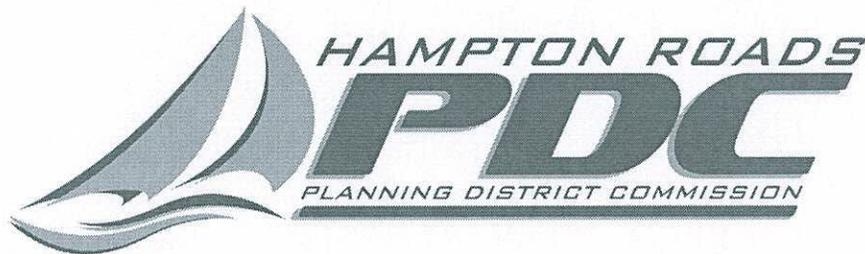


Agenda Item #12-B

Correspondence of Interest - Handout

Support letter for the Reinstatement of Hampton Roads
Inclusion into the UASI Program

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission



Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2013

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

We write to express our strong support for reinstating the Hampton Roads region in the risk-based Urban Area Security Grant (UASI) program. We are concerned that the exclusion of Hampton Roads in FY 2012 will negatively affect first responders' ability to continue meeting the strategic homeland security needs the region faces. We urge the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide adequate UASI or sustainment funding in FY13 to help preparedness stakeholders in Hampton Roads protect the region.

Hampton Roads consists of 16 localities that contain a population of nearly 1.7 million people and is home to one of the nation's largest concentrations of military personnel and their families. The area is also known for its extensive harbor, shipbuilding and repair yards, coal piers, shipping ports, historical sites, and miles of tourist-attracting beaches. While all of these assets contribute to the diversity of the region, they also increase the risk for a terrorist attack, especially considering that the area is linked by a series of bridges and tunnels that are vital to the region. In fact, the Department of Homeland Security selected Hampton Roads for the Regional Resiliency Assessment Program to evaluate the crippling effect the loss of our bridges and tunnels would have on the region and the nation.

The loss of grant funds needed to enhance security is disconcerting given the evolving terrorism threat to military personnel. UASI investments have enhanced the ability of first responders to ensure that our military personnel and families are well protected from both man-made and natural disasters here at home. With the largest naval base in the world located at Norfolk, there are nearly 108,000 active military personnel within the region, in addition to more than 23,000 retirees. Protecting Hampton Roads military personnel and their families located around military installations is the responsibility of civilian first responders. Mutual aid agreements are also in place to ensure that civilian first responders provide support on military installations if the need arises.

The Port of Virginia, which is the third largest port on the east coast, is another critical Hampton Roads asset that supports our nation. Despite the recent economic downturn, containerized cargo volume has remained steady at the port and that volume is expected to triple over the next twenty years as a result of the expanded Panama Canal. To meet this new capacity, the Port of Virginia is planning a massive expansion that will make it one of the busiest ports in the world. An attack on this port would cost both the regional and national economy billions of dollars. Any disruption at the Port of Virginia could negatively impact businesses and industries across the nation putting jobs and the nation's economy at risk. Without continued funding from UASI,

Secretary Janet Napolitano

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vital planning, screening and detection equipment to ensure the safety of incoming cargo will be jeopardized.

In sum, the infrastructure and military assets in the Hampton Roads region make it a strategically important homeland security priority. UASI funding has been critical over the last five years to building security capabilities throughout the region. As such, we ask for your continued support in helping Hampton Roads ensure the safety and security of our region by reinstating funding to the Hampton Roads region under the UASI program. Additionally, we request that the risk formula be reviewed to more adequately account for the unique security demands of a region with a large military presence.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to working together with you to ensure the continued security of our communities, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Nation.

Sincerely,



MARK WARNER
United States Senator



TIM Kaine
United States Senator



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Member of Congress



J. RANDY FORBES
Member of Congress



ROB WITTMAN
Member of Congress



SCOTT RIGELL
Member of Congress

Cc: W. Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency