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Statement of

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**Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment**

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Good morning Committee members, I would like to thank all of you for inviting me here today to testify on this very important topic as our country looks for ways to better prepare ourselves in the prevention, response, and recovery from acts of terror or from Mother Nature. I believe this is a great opportunity to identify and acknowledge our successes as well as identify areas that potentially need improvement.

During my career as a first responder in Los Angeles and as a Federal Coordinating Officer and lead federal official on disasters, I've responded to many devastating events that have occurred in this country. My goal is to do whatever I can to help prevent, respond to, and recover from such events in order to minimize the impact on our citizens.

The law enforcement community, at the federal, state and local levels, has done a great job in identifying potential threats and preventing those threats from becoming reality. I also believe that many of our citizens in this country have contributed to the success of preventing attacks due to their vigilance and desire to protect this country from acts of terror. I am hopeful, with the help of this Committee, that we can verify that the information related to acts of terror is consistent across all levels of government and not diluted to a "need to know" basis.

In addition, I am hopeful that this Committee can help in widening the definition of "need to know" to include those that would respond to an event if prevention was not successful. It is critical that when the intelligence community gets information of a potential or pending event, that information is shared with fire, EMS and emergency management in order to fine tune our all-hazard planning to that immediate threat. This country and homeland security cannot place all of its efforts in prevention without a corresponding response appropriate to that threat.

This Committee, working with the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, and other departments can be influential in the identification and support of information sharing projects utilizing various grant streams. A good example would be Cop Link, a project proposal that would increase the information sharing among communities.

This Committee, as it relates to critical infrastructure protection, can be influential in ensuring a well-rounded approach in the identification and protection of our country's most important assets. Paramount to being successful in this area, we as a country need to be consistent in the identification of these assets. As a major factor in critical infrastructure protection, the National Infrastructure Protection Plan and Sector Specific Plans are valuable tools to better protect these assets. It is critical that any planning related to critical infrastructure is developed by the private sector with the federal government as the facilitator. Ownership clearly has to fall on the private sector community since they own the vast majority of assets in this area. The best way to protect this critical infrastructure for generations in this post 911 era is through building codes and ordinances at the local level. The difficult discussion still resides in using tax payer dollars to harden private, for-profit facilities. Lastly, information gathered related to critical infrastructure needs to be shared with a select group of first responders so as to better prepare their response. Current practice is to keep this information so secretive that even the first responders and emergency managers are unaware of the critical infrastructure assets in their community.

Another tool to assist in critical infrastructure protection is the creation of a new Emergency Support Function that incorporates the 17 sectors. In Denver, we are in the beginning phase of doing just that. It has been my experience that at critical times early in an event, we can only react to issues as they arise within any sector. Our plan is to have them engaged from the onset to identify issues before they become reality. This new ESF will be embedded in our City Emergency Operations Plan and it should be a part of the National Response Plan, soon to be the National Response Framework.

It would be helpful if this Committee could assist the Department of Homeland Security in assessing the ramifications of any large event (be it acts of terror or natural hazards) in order to better prioritize use of funds as we better prepare this country. As we've seen recently in events such as Hurricane Katrina, the mass evacuation of an area, regardless of its cause, becomes one of the bigger issues facing a community during a disaster. Since the inception of the Department of Homeland Security the focus has been (rightfully so) making sure the first responders have the equipment to be successful. Now six years after September 11th we continue to focus primarily on the first responders and not focus on the other areas that need support such as mass care and medical surge capabilities. While there are current limitations with supporting the private sector with taxpayer grant funds, we as government know, especially in a crisis, that the private sector is a partner in our response. With that said, hopefully the Committee can work with the Department of Homeland Security to focus on all the issues related to a large event which include mass care and medical surge to ensure the response is appropriate across the board in handling the obvious and the collateral issues that always occur during large events. Regardless of how well the first responders do in their portion of the event, any negative peripheral issues become the legacy of the event.

Lastly, the ultimate goal of the Department of Homeland Security is to increase capability. At some point, the Department of Homeland Security should look into utilizing grant funds to support personnel costs beyond what is currently allowed. Currently the focus is on obtaining equipment but we also need to focus on the need for additional personnel to truly increase capability. By using grant funds to increase personnel, DHS would provide a substantial increase in capability in the near term with local and state government assuming the financial responsibility for the long term.

Again, I would like to thank all members for the opportunity to speak today and I would be happy to answer any questions you have.