

APR 17 2008

APR 03 2008

Archives
cc: 2145

Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



Homeland Security

Sopko
Arling
Keyle
Lisa C
R/HDB files

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of Secretary Chertoff, thank you for your letter regarding the Committee on Energy and Commerce and its Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations inquiry into "the management, operations, and activities" of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC) and "the proposal by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to close the PIADC and relocate its operations to a new facility," the proposed National Bio and Agrodefense Facility (NBAF).

Enclosed is DHS's response to Question 14 posed in your February 21, 2008, letter regarding "the dates and attendees at all meetings" that Secretary Chertoff and Deputy Secretary Jackson "may have had with representatives or members of the consortia that filed expressions of interest in the NBAF process." Please note that DHS has already provided its response to Question 14 regarding Under Secretary Cohen's meetings with representatives or members of the consortia that filed expressions of interest in the NBAF process. DHS requests the documents accompanying this letter be used for Committee purposes only and that it is confidentially preserved within the Committee. Should the Committee determine that public disclosure is necessary in the exercise of its responsibilities, DHS requests an opportunity to discuss its concerns with you before the document is released. An identical letter has been sent to Chairman Bart Stupak.

I appreciate your interest in the Department of Homeland Security, and I look forward to working with you on future homeland security issues. If I may be of further assistance, please contact the Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 447-5890.

Sincerely,

Donald H. Kent, Jr.
Assistant Secretary
Office of Legislative Affairs

Enclosures

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

REMARKS TO GREATER SAN ANTONIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

DATE: Monday, March 26, 2007
TIME: 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. (45 minutes)
LOCATION: Mayflower Hotel, East Room
FROM: Stewart Baker, Assistant Secretary, PLCY

OBJECTIVES/DESIRED OUTCOME OF MEETING:

- Address members of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce for 15-20 minutes and follow with Q&A for 15 minutes.
- Provide insight into the latest developments at DHS. There is special interest on immigration, transportation, and cross-border trucking/trading with Mexico.
- Listen to concerns of the Chamber regarding immigration and other subjects above.

BACKGROUND:

- **Organization:** The mission of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce is to be an advocate for its members and business community in building and sustaining a diverse and prosperous economy. It has been in existence for 110 years.
- **Relation to DHS:** Interested in interaction and relations with neighbors across the southern border. Some important issues include trade, transportation, and immigration. This group is receptive to helping the Administration and Congress on Comprehensive Immigration Reform.
- **O&A Note:** They might ask about the plans to replace the Plum Island Facility. San Antonio has several interested parties. See *Tab E* for further information.
- **Note:** The next event after this is a panel on immigration.

PARTICIPANTS:

Non-DHS

Brenda Vickrey Johnson, Chairman, Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce
TBD Members of San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

DHS

Deputy Secretary Jackson
Beverly Cenname, Business Liaison, PLCY/PSO

PRESS PLAN: Open

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Remarks (Source: PLCY/PSO)
- B. Agenda (Source: Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce)
- C. Fact Sheet on Cross-Border Trucking (Source: OPA)
- D. Fact Sheet on SPP (Source: PREP/IP)
- E. Fact sheet on NBAF (Source: S&T)
- F. Biography (Source: Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce)

Prepared by: Anisha Dewan, PSO, anisha.dewan@dhs.gov, (202) 282-9803

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

QUARTERLY MEETING WITH SECRETARY JOHANNNS

Overview

The take-home message from this discussion is that a significant agricultural disease event in the United States will require responses that outpace any single Department's capability.

- This requires that we work closer together now.
- Demonstrate an emphasis on developing a partnership for national security through a sustainable, strategic planning and implementation of HSPD-9.

National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF)

Talking Points:

- DHS and USDA need to accelerate the joint development of countermeasures to agricultural threats.
- DHS and USDA should focus both Departments' energies not on the geography of NBAF, but on demonstrating an expanded partnership through an end-to-end assessment and implement strategy of countermeasures development from threat determination, measurement of capabilities, combined effective surveillance, sufficient modeling and risk reduction strategies, and surge of diagnostic, response, and recovery down to the local level.

Background:

- Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC) has served as the Nation's first defense against foreign animal diseases for over 50 years.
 - Threats to the Nation's agriculture and public health have changed dramatically since the time of PIADC's establishment.
 - Changes include the globalization of travel and trade, the broadened size and scope of U.S. livestock and agricultural industry, and the threat of agro-terrorism.
- Despite significant investments in the facility's infrastructure, PIADC is unable to fully meet the research and diagnostic capabilities required to address the threat of agro-terrorism.
- Due to biocontainment constraints, PIADC concentrates on research and diagnostic activities for only a subset of the highest-consequence foreign animal diseases and cannot facilitate expanded research into other high priority foreign animal disease and emerging threats of concern.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Agriculture Border Protections

Talking Points:

- In order to strengthen U.S. agricultural resilience, DHS and USDA need to develop a comprehensive border protection plan to address the spectrum of agricultural threats.
- DHS and USDA should develop a border action plan that quantifies demand for services and measures quality of service and training, including of all CBP border inspectors. It should also effectively involve stakeholders and provide the research and development of advance analysis and sensors.

Food Sector Vulnerabilities

Talking Points:

- Launch a joint (DHS, USDA, HHS, and potentially DOD) review and “lessons learned” assessment of the recent melamine adulteration incident.
- Long-term, sustainable planning and implementation of HSPD-9, *Defense of U.S. Agriculture and the Food Supply*, is needed.
- Partner with HHS Secretary Leavitt to request DOD Secretary Gates to conduct a review and develop lessons learned from the recent melamine adulteration incident, with an emphasis on measured actions taken and the further development of interoperable, NIMS-compliant plans, tasking, and resource management; JIC; situational awareness via NBIS; and, exercises and capabilities.

Watch Out For/If Asked:

- Issues raised on the part of the other SSAs within the food and agriculture sector regarding turf issues, authorities, and defenses against open and collaborative information sharing.
- As has been the case in many past events, as well as the current gluten contamination, when an event unfolds in this sector, the SSAs implement or require actions that are left to DHS to execute and fund. In the event of a large scale, high mortality food event or a major foreign animal disease like Foot and Mouth disease, DHS would have to resource and manage the overall response.
- USDA should be encouraged not to minimize the significance of any event within the national food and agriculture production chains in order to protect against commodity market and futures price fluctuations/disturbances.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Background:

The Food and Agriculture Infrastructure and Public Confidence:

- The U.S. food and agriculture industry has a long history of providing safe and abundant food for its population, and the American people have had great confidence in it for many years.
- Recent events have shaken that level of confidence and the media has picked up on this, addressing the theme that they need to keep the industry and the government “honest” (e.g., CNN news stories on the gluten, spinach, and peanut butter events; also note the most recent reports of melamine adulteration in domestic U.S. feed).
- There is a growing interest on the Hill and in the media for change in food safety regulations and surveillance of the food supply chain. This has also resulted in a new OMB effort (the current “OMB Food Safety Cross Cut” initiative) to look at what changes are needed to insure the safety and defense of the Nation’s food supply chain.
- When the public loses confidence in any aspect of the food supply chain, it can rapidly translate into economic harm and a drop in confidence in government.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
