January 25, 2017

The Honorable Timothy Kaine
Senator
United States Senate
222 Central Park Avenue, Suite 102
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Senator
United States Senate
101 W. Main Street, Suite 4900
Norfolk, VA 23510

The Honorable A. Donald McEachin
Congressman
U.S. House of Representatives
314 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Congressman
U.S. House of Representatives
2600 Washington Avenue, Suite 1010
Newport News, VA 23607

The Honorable Scott Taylor
Congressman
U.S. House of Representatives
412 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Wittman
Congressman
U.S. House of Representatives
401 Main Street, P.O. Box 494
Yorktown, VA 23690

RE: Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) Program

Dear Senator Kaine, Senator Warner, Congressman McEachin, Congressman Scott, Congressman Taylor and Congressman Wittman:

We, the elected leaders of Hampton Roads, request your assistance on an issue of critical importance to the region.

Despite having the largest naval base in the world and the second highest number of military personnel of any metropolitan area in the United States, Hampton Roads does not receive funding through the UASI program to fund efforts to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from acts of terrorism. We have attached materials which provide background information on the UASI program and its importance to Hampton Roads. The significance of this topic to our region is reflected by the unanimous vote of all 17 of our local governments to include this item as one of our region’s top legislative priorities.

We are concerned with the formula utilized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to determine relative risk and subsequent funding of urban areas under the Urban Areas Security Initiative grant program. Our concerns with the current formula are specific to two components: the national security index and the limited scope of critical infrastructure contained in the targeted infrastructure index.
The national security index is composed of military personnel and a count of defense industrial bases (DIB). These components combined currently account for only 2% of the total risk formula. As the risk formula does not take into consideration the threats to military facilities nor consider the significance of DIB facilities (all are weighted equally), we believe the current weight of 2% for the national security index highly undervalues the terrorism risks of the Hampton Roads region. Raising the weight of the national security index to 5-10% of the total risk formula would address the omission of highly targeted military facilities and personnel.

Another concern involves the critical infrastructure covered under the targeted infrastructure index. This component constitutes 20% of the risk formula and includes critical infrastructure such as aviation, mass transit and commuter rail, oil and natural gas facilities, and large public facilities and venues. As military installations continue to be an attractive target for terrorist organizations, we believe that DOD facilities should be included in the targeted infrastructure index. Additionally, the navigable harbor channels within the Hampton Roads region serve both naval and commercial port operations. An attack that blocks these channels would have substantial economic and national security implications, and thus should also be included in the targeted infrastructure index.

The Urban Areas Security Initiative grant has provided the Hampton Roads region with crucial support to prevent, prepare, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks. Due to a devaluation of the risks specific to military communities like Hampton Roads, we have been subsequently ranked out of funding under this program. We ask for your assistance in ensuring that threats to Hampton Roads are accurately captured in the risk profile so that we can have the necessary resources to address them.

Sincerely,

Hampton Roads Mayors and Chairs

Alan P. Krasnoff, Mayor
City of Chesapeake

Rex W. Alphin, Chairman
Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors

Frank M. Rabil, Mayor
City of Franklin

Kevin Onizuk, Chairman
James City County Board of Supervisors

Phillip N. Bazzani, Chairman
Gloucester County Board of Supervisors

McKinley L. Price, Mayor
City of Newport News
Donnie R. Tuck, Mayor  
City of Hampton

Kenneth Alexander, Mayor  
City of Norfolk

W. Eugene Hunt, Mayor  
City of Poquoson

John M. Seward, Chairman  
Surry County Board of Supervisors

John L. Rowe, Jr., Mayor  
City of Portsmouth

William D. Sessoms, Mayor  
City of Virginia Beach

T. Carter Williams, Mayor  
Town of Smithfield

Paul T. Freiling, Mayor  
City of Williamsburg

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman  
Southampton County Board of Supervisors

Sheila S. Noll, Chairman  
York County Board of Supervisors

Linda T. Johnson, Mayor  
City of Suffolk