



Committee on
HOMELAND SECURITY
Chairman Michael McCaul

Opening Statement

March 19, 2013

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**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Susan Brooks (R-IN)
Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications
Committee on Homeland Security**

“Homeland Security Grants: Measuring Our Investments”

**March 19, 2013
Remarks as Prepared**

After holding a number of site visits and briefings over the past month, the Subcommittee is convening to hold its first hearing of the 113th Congress on a subject that has had a great impact on the prevention, preparedness, and response capabilities of our State and local partners – homeland security grants.

The September 11th terrorist attacks exposed significant gaps in prevention, preparedness, and response capabilities at all levels of government. As a result, a suite of grant programs was created to address these issues and enhance our preparedness as a Nation. To date, nearly \$40 billion has been distributed to States and localities through these grants and according to the National Preparedness Report, which was released last year by FEMA, progress in building and sustaining capabilities has been made as a result of these grants.

According to this report, “Federal preparedness assistance programs have helped build and enhance state, local, tribal, and territorial capabilities through multi-year investments across mission areas.” The report goes on to say that, “Federal preparedness assistance has clearly contributed to the capability gains achieved since 9/11.” However, as has been noted by the Government Accountability Office and the DHS Inspector General, FEMA has been unable to develop comprehensive measures and metrics to quantify the impact of these grant investments on grantee capabilities. Although a difficult task, we must always ensure that we are good stewards of taxpayer dollars and that we are able to justify and account for investments.

The 9/11 Act, which became law in 2007 stated that, “In order to ensure that the States and high –risk urban areas are using grants administered by the Department... the (FEMA) Administrator shall... use performance metrics....and ensure that any such State or high risk urban area regularly tests its progress against such metrics.” Nearly six years later, we are still waiting for comprehensive measures.

Anecdotally, we know that these grants have made a difference: the National Network of Fusion Centers has enhanced intelligence and information sharing; emergency plans have been developed, updated, and exercised; emergency response providers have received important training; and investments in vital communications capabilities have been made. However, we also know that challenges and capability gaps still remain. But, without appropriate measures and metrics we can’t ensure that these grants are going to address critical capabilities in the areas with the greatest risk.

We are all aware of the grave fiscal challenges facing all levels of government. We must ensure that we are getting a return on our investment and that each and every grant dollar is used appropriately. When it comes to our security, we can’t afford to waste a single dollar.

Last Congress, this Subcommittee held a number of hearings on homeland security grants and the capabilities that have been attained since September 11th. We continue that important oversight today. We have many questions about the impact of these grants and about how these dollars are utilized, how their impact is being measured and how the Department and FEMA are ensuring that the grants are being used in the appropriate manner according to their intent.

I hope that the hearing today will answer several key questions:

- What progress has been made in FEMA’s efforts to measure the impact of homeland security grants?
- What steps are being taken to ensure that grant funds are being used in accordance with the grant guidance?
- What progress has FEMA made since this Subcommittee held a hearing on grants almost exactly a year ago?
- How will the THIRAs help inform the investment justification and project approval process?
- Based on the findings of the National Preparedness Report, what are the capabilities most in need of investment?

I am pleased to welcome our distinguished panel of witnesses and look forward to hearing your perspectives on these important topics.

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