



HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Dan Donovan (R-NJ) Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications Subcommittee

“Using Innovating Technology and Practices to Enhance the Culture of Preparedness”

July 25, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

I want to welcome our witnesses here today to discuss an issue that is important to our homeland security: fostering a culture of preparedness.

The events of 2017 emphasize the importance of being prepared for the range of threats we face. In six months alone, there were three devastating hurricanes, some of the costliest wildfires to move through California, and two separate ISIS inspired terror attacks carried out in my hometown of New York City.

As the 2018 hurricane season has begun, recovery from last hurricane season is ongoing and for so many Americans it will be a long road to pre-storm restoration. I speak from experience on this point. Nearly six years later, I still have constituents grappling with the lasting effects of Superstorm Sandy.

All of these events underscore the need to foster a culture of preparedness, where citizens and governments work together to mitigate the impact of future threats. We must work together at all levels of government and with the private sector and the public to identify new and innovative practices and technology that will enhance our prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities.

We need to continually reevaluate the policies and practices we use to respond and rebuild in the wake of a disaster. Investments in mitigation need to be made to create stronger, more resilient systems in a cost-effective manner. Local communities have to be empowered to manage their own basic needs and allow neighborhoods to come together to lend a helping hand. And we need to ensure our first responders have the tools and cutting edge technology that will enable them get their vital jobs done.

Whether stopping terrorists or preparing for the next natural disaster, American ingenuity should be nurtured to find creative solutions to ready our communities for the next threat.

That is why I am pleased to have our witnesses here today to discuss how they are thinking “outside the box” as they work to address the threats we face. I am particularly looking forward to hearing how FEMA is using lessons learned from the 2017 disasters to enhance our ability, working with our state and local partners, to respond this hurricane season.

I am also interested in learning more about how the Science and Technology Directorate is supporting FEMA in its efforts and working to enhance first responder technology. Finally, central to any successful response effort is the ability of our first responders to communicate and I look forward to hearing about NIST's efforts to enhance first responder communications. With that, I welcome our witnesses here today. I look forward to our discussion.

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