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Testimony of  
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*Readiness in the National Capital Region*

Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the  
Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia  
**Senator George V. Voinovich, Chair**  
**Senator Daniel K. Akaka, Ranking Member**

July 14, 2005

Room 562  
Dirken Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
9:30 A.M.

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**Strategy**

Historically, the NCR has led the nation in the development of regional homeland security planning and coordination. This leadership is driven by necessity—the NCR requires a coordinated regional strategic plan to guide a unified, long-term effort to ensure the NCR is safe and secure from all hazards.

NCR homeland security partners are currently working closely together to develop a regional strategic plan that establishes preparedness priorities and objectives for the entire region. The regional strategic plan will integrate pre-existing federal, State, local, regional, and practitioner-level planning documents into one unique strategic plan for the NCR, while also infusing newly identified goals and priorities for regional preparedness. A key building block for regional coordination was the UASI grant.

The 2003 UASI grant required a regional needs-assessment and an Urban Area Homeland Security Strategy. The *FY 2003 Urban Area Homeland Security Strategy* (Attachment A) for the NCR was developed based on the results of the needs assessment completed by member jurisdictions in July 2003—the first region in the nation to do so. The *2003 Strategy* included three objectives:

- Prevent terrorist attacks within the NCR;
- Reduce the NCR’s vulnerability to terrorism; and
- Minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur.

The *2003 Strategy* incorporated three separate influences: (1) the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* that identifies a perspective and direction for regional initiatives; (2) guidance from NCR executives represented in the *Eight Commitments to Action*; and (3) the *Statewide Template Initiative* with its checklist of planning guidance from State and local public safety emergency managers.<sup>1</sup>

The *2003 Strategy* focused on developing true regional capability—capability with benefits across the NCR, not simply for a particular jurisdiction. The *2003 Strategy* embraced the concept of a national incident management system that defines a common terminology for all parties, provides a unified command structure, standards and qualifications, and is scalable to meet incidents of all sizes. This integration was a program milestone toward Regional leveraging of pre-existing State, District, and local initiatives to create, for the first time, a cohesive regional identity.

While the *2003 Strategy* was a major milestone for the NCR, as noted in GAO Report GAO-04-433, *Management of First Responder Grants in the National Capital Region*, the *2003 Strategy* was but a first step. Since summer 2004, regional homeland security and public safety officials and private sector leaders actively sought to create the nation’s first integrated and comprehensive regional homeland security strategic plan. Dissimilar from past planning efforts, it utilizes a more collaborative, consensus-based approach to decision-making while also leveraging and strengthening the various public and private communities throughout the region that make up the NCR homeland security partnership.

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<sup>1</sup> *Statewide Template Initiative*, President’s Homeland Security Advisory Council, March 2003.

In contrast to the *2003 Strategy*, these strategic efforts, now documented in draft form entitled *2005 National Capital Region Homeland Security Strategic Plan*, will be a comprehensive document that defines priorities and objectives for the entire region without regard to any specific jurisdiction, discipline, or funding mechanisms to:

- Establish coordinated regional goals and priorities for the enhancement of homeland security and first responder capabilities in the NCR
- Guide, integrate, and ensure the efficient spending of homeland security grant and budget dollars throughout the NCR
- Provide a means to measure the actual improvements made to NCR preparedness

This strategy is based on seven guiding principles which provide a framework for decision making. These include:

1. Strengthen regional coordination among all partners to gain synergy while sustaining jurisdictional authority and enhancing capabilities.
2. Implement homeland security policies and programs while maintaining our constitutionally-based society, particularly the civil rights and civil liberties of the NCR's diverse population, including persons with disabilities.
3. Prepare for "all-hazards", including man-made and naturally occurring emergencies and disasters.
4. Advance the safety and security of the NCR in ways that are enduring, relevant, and sustainable.
5. Foster a culture of collaboration, respect, communication, innovation, and mutual aid among all homeland security partners across the NCR.
6. Adopt best-practice, performance-based approaches to staffing, planning, equipping, training, and exercising for all homeland security partners.
7. Strive for an optimal balance of preparedness capabilities across the NCR that recognizes differing risks and circumstances, and leverages mutual aid agreements.

These efforts seek to integrate pre-existing federal, State, local, regional, and practitioner-level planning documents into one unique revised strategic plan for the NCR, while also infusing newly identified goals and priorities for regional preparedness. The *2005 National Capital Region Homeland Security Strategic Plan* will serve as a guiding framework. NCR priorities will be aligned against the five strategic goals: awareness, prevention, protection, response, and recovery.

Related to the strategic framework, is the creation of integrated, multi-jurisdictional performance measures to effectively monitor and assess execution of the regional strategic plan. In addition to integrating guidance from DHS national efforts such as *HSPD-7 Critical Infrastructure Identification, Prioritization* and *HSPD-8 National Preparedness*, the region is also undertaking a more detailed assessment, entitled Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP).

The EMAP process combines a self assessment, documentation, and peer assessment to provide an independent evaluation of a jurisdiction's disaster management capabilities and a roadmap for continuous improvement. Standards found in EMAP are consistent with the NFPA 1600 Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs, 2004, which was recommended by the 9/11 Commission as the national preparedness standards. EMAP will measure the status of current capabilities in the NCR against the established EMAP standards, assist in identifying and prioritize future improvements activities, and enhance strategic framework measures for resource allocation.

Results from the EMAP assessment combined with the development of national preparedness standards will provide specific guidance in determining the region's homeland security needs and in allocating resources associated with FY 2006 homeland security grants and beyond.