidence in the plants," she says. "We have studies that show the safety of our plants."

It thus appears that the public relations needs of the nuclear industry must take precedence over the public health needs of American children. What is hardest to understand about this attitude is that it means sacrificing protection against radiological terrorism simply out of fear that to have this drug available might incidentally cause some people to doubt the safety of nuclear power plants – a completely different issue. We all hope that this country never experiences a major radiological disaster, either from an act of terrorism or a nuclear power plant accident. But it is a certainty that if

one does occur, and KI is needed but unavailable, the American public will demand to know why their children were left inadequately protected, when around the world, governments have routinely stockpiled the drug ever since Chernobyl. The failure will no doubt be laid principally at NRC's door, given its record of having for so long "fought relentlessly" against KI, in the words of Professor Frank von Hippel of Princeton University, quoted in the *New York Times* on March 21, 2011.

But the blame will hardly stop there. The question will surely be asked why President Bush's Science Advisor did not heed the advice of the National Academies of Science, and why President Obama's Science Advisor has so far failed to reconsider his predecessor's decision. Not least, it will be asked whether Congressional oversight committees were paying attention as potassium iodide was removed from the Strategic National Stockpile. It is not clear to me that they even noticed.

The first step, I believe, is to see that potassium iodide is restored to the Strategic National Stockpile at the earliest possible moment. The next step is for the President's Science Advisor to revisit the issue of expanded stockpiling of the drug. If he fails to do so, I suggest that Congress consider reenacting the 2002 statute on KI, this time with no escape clause of the sort that permitted implementation of the 2002 law to be first delayed and then torpedoed. I urge this Subcommittee to consider holding hearings to explore the potassium iodide issue. If I can provide any assistance to the members and staff of the Subcommittee, I am ready to do so at any time. Thank you.

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**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Christopher Geldart
From Senator Mark Begich**

**“How Prepared is the National Capital Region for the Next Disaster?”
July 31, 2013**

- 1. In the Subcommittee’s last hearing we evaluated the measurements of how effective grant funding has been. Do you have any suggestions on how we can more effectively measure our strides in preparedness? Are there avenues through the grant reporting that can be improved?**

Strides in preparedness can be more effectively measured, and grant-reporting avenues improved, through continued analysis of the core capabilities outlined in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines, such as the 2013 National Preparedness Report (NPR). The NPR summarizes national progress in building, sustaining, and delivering the 31 core capabilities outlined in the National Preparedness Goal. The NPR highlights FEMA’s Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments (THIRA) reporting process as a crucial element of the National Preparedness System. The THIRA provides a framework for regional, state, and local jurisdictions to identify threats and hazards that most stress capabilities, and establishes capability estimations and target levels of performance for each of the 31 core capabilities. The District of Columbia and the National Capital Region (NCR) Urban Area Security Initiative is currently completing its second THIRA and embarking on completion of the capability estimations. These processes are helping to provide the District and the NCR with capabilities estimations and gap identification. Going forward, this process will provide an effective means of both measuring progress in preparedness and identifying capability gaps ripe for grant funding. The THIRA and capability estimation process should continue to be a requirement by FEMA without too many changes year to year. The District and the NCR are investing time and grant dollars to develop THIRAs and capability estimations that truly reflect our capabilities and gaps in the Region.

- 2. Could you provide three things that the FEMA National Capital Region Coordination office could do to improve its efforts to coordinate with local and State communities and strengthen the regions preparedness?**

The FEMA Office of National Capital Region Coordination (NCRC) could improve state, local and regional efforts by assisting in better integrating the local federal agencies, which are all headquartered in the National Capital Region. The approximate 300,000 federal employees that work in the District are part of the larger federal workforce that lives and works in the NCR. A critical element of regional coordination is communicating with these hundreds of thousands of employees. The NCRC could improve regional coordination among these employees by focusing on increasing situational awareness through: 1) active and joint efforts to educate and prepare the federal workforce; 2) participation in regional information sharing through the

coordination of the NCR Watch Desk and the Regional Information Coordinator; and 3) ensuring that when events occur senior leadership at the Department of Homeland Security is connected with the senior regional leadership.

- 3. Given the current fiscal environment, the National Capital Region has seen a decline in regional preparedness grant funds. Is the decline in grant funding impacting your ability to be prepared?**

Yes, the decline in regional preparedness grant funding is affecting the National Capital Region's ability to be prepared. The District has a unique character both as the Nation's Capital for hundreds of thousands of federal employees, a hub for mass events like marathons, demonstrations, ceremonies and presidential inaugurations, and as a major target for man-made and natural hazards. The lack of adequate funding for capacity and capability development, given the level of both our identified and unidentified threats, is a hindrance to our ability to be prepared and our ability to lead regional coordination efforts.

- 4. On a broader level, are there things that the federal government could do to improve our coordination with local and State governments in the National Capital Region?**

The "local" federal government could improve coordination with local and state governments by pursuing the same benchmarks for preparedness that are required by the Department of Homeland Security for state and local governments. For example, as a condition of homeland security grant funding all state and local employees receiving funding must be compliant with the National Incident Management System. Reporting and verification are required for state and local employees before further grants are awarded while federal employees are not required to do the training and/or report it. Reconciling these types of disparities would vastly improve coordination between federal agencies, their employees, and their state and local counterparts in the National Capital Region.

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Kenneth Mallette
From Senator Mark Begich**

**“How Prepared is the National Capital Region for the Next Disaster?”
July 31, 2013**

1. In the Subcommittee’s last hearing we evaluated the measurements of how effective grant funding has been. Do you have any suggestions on how we can more effectively measure our strides in preparedness? Are there avenues through the grant reporting that can be improved?

Response

As you know, FEMA requires states and urban areas to complete an annual Threat Hazard Identification Risk Analysis (THRIA) by the end of the calendar year. This year will be the second year of this requirement, and last month FEMA announced that it will also require states and urban areas to complete capability estimations for approximately one-third of the 31 National Core Capabilities. This additional requirement will challenge most states and urban areas to complete by December 31, 2013 and I hope that FEMA continues to provide ample technical assistance to assist states and urban areas in completing this process.

Nevertheless, I believe that estimating capabilities will be a valuable exercise for all states and urban areas and is the best tool we have at a national level for measuring local, state, and national preparedness. Determining the equipment, plans, training, and other components required to execute FEMA’s Core Capabilities will provide local jurisdictions and states with a quantifiable way of measuring levels of preparedness, identifying gaps, and applying preparedness grant funds to fill specific gaps. This process – if successful – will enable local jurisdictions and states to explain in clear, plain language how federal preparedness grant funds are making their communities safer and more prepared for emergencies and disasters.

Successful implementation of the THIRA and capability estimations relies in-part on: 1.) FEMA providing consistent guidance and requirements from year to year so that local jurisdictions and state are able to develop a process for addressing capability estimations and make continuous improvements; 2.) FEMA continuing to provide robust technical assistance to local jurisdictions and states in developing a THIRA and capabilities estimation process; and 3.) FEMA being flexible as states and urban areas determine the best approach to completing these reporting requirements and – if need be – allowing for more time to complete the CY2013 THIRA and the capability estimations.

2. Could you provide three things that the FEMA National Capital Region Coordination office could do to improve its efforts to coordinate with local and State communities and strengthen the regions preparedness?

Response

The concentration of federal agencies in the District of Columbia and the NCR creates unique challenges in ensuring preparedness across three levels of government and the private sector that no other city or region faces. These preparedness challenges, coupled with the high risks the region faces from terrorist attacks, warrant a dedicated federal office with responsibility for working directly with local and state NCR partners. The following recommendations may assist the Office of the National Capital Region Coordination in its mission to support local and state NCR partners in its mission to build and maintain preparedness capabilities:

- **Codify the institutional home of ONCRC.** In the years since the office was created, ONCRC has been housed in multiple offices and appeared in multiple organization charts. The most recent proposal is to “realign” the ONCRC with the FEMA Region 3 Administrative Office in Philadelphia, which includes a partial relocation of ONCRC outside of the NCR. Local jurisdictions and state response agencies in the NCR see this frequent movement of the ONCRC and naturally wonder what it means for the office in terms of resources, mission, and institutional support. An ONCRC housed within the Office of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security – as it originally was when the office was first created – reflects the importance of the ONCRC and best supports its mission of building preparedness across federal agencies in the NCR and ensuring their preparedness policies are aligned with local and state partners. But even more important than specific organizational placement of ONCRC is consistency; the ONCRC should continue to be located within the NCR in a permanent location inside DHS, provide consistent services to the region, and be transparent about the resources that it has to offer.
- **Continual outreach from ONCRC with local and state NCR partners on the resources the office has access to and is able to provide would further assist the region in ensuring that it is leveraging the ONCRC to the fullest extent.** The ONCRC’s core mission is to serve as a single point-of-contact for the local and state NCR partners that need to coordinate preparedness policies and plans with federal agencies located within their jurisdictions. This does not happen automatically and the ONCRC should continuously identify and meet with local stakeholders so they are aware of the ONCRC’s mission and the services it provides. In addition, the ONCRC should continue to help local and state NCR partners cut through the federal bureaucracy and ensure that they are able to coordinate their preparedness policies and initiatives seamlessly with their federal partners.
- **Supplement ONCRC Watch Desk with analytical function.** The ONCRC operates an NCR Watch Desk that provides situational awareness for local and state NCR partners on emergency events. Although this desk does not operate 24/7, it is supplemented by a

national FEMA Watch Desk to provide round-the-clock coverage. However, the NCR Watch Desk is one of multiple watch desks that serve the region; there is no lack of sources for information on road closures, weather events, or other emergencies. Earlier this month, I met with Kim Kadesch, Acting Director of ONCRC, and he acknowledged these duplicative efforts. Mr. Kadesch suggested that FEMA develop an analytical function to supplement its Watch Desk services and help local and state NRC partners understand not just which events are happening, but why they matter. I support this proposal and believe it could provide an important service for local and state emergency managers in the NCR. I look forward to working with the ONCRC on creating this service and ensuring that it provides valuable information for NCR partners and results in better emergency management decision making.

3. Given the current fiscal environment, the National Capital Region has seen a decline in regional preparedness grant funds. Is the decline in grant finding impacting your ability to be prepared?

Response

Over the past few years, the NCR has been fortunate to receive relatively consistent preparedness grant funding from FEMA compared to many other urban areas. However, like all states and urban areas, the NCR has responded to the decline in preparedness grant funds by allocating a greater share of its grant funds to maintaining existing capabilities rather than building new ones.

The threat landscape is not static and response agencies must continuously adapt to new threats and challenges as they appear. Today, local jurisdictions and states are just beginning to grapple with emerging threats like attacks on local and state information networks from cyber threats. In many areas of the country, they are also re-examining how they plan long-term recovery operations given the increased severity of recent hurricanes, tornados, and other extreme weather events. The region's response to the very recent mass shooting at the Navy Yard in the District of Columbia show that it is able to successfully coordinate a rapid response across multiple agencies at federal, state, and local levels. At the same time, there are no doubt additional steps and capabilities that the region's responder agencies should build to help further prevent or mitigate the damages from similar mass shootings or terrorist attacks.

To successfully identify the capabilities needed to respond to the realistic threats that cyber attacks pose to states and local jurisdictions, the NCR will continue to rely on our federal partners for financial support as well as subject matter expertise in developing effective cyber preparedness programs. If the NCR is to enhance its ability to respond to a mass shooting, rather than just maintain our current capabilities, we will again rely on continued federal support from grant programs. Declining preparedness grant programs make it more difficult for local jurisdictions and states to adapt to new threats and ensure first responders, governments, businesses, and citizens are prepared.

4. On a broader level, are there things that the federal government could do to improve our coordination with local and State governments in the National Capital Region?

Response

Cyber security represents a threat area for which state and local NCR partners could benefit from greater engagement and information sharing with federal agencies. DOD, DHS, FBI, NSA, and other federal partners have far more experience, expertise, and resources in addressing cyber threats than their local and state partners. They understand the different types of threats, their effects on information networks and practical effects on critical services, and strategies that can protect against attacks, reduce risks, and mitigate damages.

While these federal agencies already frequently meet with the NCR's fusion centers and local law enforcement partners to share cyber threat information and prevention resources, greater coordination and information sharing with the region's emergency managers and Chief Information Officers could help improve the region's protection and security of its information networks. In particular, ONCRC could play a role in helping the region's emergency managers and information officers better leverage the federal government's expertise in this area to identify key at-risk sectors and assets based on cyber threat information, develop preparedness priorities, and execute a strategic approach to securing the information networks behind critical life safety services.

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Barbara Donnellan
From Senator Mark Begich**

**“How Prepared is the National Capital Region for the Next Disaster?”
July 31, 2013**

1. In the Subcommittee’s last hearing we evaluated the measurements of how effective grant funding has been. Do you have any suggestions on how we can more effectively measure our strides in preparedness?

Response: As the NCR updates the Homeland Security Strategic Plan, it is important to provide a framework to allow each jurisdiction to supply its own metrics to established goals and objectives in order to demonstrate real improvements in preparedness. To date, the metrics have usually fallen short in demonstrating preparedness because jurisdictions were asked to measure items that were not specific to their efforts. By calling for jurisdiction-specific measures to NCR specific goals, we will begin to see how each locality is improving its performance as well as that of the National Capital Region.

Are there avenues through the grant reporting that can be improved?

Response: The current format for reporting financial updates and narratives on the project works well, but is lacking in the area of performance metric reporting. When developing a project management plan (PMP), each jurisdiction should submit the metrics that would be used for the duration of the grant. Each project manager should work with the SAA to communicate why these measures are critical to the program, and should report any updates on Quarterly Reports. If a new or changed metric arises during the life of the project, an updated PMP should be submitted to the SAA for consideration.

2. Could you provide three things that the FEMA National Capital Region Coordination office could do to improve its efforts to coordinate with local and State communities and strengthen the regions preparedness?

Response: Three things that the FEMA National Capital Region Coordination office could do to improve its efforts to coordinate with local and State communities and strengthen the regions preparedness are as follow: 1.) Provide administrative, fiscal and operational support to regional emergency/homeland security planning, training and exercises. 2.) Partner with the localities to provide real time situational awareness. 3.) Facilitate the execution of the First Hour Checklist as defined in the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan by participating in, and/or potentially hosting regional conference calls.

3. Given the current fiscal environment, the National Capital Region has seen a decline in regional preparedness grant funds. Is the decline in grant finding impacting your ability to be prepared?

Response: Over the last few years, we have seen our preparedness efforts in our established programs improve due to the sustainment of those programs with grant funding. Grant funds have allowed us to innovate in how we reach out to the community,

how we coordinate with regional partners, and how we train and evaluate our first responders. Where we have been impacted is in the limited availability of new resources for newer technologies. As emergency events evolve, we need to have access to funds that are not part of our important sustainment programs, and that can be used to innovate with our partners.

4. On a broader level, are there things that the federal government could do to improve our coordination with local and State governments in the National Capital Region?
Response: Yes. Strengthen the performance of the ONCRC in carrying out its responsibilities as defined in Public Law 107-296 –Nov. 25, 2002. Those duties pertain to assessing and advocating for resources; information sharing, coordinating plans and training among the government, private and non-profit sectors; and liaising with federal departments and agencies to coordinate planning, training, exercising and response efforts.

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to James Schwartz
From Senator Mark Begich**

**“How Prepared is the National Capital Region for the Next Disaster?”
July 31, 2013**

1. In the Subcommittee’s last hearing we evaluated the measurements of how effective grant funding has been. Do you have any suggestions on how we can more effectively measure our strides in preparedness? Are there avenues through the grant reporting that can be improved?

Response: The largest problem with evaluating the effectiveness of grant funding and the extent to which it affects our strides in preparedness is that the measurements are taken from 30,000 feet even though the capabilities are developed and delivered at the ground level. The current approach is to rely on the states for assessing preparedness and for making adjustments too often without input from localities. The mere size of states often obscures the discreet threats that sub-regions within a state are subject to and the reporting methodology does little to highlight the value associated with many investments despite the occasional lapse in administrative processes or updating of a strategic plan.

One suggestion to better evaluate our preparedness is to require states to organize by intrastate regions. These regions could then assess the threats most likely to affect that region and develop capabilities to address those distinct threats. Such a system could also result in better spending of grant funds by evaluating need on an area larger than one locality and by acknowledging that even within states, threats are diverse (e.g. the threats facing the northern portion of a state may not be the same as the southern portion of a state). This organizing approach could also facilitate more frequent mutual aid between localities, thus bolstering preparedness.

If states were required to establish regions within their boundaries, stakeholder groups could be formed to assess threats, share information and develop capabilities inherent to that region. These regional bodies could also develop plans for providing aid outside the region when necessary. Each region could develop plans that could be aggregated as the state plan for submission to grant officials. Subsequent finding would then follow back to the regions for implementation.

An excellent example of this approach is the Northern Virginia Emergency Response System (NVERS). NVERS is an organization that brings together Fire/EMS, Law Enforcement, Emergency Management, Public Health, Technology and Hospitals representing the jurisdictions of Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William and Loudoun Counties and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park for the purposes of regional planning and the development of operational capabilities. NVERS recognizes that preparedness is not bounded by jurisdiction or professional discipline and those preparedness efforts are more successful when these interdependencies are acknowledged up front. It also recognizes that the threats we face in Northern Virginia are different from those most likely to occur elsewhere in

the state. There is little reason that a construct such as this could not be replicated across the country.

2. Could you provide three things that the FEMA National Capital Region Coordination office could do to improve its efforts to coordinate with local and State communities and strengthen the regions preparedness?

Response: The office of National Capital Region Coordination does little to coordinate with the local jurisdictions of the NCR. The office is represented at the Senior Policy Group (which represents the states and the District of Columbia) but shares little information regarding the planning, information sharing and coordination activities of federal agencies with local governments who bear the majority of responsibility for preparedness activities. The office should consult regularly with representatives of local governments (where most of the capabilities reside) in order to develop a better understanding of the operating conditions of local governments and to determine how the NCRC can facilitate the closing of gaps that compromise the regions preparedness. NCRC should not engage in the development of tools or processes (e.g. risk knowledge base) without consultation with local practitioners.

3. Given the current fiscal environment, the National Capital Region has seen a decline in regional preparedness grant funds. Is the decline in grant finding impacting your ability to be prepared?

Response: Yes; the decline in grant funding is impacting local and regional preparedness. At the local level this has required that grant funds be used to maintain capabilities that local jurisdictions might have otherwise absorbed into their respective budgets. Additionally, there has never been a year when the aggregated assessment of regional needs did not exceed the level of grants. Even with local revenues invested in preparedness efforts, gaps remain.

4. On a broader level, are there things that the federal government could do to improve our coordination with local and State governments in the National Capital Region?

Response: Mandate that the Administration return the Office of National Capital Region Coordination to the office of the Secretary of Homeland Security and require that the ONCRC fulfill its original requirement to “integrate the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia into the planning, coordination and execution of activities of the federal government for the enhancement of domestic preparedness...” Furthermore, Congress should, as part of its oversight responsibilities, encourage an appointee that has an understanding of the region and can effectively navigate the myriad of relationships and complexities inherent within. Lastly, the Office of National Capital Region Coordination should be required to report to Congress annually on the state of preparedness of the NCR; such a report should include an assessment of federal agency cooperation in the development of a prepared region.

With regard to grant funding, FEMA should be required to develop a resource that would enable grant recipients to take advantage of successful projects already completed elsewhere in the nation. This resource (database?) would capture detailed descriptions of successful capabilities developed elsewhere to meet a specific need (e.g. patient tracking, supply chain management,

tactical emergency casualty care, etc.) thus providing valuable guidance to other jurisdictions or organizations that require the same capability. Efficiencies could be gained by not “reinventing the wheel” and a measure of standardization and interoperability might also be achieved. This could lead to grants being better managed and contribute to a national architecture of preparedness.