

Statement of Thomas J. Lockwood
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Committee on Government Reform
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Introduction

Good morning. Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am honored to be here with you today to discuss emergency preparedness in the Nation's Capital. I am Tom Lockwood, director of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of National Capital Region Coordination (ONCRC).

The Office of National Capital Region Coordination was established by Section 882 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to oversee and coordinate Federal programs for and relationships with State, local and regional authorities in the National Capital Region (NCR). The Office came into being on March 1, 2003 when the major components of the Department came together. The establishment of an office solely dedicated to the NCR recognizes the importance of our region as a symbol of our nation and the seat of our government and the complexity of relationships, roles and responsibilities that exist within the NCR.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Office of National Capital Region Coordination has been given broad responsibilities in the Homeland Security Act of 2002. These responsibilities include:

- Coordinating the activities of DHS relating to the NCR;
- Assessing, and advocating for, the resources needed by State, local, and regional authorities in the NCR to implement efforts to secure the homeland;

- Providing State, local, and regional authorities in the NCR with timely information, research, and technical support to assist the efforts of State, local, and regional authorities in the NCR in securing the homeland;
- Developing a process for receiving meaningful input from State, local and regional authorities and the private sector in the NCR to assist in the development of the homeland security plans and activities of the Federal Government;
- Coordinating with Federal agencies in the NCR on terrorism preparedness, to ensure adequate planning, information sharing, training, and execution of the Federal role in domestic preparedness activities;
- Coordinating with Federal, State, local, and regional agencies, and the private sector in the NCR on terrorism preparedness to ensure adequate planning, information sharing, training, and execution of domestic preparedness activities among these agencies and entities; and
- Serving as a liaison between the Federal Government and State, local and regional authorities, and private sector entities in the NCR to facilitate access to Federal grants and other programs.

The complexity of relationships, jurisdictions, roles and responsibilities within the NCR is staggering. Eighteen separate local jurisdictions must work in concert with each other, their State counterparts, the Federal government – all three branches – and the private sector in order to achieve the type of cohesive planning in prevention, preparedness, response and recovery that is necessary to secure the NCR and save it harmless from all incidents, natural or manmade. To function, this office must coordinate and work with and through others to fulfill its responsibilities.

In this spirit of cooperation, senior representatives of the District of Columbia, State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and this office, participate on the NCR Senior Policy Group (SPG), continue to effect an unprecedented level of cooperation among the jurisdictions.

I also note this office's active coordination across the Department as well as across the Federal family. Working through the Joint Federal Committee – whose membership is drawn from law

enforcement, protective services, and emergency preparedness communities from the Federal Government's executive, legislative, and judicial branches – the office seeks to create a regional focus among the federal government, increasing emergency preparedness and response. Specific examples of the Joint Federal Committee efforts include issues such as Federal workforce emergency release processes, security related access control, and to solidify a regional street closure process during emergencies.

Monitoring Grant Monies

With respect to regional funding decisions, the role of the ONCRC is to better synchronize and facilitate integration of efforts and not to create duplicative and competing organizational structures. This office works collaboratively with the National Capital Region SPG, regional Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), and the NCR Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC) to accomplish essential region-wide resource allocation and asset management coordination. These groups have worked to maintain organizational discipline – sustaining proven relationships between levels and agencies of government as well as successful processes for grant management.

Critical to efficient grant management and effective resource allocation is a coordinated, region-wide plan for establishing first responder goals, needs, and priorities and assessing the benefits of all expenditures to enhance first responder capabilities. To prepare the foundation for a regional asset management strategy, this office in cooperation with the Office for Domestic Preparedness sponsored a regional risk, capabilities, and needs assessment which resulted in the first Urban Area Homeland Security Strategy for the region and the nation. On February 4, 2004 the region

formally adopted the National Capital Region Review and Recommendation Process to ensure coordination of asset management activities among all jurisdictions.

The governance structure for the NCR was founded on the principles of full disclosure of information, joint decision-making, and equality of parties. This office's unique role is not of federal control and direction, but coordination and cooperation. The ONCRC works collaboratively with the SPG, CAOs, and EPC to establish funding decisions and priorities.

Gaps in Incident Preparedness

The region in coordination with this office is presently invested in numerous efforts to enhance the preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery capabilities within the NCR. The region has taken great strides to develop or enhance necessary plans and protocols, outfit emergency service providers with necessary personal protective equipment, create additional capacity to provide both basic and advance training for regional first responders, and engage the region in comprehensive exercises. For all the progress made to enhance the region's homeland security capabilities, much work still exists. This office recognizes the need to develop more specific preparedness standards, clearer performance goals, and establish an improved method for tracking regional initiatives to facilitate efficient and effective asset management and resource allocation decisions in future efforts.

Close

In closing, the NCR presents a unique challenge for those who protect its citizens, property and institutions. The region has developed a solid foundation for meeting these challenges and will continue to work toward addressing region-wide preparedness needs. The ONCRC is committed

to ensuring that cooperative actions are taken to enhance coordinated asset management and resource allocation in the NCR.