

Secretary Napolitano Announces Decision to End National Applications Office Program



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Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano today announced her decision to end the National Applications Office (NAO) program, after a five-month review conducted in coordination with the Department's law enforcement, emergency management and intelligence partners.

"Over the past several months, we have worked closely with our state, local and territorial homeland security partners to determine how our Department can best support their priorities," said Secretary Napolitano. "This action will allow us to focus our efforts on more effective information sharing programs that better meet the needs of law enforcement, protect the civil liberties and privacy of all Americans, and make our country more secure."

The Department's review of NAO involved direct consultation with a broad range of the Department's state, local and tribal homeland security partners to assess the program's potential effectiveness, led by Acting Under Secretary of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) Bart Johnson. Following a series of meetings with several major national law enforcement and intelligence organizations, Johnson recommended ending the NAO program in favor of more urgent priorities—including state and local fusion centers and the National Suspicious Reporting (SAR) Initiative.

According to Major Cities Chiefs Association President William J. Bratton, Secretary Napolitano's review marked the first time in the history of DHS that major law enforcement organizations were invited to participate in the NAO initiative. In a letter dated June 21, Bratton thanked Secretary Napolitano for the opportunity to provide collaborative input on NAO and asked the Department to halt the program.

DHS also consulted with the International Association of Chiefs of Police; the National Sheriffs Association; the Fraternal Order of Police; the Major County Sheriffs Association; the National Native American Law Enforcement Association; the Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Units; as well as state homeland security advisers and other key stakeholders.

NAO was established to facilitate access to satellite imagery for homeland security and law enforcement purposes. The NAO Charter formally established NAO as a part of DHS in February 2008.

Secretary Napolitano's decision will not affect the ability of the Department or its state, local and tribal partners to use satellite imaging as currently allowed under existing policy in order to meet its many other responsibilities.

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