

Written Statement of

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The State of Northern Border Preparedness:
A Review of Federal, State, and Local Coordination

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Good morning Chairman Bilirakis, Ranking Member Richardson, and distinguished members of the House Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the State of Michigan and the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD). It is a privilege to be here today to discuss the State of Michigan's efforts to secure our northern border and international waterways in coordination with our partners from local units of government and federal agencies.

I would like to begin by providing an overview of Michigan's homeland security framework and the role of the Michigan State Police in protecting our citizens from all hazards, both natural and man-made. Michigan's unique geography, resources, and critical infrastructure are vital to the Great Lakes Region and the country. With 721 miles of shared international border with Canada, Michigan serves as our nation's principal gateway for international commerce and trade.

Michigan's Homeland Security Framework

The State of Michigan has built an extensive homeland security structure to safeguard Michigan's residents and resources by ensuring the necessary plans, procedures, systems, and protocols are established before an emergency occurs. The responsibility of Michigan's homeland security response activities and initiatives rests with the director of the Michigan State Police (MSP), who serves as the State Director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

As the commander of the MSP Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, I hold the position of Deputy State Director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security with the responsibility of coordinating the state's day-to-day activities for all emergencies and disasters. The MSP/EMHSD focuses on a number of areas including strategic planning, intelligence gathering, information sharing, critical infrastructure protection, citizen preparedness, and federal homeland security grant programs.

Michigan's homeland security framework is based on a collaborative effort among all local, state, and federal agencies working together to protect Michigan's residents, resources, and northern border. To ensure a coordinated homeland security approach, the State of Michigan implemented an enhanced five-year Statewide Homeland Security Strategy in 2009 integrating the state's collective efforts in accordance with a strategic vision to complement and unite the capabilities of all partners. With the understanding that all disasters begin as local events, the statewide homeland security strategy focuses on local priorities developed by the state's seven regions.

Michigan's border crossings, manufacturing centers, corporate and government buildings, waterways, and technology networks all present attractive targets for terrorists and criminals. To secure the safety of Michigan's assets, the Statewide Homeland Security Strategy focuses on eight strategic goals, including improving operational readiness, enhancing intelligence and information sharing, reducing the risk to critical infrastructure and key resources including international interdependencies, and strengthening communications capabilities.

Today, I will discuss several initiatives underway in the State of Michigan to bolster the security of our northern border in partnership with local, state, and federal agencies.

Information Sharing

The State of Michigan has worked extensively to develop a collaborative environment and culture of sharing information among all government agencies, law enforcement, private sector members, and the public.

One of our key means of sharing information is through Michigan's primary fusion center, called the Michigan Intelligence Operations Center for Homeland Security, known as the MIOC.

Operational since 2007, the MIOC was established to build upon existing information sharing practices and to enhance relationships between law enforcement agencies. Housed within the MSP, the MIOC operates 24/7 providing a critical link to all government and law enforcement agencies, as well as the private sector in sharing critical information as it pertains to all crimes, all threats, and all hazards. The MIOC is one of 72 federally recognized fusion centers nationwide to effectively exchange information and intelligence, and improve the ability to fight crime and terrorism by maximizing resources and streamlining operations.

The MIOC is a cooperative effort among all levels of government and the private sector, including the following agencies working within the facility: Michigan Departments of State Police (MSP), Corrections (MDOC), Military and Veteran Affairs (DMVA), Technology, Management & Budget (DTMB), and Transportation (MDOT), as well as the Michigan National Guard, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and Michigan State University Police Department.

The MIOC works extensively with public and private sector partners in Michigan, the United States, and Canada to gather and share intelligence to help prevent acts of terrorism or crime from occurring in our country and across the northern border. Through sharing information, the MIOC is able to help identify trends occurring across the northern border, such as organized crime, narcotics smuggling, or human trafficking, which can then be shared with law enforcement agencies in the United States and Canada.

A key nexus of information sharing takes place among the many jurisdictions and agencies located in Southeast Michigan, which is designated as a Tier II Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) by DHS. Over the past several months, the State of Michigan has worked in partnership with members of the UASI Board to begin standing up a fusion center, called the Detroit Southeast Michigan Information and Intelligence Center (DSEMIIC). The DSEMIIC serves as a node of the MIOC to help streamline the flow of information sharing in Southeast Michigan and statewide.

Collaborating Resources

In March of 2011, Michigan's capabilities to secure the northern border were significantly enhanced by the opening of the CBP Operational Integration Center (OIC) located at the Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Michigan. The MSP and MIOC are building a strong partnership with the OIC to protect Michigan's northern border.

We are currently in the process of developing infrastructure to provide the OIC, MIOC, DSEMIIC, and State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) with the capability to share data, videos, and maps among all facilities. This capability will better enable Michigan to provide timely and actionable intelligence to enhance our border integrity and to direct operations in an efficient and effective manner. Through our partnership with the OIC, Michigan is able to further protect our northern border by integrating law enforcement and intelligence resources into one common operating picture, thus maximizing the effectiveness of our combined efforts.

Our department strives to work in partnership with our fellow public safety agencies to join resources and intelligence assets through collaboration and interagency consortiums. For example, since 2010 the MSP Aviation Unit has supported the CBP with patrolling the international border in Southeast Michigan. The primary mission for MSP aviation is observing and tracking activities along the border that may be a violation at international crossings, waterways, or critical infrastructure sites. This partnership strengthens the security of Michigan's northern border and enhances the response capabilities of local, state, and federal resources along the border.

Recognizing the importance of patrolling and securing our shared international waterways, the MSP and additional state agencies actively participate in Operation Channel Watch led by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), which is designed to gather intelligence and intercept illegal activity associated with the international border. Operation Channel Watch brings together law enforcement officers from local, state, and federal agencies to carry out joint patrols along shared waterways between Michigan and Canada to improve interoperability, maximize public service, and promote sharing of resources and collaborative intelligence gathering. The MSP also serves as a member of the Area Maritime Security Committee (AMSC) to help identify and mitigate any threats against Michigan's ports.

The MSP maintains a continuing presence in several other interagency consortiums, including the Integrated Border Enforcement Team (IBET) formed in 2002, which is a joint bi-national law enforcement team involving agencies from both the United States and Canada. The team analyzes and responds to information gathered from a collection of border agencies pertaining to illegal cross-border activity.

Enhancing Border Capabilities

Since the attacks against our nation on Sept. 11, 2001, Michigan has enhanced its capabilities and resources to protect citizens against threats along and across the northern border in large part through federal grant funding.

Since Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, Michigan's law enforcement capabilities have been significantly bolstered along the northern border with the award of nearly \$10.5 million under the DHS Operation Stonegarden Grant Program (OPSG). Michigan and other northern border states were incorporated into the OPSG program for the first time in 2008, which enabled the Michigan counties of Chippewa, St. Clair, and Wayne to purchase equipment and increase law enforcement patrols along their shared land border with Canada. Since the OPSG program was expanded in 2009 to include international water and shared land borders of the U.S., 24 counties in Michigan are now eligible to receive OPSG funding.

With the availability of OPSG funding, Michigan's northern border is better secured by providing law enforcement agencies with the means to put more boots on the ground by covering overtime costs and to purchase essential equipment needed to patrol the border. For example, OPSG funding was used to purchase a communications tower in Chippewa County located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, which greatly enhanced the ability of law enforcement to secure the border as they encountered illegal border crossings and previously had limited capabilities to communicate in the area.

As evident during the September 11 attacks, one of the biggest challenges first responders often face is difficulty communicating with one another due to different communication systems or a lack of infrastructure. Over the past decade, Michigan has greatly expanded the ability for public safety personnel to communicate during an incident, share critical information in a timely manner, and leverage all available resources in an efficient and effective manner. While it is critical for Michigan first responders to have the ability to communicate with one another, we also recognize the importance of facilitating communications between Michigan, neighboring states, and Canada. Because when a disaster strikes, it ignores geographical boundaries affecting communities from different jurisdictions, states, and countries.

A project is currently underway enhancing interoperable communications among local, state, federal, tribal, and international partners through the award of \$4 million to Wayne County as a part of the DHS Border Interoperability Demonstration Project (BIDP). With the use of BIDP funding, the necessary infrastructure and equipment is being purchased creating a gateway connecting the Michigan and Canadian public safety communications systems. This project will improve communications for emergency personnel responding to incidents along the international border and ports of entry between Canada, Southeast Michigan, and Sault Ste. Marie.

Michigan serves as a key hub for international trade along the northern border with transportation infrastructure including three international bridges, three tunnels, and multiple vehicle ferries.

The MSP Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division (CVED) has worked extensively to secure Michigan's northern border by promoting commercial vehicle safety enforcement measures, including conducting security visits on bulk hazardous materials carriers in Michigan. Since 2004, the CVED has received nearly \$7.6 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation to enhance commercial motor vehicle security at Michigan's international border crossings. Using federal funding, our department has expanded commercial vehicle enforcement efforts at the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit, the Blue Water Bridge in Port Huron, the Detroit-Windsor Truck Ferry, the International Bridge in Sault Ste. Marie, and the tunnel connecting Detroit and Windsor.

Proactive Measures

Events like the 2009 Christmas Day airplane bombing in Detroit are a reminder that a terrorist attack in Michigan and across our northern border is a realistic threat we must be prepared for. I am pleased to share with you today that Michigan has taken several proactive steps in partnership with local and federal agencies to secure our northern border and prepare for all potential threats.

Multiple times each year, local, state, federal, and international partners participate in drills and exercises conducted along the northern border to test emergency plans, enhance security measures, and ensure a coordinated response during an incident. For example, an exercise tested the response to an improvised explosive device (IED) at the Soo Locks along Lake Superior requiring a response from the bomb squads with the Michigan State Police and the Sault Ste. Marie Ontario Police Department. This past August, an exercise was held along the Detroit River involving nearly 30 agencies from the United States and Canada to test a multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency response to an explosion and subsequent oil spill in international waters.

Many emergencies not only require a coordinated response, they also frequently require additional resources to be brought in as the affected jurisdiction's capabilities are exceeded. This is why Michigan is taking proactive measures to form an international mutual aid agreement with our Canadian partners.

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to participate in a cross-border mutual aid executive seminar in Port Huron, Michigan with participants representing all levels of government and the private sector from the United States and Canada. Throughout the seminar, we discussed opportunities to collaborate resources and planning initiatives across the border, challenges associated with international mutual aid including legal concerns, as well as potential next steps toward solidifying a cross-border mutual aid agreement.

Initiatives are also underway at the national level to make a cross-border mutual aid agreement a reality for Michigan and other states. For example, I serve as a member of the North American Mutual Aid Work Group with the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), which is making significant progress in establishing the framework for a cross-border mutual aid agreement. This past week, I attended a meeting in Chicago hosted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region V Office that brought together representatives from several states and Canada to discuss the next steps in establishing an international mutual aid agreement.

While there is still work to be done, I am confident by the progress we have made thus far and I look forward to further developing our capabilities in partnership with Canada to prevent, deter, respond to, and recover from all hazards.

Closing

Protecting Michigan's border and citizens requires a proactive and coordinated approach from local, state, federal, tribal, and international partners. As portrayed by the many initiatives I shared today, the State of Michigan works in close partnership with all levels of government and seeks new avenues to ensure the security of our border and safety of our citizens. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today and I look forward to any questions you may have.