



JULY 31, 2013

HOW PREPARED IS THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION FOR THE NEXT DISASTER?

UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, INTERGOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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**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 (MWCOG). 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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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.