

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 25, 2017

The Honorable John Kelly
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Kelly,

As members of Congress representing the Hampton Roads area of the Commonwealth of Virginia, we write to request your assistance on an issue of critical importance to our region.

Despite having the largest naval base in the world and the second highest number of military personnel of any metropolitan area in the United States, Hampton Roads does not receive funding through the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) program to fund efforts to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from acts of terrorism. We are concerned with the formula utilized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to determine relative risk and subsequent funding of urban areas under the UASI grant program. Our concerns with the current formula are specific to two components; the national security index and the limited scope of critical infrastructure contained in the targeted infrastructure index.

The national security index is composed of military personnel and a count of defense industrial bases (DIB). These components combined currently account for only 2% of the total risk formula. As the risk formula does not take into consideration the threats to military facilities nor consider the significance of DIB facilities (all are weighted equally), we believe the current weight of 2% for the national security index highly undervalues the terrorism risks of the Hampton Roads region. Raising the weight of the national security index to 5-10% of the total risk formula would address the omission of highly targeted military facilities and personnel.

Another concern involves the critical infrastructure covered under the targeted infrastructure index. This component constitutes 20% of the risk formula and includes critical infrastructure such as aviation, mass transit and commuter rail, oil and natural gas facilities, and large public facilities and venues. As military installations continue to be an attractive target for terrorist organizations, we believe that DOD facilities should be included in the targeted infrastructure index. Additionally, the navigable harbor channels within the Hampton Roads region serve both naval and commercial port operations. An attack that blocks these channels would have substantial economic and national security implications, and thus should also be included in the targeted infrastructure index.

The UASI grant program has provided the Hampton Roads region with crucial support to prevent, prepare, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks. Due to a devaluation of the risks specific to military communities like Hampton Roads, we have been subsequently ranked out of funding under this program. We ask for your assistance in ensuring that threats to Hampton Roads are accurately captured in the risk profile so that we can have the necessary resources to address them.

We respectfully ask that you provide a response to our proposed changes to the formula utilized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Please contact Pat Thompson in the office of Congressman Rob Wittman at patrick.thompson@mail.house.gov with a response to this inquiry.

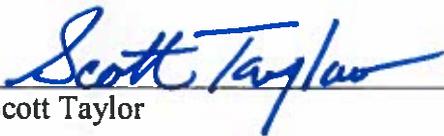
Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott



Scott Taylor



Donald McEachin