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Director  
Wayne County Homeland Security  
And Emergency Management  
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The State of Northern border Preparedness

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is James Buford, Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management for the County of Wayne. As Director I am responsible for the Emergency Operation Plan and Emergency Operation Center in Wayne County. I am also responsible for all other planning to mitigate potential acts of terrorism, disasters and emergencies. I am responsible for managing the Homeland Security Grant funds allocated to Wayne County.

I am honored to be here today and to testify on the State of the Northern Border and funding to Wayne County. I have submitted my full testimony which I ask be made part of the hearing record.

### **Federal, State, and Local Coordination**

I would like to start by saying that I honor all of the men and women in uniform whether it is military or civilian, who protect us every day from acts of terrorism. I remember 9/11 like most of us and exactly what I was doing at that time. I remember law enforcement before that day and I have seen how it has changed since then. I remember that law enforcement had its own lanes for federal, state, and local law enforcement officers. I also know that has changed significantly since that that fateful day. I do believe that we have a much better environment for information sharing amongst law enforcement agencies today.

Wayne County has forty three (43) cities and townships, all with their own Police Chief and Fire Chief. The City of Detroit is the largest city in Wayne County and also the seat of County government. The local police and fire chiefs have three mutual aid groups, Downriver, Western Wayne County, and Eastern Wayne County. There are two small communities, Highland Park and Hamtramck that are completely surrounded by the City of Detroit. All of the Public Safety agencies in Wayne County assist each other with different special events that occur throughout Wayne County.

The Michigan State Police and all of the Federal Law Enforcement agencies have a presence in Detroit. Law Enforcement coordination occurs through task forces, joint operating groups and day to day information sharing.

The Wayne County Sheriff's Department operates three jail facilities, court room security, road patrol, marine patrol and narcotics/morality enforcement. Sheriff Benny Napoleon coordinates activities with other Sheriff's in Southeast Michigan as well as with local, state and federal agencies.

In addition to law enforcement we work with our private partners who give us input and feedback on planning and information sharing to protect the residents and visitors of Wayne County.

Wayne County and City of Detroit share an international border with Essex County and the City of Windsor. There are many events that occur on the Detroit River between these communities as well as the shipping that occurs annually. This requires coordination between all law enforcement, fire, and EMS agencies along the border. We also have several large hospital systems that receive Canadian patients every day.

## **The need for Grant Funding**

The Homeland Security grant funding that has come to this area is provided by the Homeland Security Grant Program. The Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Detroit, Wayne County, Livonia and Warren. These communities have the largest populations in the core urban area. It was determined by the Department of Homeland Security that these core urban areas were at the highest risk for potential terrorist attacks. With this determination the Urban Area Security Initiative grant has provided billions of dollars throughout the United States. In the Detroit Urban Area we have received some of the funding intended for this risk mitigation. We used the allocated grant dollars to assist the public safety agencies to prevent and protect the public from acts of terrorism. We have educated the public about emergency preparedness and recognition of potential terrorist activities. During these depressed economic times these activities would have not been able to have taken place without the Homeland Security Grant Program. The need to have a strong and resilient Northern Border will rest with those entrusted with protecting us.

## **Regional Approach**

Within the first few years of the Homeland Security Grant Program starting, the State of Michigan recommended a regional approach to grant funding. The Core Urban Area was asked to add the additional five counties in Southeast Michigan to its region. This was agreed to based on that recommendation, and this group exists today as the Urban Area Security Initiative Regional Planning Board. We have developed a regional strategy and use it as a guide for the project allocation of Homeland Security grant funds. The core county has found that while the regional group is a good concept, it does not provide for the best use of ever shrinking financial resources given that the highest risk remains in the core Urban Area.

The Northern Border has had additional grant fund used for patrol efforts. The Stonegarden grant provides overtime and backfill for patrol efforts by communities along the Lake St. Clair, Lake Erie and Detroit River border area. It also allows for equipment to be purchased to assist with these patrols. This is a coordination of Wayne County Sherriff's Marine Patrols along with local communities' shore patrol. The information of these patrols is given to the DHS Customs Border Patrol Division for their review.

We also have a statewide shared channel radio system that allows for interoperable communication throughout the region and the state. Wayne County was the recent recipient of the Border Interoperable Communication Grant Demonstration Project. This will allow for an even greater level of radio communications interoperability with our Canadian partners.

Wayne County has also used Homeland Security grant funding to develop a border surveillance camera system along its international border. This system will be made available to local state and federal law enforcement.

## **Recommend Federal or State Policy Changes**

I encourage a review of the way the Homeland Security Grant Program dollars are distributed in the Detroit Urban Area so that these shrinking resources can be used as intended on the high threat, high density areas. If this is not done, I believe that we will not be giving the citizens the best protection that they should have.

## **Summary**

In summary Mr. Chairman, Wayne County realizes that we are an integral part of the surveillance and security of our share of the Northern Border. This responsibility is taken very seriously and we continue to work with all of our public and private partners to strengthen our border area. The planning, training, and exercising to complete this mission are greatly assisted through the use of Homeland Security grant dollars. Without these dollars it significantly reduces our ability to have a resilient U.S. Canadian border.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you the work of County Executive Robert Ficano, and the hard working men and women of Wayne County. We will always work to protect the resident, workers and visitors by securing the international border in Wayne County.