

**Speech as Written for Delivery By  
VADM Thomas J. Barrett, USCG (ret.)  
Administrator  
Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration  
U.S. Department Of Transportation**

**California State HMEP Grant Announcement  
Tracy Fire Station #1  
1701 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tracy, CA  
@ 10:00 a.m.  
Thursday, October 19, 2006**

Thank you Chief Bosch for that very kind introduction and for hosting our grant announcement today.

I would also like to thank

- Congressman Richard Pombo,
- Mayor Dan Bilbrey,
- Mayor Pro-Tem Brent Ives,
- City Manager Daniel Hobbs,
- Michael Oliveri, Program Manager, Emergency Medical Program, and
- Michael Brady of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services

for participating in our event.

I am here today because Congressman Pombo told me about the outstanding first responder team you have here in Tracy. He has high praise for the local fire fighters and other first responders who work closely with the San Joaquin County Office of Emergency Services.

You and your fellow fire fighters are the unsung heroes who ensure the safety of local California citizens in responding to incidents involving hazardous materials.

So, on behalf of the Bush Administration, and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, I'd like to tell you that we greatly appreciate the dedication of the first responder community for risking your lives every day.

I am also here today to announce a DOT Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant to the State of California in the amount of \$ 964,316 dollars. This grant will fund hazardous materials emergency preparedness planning and training activities for first responders at the state, county and local level.

I've learned that over the last three years, HMEP Grant funding to San Joaquin County paid for 481 hazardous materials training and qualification courses taken by county and local emergency responders. These emergency responders completed qualifications as First Responder Operators, Hazmat Trainers, Incident Commanders, Decontamination Specialists and Safety Officers.

And last year, this training was put to good use. The Tracy Fire Department, with support from the San Joaquin County Hazmat Team, responded to 223 hazardous materials calls.

This is exactly what the HMEP Grants Program was established to do..., to improve the safety and security of our communities by providing funding for hazmat training and preparedness.

Thank you, Congressman Pombo, for your strong leadership in Congress to ensure that this HMEP Grant Program is fully funded and available to our first responders.

The safe and secure transportation of hazardous materials is a big job, and the Federal government can't do it alone. We rely heavily on the trained and fearless group of professional fire fighters, police, and other first responders found in local volunteer fire departments, like the one here in Irwin.

Our hope is that the funds we provide to California continues to trickle down to the county and local community emergency preparedness units that need the hazmat training and planning the most.

Together with the help of your representatives in Congress, and the brave men and women on the front lines of emergency response, we can advance the safety and security of our transportation systems.

Now I would like to offer the floor to Congressman Richard Pombo.

– END –