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EMERGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS: FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL COORDINATION

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

OF THE

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EMERGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS: FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL COORDINATION

Wednesday, April 12, 2006

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:00 a.m. at the Orting Multi-Purpose Center, 202 Washington Avenue South, Orting, Washington, Hon. Dave Reichert [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Members Present: Representatives Reichert and Pascrell.

Mr. REICHERT. The Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Science, and Technology will come to order. The Subcommittee will hear testimony today on Federal, State and local coordination for emergency planning and preparedness.

I would like to thank every one of the witnesses here today and the public for attending this morning's important hearing.

Before we proceed any further this morning, as chairman, I need to take care of some housekeeping duties. Because this is an official Congressional hearing as opposed to a town hall meeting, we must abide by certain rules of the Committee on Homeland Security as well as the House of Representatives. Therefore, I kindly ask that there be no applause at any time or any kind of demonstration with regard to the testimony. It is important that we respect the decorum and rules of the Committee and the House. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Before we begin the testimony today, I must first welcome my distinguished colleague, the ranking member of our Subcommittee, Mr. Pascrell. The Subcommittee's ranking member and New Jersey's finest is welcome to the State of Washington and Washington's 8th Congressional District.

Although Bill and I hail from opposite coasts and belong to different political parties, we nonetheless share a common vision for a safer America.

I'm just going to pause here and go off the script just a little bit. Bill and I have had the opportunity to work together as partners, I think, for about the six months or so that I've had this position. And I must say that I think that we have become an example, not only for other subcommittees under the Homeland Security um-

brella, but also for other committees and subcommittees within the House of Representatives as to how we work together to address the Nation's needs, especially when it comes to keeping our communities safe from all hazards; not just national hazards, but all hazards that we might face in the changing world that we all now live in.

So I'll go back to the script to say that there are few members of Congress as passionate as Bill on issues related to first responders to Homeland Security. And to be honest, there are few in Congress as knowledgeable and with as much expertise on the needs and concerns of first responders as Bill.

So thank you, Bill, for taking part in this hearing. It's time away from the family. He's come a long way, all the way from New Jersey. I don't pronounce it the same way as he does, I'm sure. But this is a long trip. It's a five and a half to six-hour trip from New Jersey to the Seattle area, the Northwest here, and Bill is on a flight home this evening already with his staff, and also the staff of the Homeland Security Committee.

So I just want to take this moment to thank all the staff from both sides of the aisle and the staff from the Homeland Security Department. Amy especially has been very helpful in helping bring this hearing here today. We have a very busy schedule after this meeting this afternoon shortly after this hearing. So thank you so much, Bill, for taking time to be here.

Thank you, George Foresman and the Department of Homeland Security, the Under Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security—he's the Under Secretary of Preparedness—for his graciousness in appearing before us today. Mr. Under Secretary, I'm sure that Bill shares my high regard for you and my sincerest wishes for your success in a very challenging job.

Bill, please correct me if I'm wrong or just simply exaggerating, but I believe our Subcommittee to be one of the most bipartisan in all of Congress. Although we have some policy differences on occasion, Bill and I and our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, our goal is enhancing our nation's ability to prevent and therefore mitigate against, respond to and recover from acts of terrorism, especially those involving weapons of mass destruction, natural disasters and emergencies.

There is a public perception that bipartisanship, if it isn't dead yet, is on life support. But as long as I have anything to say or do about it, bipartisanship on this Subcommittee will remain strong. After all, homeland security is a bipartisan issue. Neither party has a monopoly on national security or the caring for the wellbeing of our

Nation and its citizens. That is precisely why Bill and I will within the next month or so jointly introduce legislation to fix two of the most serious deficiencies within our National Disaster Response System as made evident by the government's response after Hurricane Katrina.

The first bill on public safety emergency communications will, among other things, establish an office of emergency communications in the preparedness directives, consolidate the national communications system, SAVCOM, program, the integrated network project, the interoperable communications technical assistance pro-

gram within this new office, and transfer the Department of Commerce's new $1 billion interoperability grant program to DHS.

The second bill, which is on preparedness and response, will instead of restoring FEMA to its previous status as an independent agency, better integrate FEMA into the department, restore the nexus between preparedness and response, and implement many important Katrina-related reforms such as creating an Office of Public and Community Preparedness.

The purpose of this hearing is to help us gain a more thorough understanding of what Congress can do to better assist the Seattle region's efforts to enhance all hazard preparedness. Specifically we will examine the state of the region's coordination, cooperation and planning for the state of the region's catastrophic events, whether manmade or natural, and how well the Department of Homeland Security is working with our State and local governments.

There are few metropolitan regions in the country as vulnerable as ours. Those of us who live in the Pacific Northwest unfortunately are all too familiar with nature's fury. In fact, I'm pressed to think of any other region that faces the same number of natural hazards such as volcanic eruptions, lahars, earthquakes, tsunamis, wildfires and floods, just to name a few. Given our region's wealth of critical infrastructures such as the Port of Seattle, our military bases, and our proximity to Canada, the Seattle region is increasingly a potential target for those seeking to undermine our way of life. Because we reside in an area so prone to catastrophic natural disasters and at such high risk for acts of terrorism, it is absolutely imperative that all those forms of governments, Federal, State and local, work in an integrated seamless manner.

Unfortunately, as the response to Hurricane Katrina so dramatically exposed, we as a nation have a long way to go in that regard. We really should expect better from our government. It's for these reasons that the Subcommittee is holding today's field hearing. We are indeed fortunate in the Seattle region to have the opportunity to hear from so many hardworking, dedicated expert public servants on our state of preparedness. Your appearance is vitally important to the work of the Subcommittee and no doubt to the Department.

A little more than six months ago, Peter King, Chairman of the full Committee on Homeland Security, personally asked me to chair this Subcommittee. As one of the only six freshman in the history of Congress to be afforded the privilege and honor of chairing the Subcommittee, I am pleased and happy to host my first field hearing in the 8th Congressional District.

Again, I would like to thank the witnesses and the audience for being with us. I now yield to the ranking member of the Subcommittee, Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, Chairman Reichert, for holding the first of two hearings dedicated to examining emergency planning and preparedness among Federal, State and local officials. And when I look at the basic topics that we're going to get into today, what are our strengths and what are our weaknesses, and what is the relationship between the different levels of government, we're trying to spend a lot of time on that, because we think it's critical.

We know of the lack of communication at 9/11, and we want to see how far we've come since then. Are we working together in the first place? A lot of things pass for working together when you look at it and scratch the surface to find out the folks on the local level don't have any idea because we haven't really shared with them.

Dave and I believe in the same philosophy on this. We believe in a bottom-up approach to protecting our kids and our families and our neighborhoods. It's been an honor for me. And David knows that I can be as partisan as the next person, but David knows I care for this guy. He's been a great chairman. You have a great congressman here. He works very, very hard for all the people. And he knows, if I didn't mean it, I wouldn't say it. I don't care where I would be.

Mr. REICHERT. That's true.

Mr. PASCRELL. So this is a serious concern for both of us. If and when terrorists or natural disaster strike our homeland, it would be those on the local level that are most affected. We forget that many times when we get caught up in the aura of the dome.

Homeland Security consequently must begin at home, in our communities and our cities. It is imperative that the men and women on the frontlines are fully coordinated with State and Federal officials, that robust communication, cooperation and integration throughout the various spheres of our security apparatus exists. Lives, as you know, will depend on it.

We live in a vast nation, so whether I'm talking about Mr. Dave in Washington State or Mr. Dave for New Jersey, which I represent, there may be many miles, 2,300, that separate us, but we both really want the same thing for America. We want to contribute to that and get out of the business of simply pointing fingers. Because of the sheer size of the Nation, we have an abundance of risks and vulnerabilities right here in Washington State. It's home to the potential of a variety of natural disasters, earthquakes volcanic eruptions, tsunamis.

In additional, two large container ports and a close proximity to the northern border, the area is considered to be a potential terrorist target. Dave and I both agree that, whatever dollars are spent by the Federal Government, the more we can base it on risk to the communities, the better off we will all be. It will work more efficiently and more effectively.

In New Jersey, which we'll be visiting for a second hearing down the road, we have a number of challenges. It's close to New York City, and that presents its own share of risks. It has a complex array of infrastructures throughout the region.

Both of our congressional districts have many things in common. First and foremost is the dedication of our first responders, the police, fire, EMTs, State and local officials who want to help protect our citizens. That's why we're here today, to help ensure that the Department of Homeland Security is effectively working with State and local agencies in addressing the challenges of developing and implementing their emergency preparedness and their response plans and their interoperable communication networks. We have spent vast hearing hours in debate and discussion on how we can improve communications in this country. And if one was to look objectively and stand back, we haven't come very far in four years.

We have our own inability to get the agencies to reach out to one another. We have our own turf wars that exist on a Federal level. We're trying to overcome them, trying to bring people together.

At the same time, we want the Federal Communications Commission to understand their responsibility in providing a spectrum so that we can elaborate upon communications.

We're very fortunate today to have these folks that have come a long way. We have the Under Secretary, George Foresman, very well respected in emergency management. I really believe that. And we have some disagreements when we come to meetings, of course, because he represents the administration's standpoint. But he goes beyond that, and I want to commend him for the work that he's done and the patience that he's had with me, because I can ask too many questions at times. He doesn't know whether to laugh or smile. We all have faith in you, George, Mr. Secretary, not only your competence but in your passion for the responsibilities. You are well prepared for this job, and one of the few areas of Homeland Security which I feel comfortable with, even though we're a long ways from doing what I think should be done, and I mean that sincerely.

I'm looking forward to an appearance or an array of emergency management and first responder officials, and I'm interested to learn what they believe are the greatest impediments to this.

My local firefighters in New Jersey, my local police officers and EMTs back in New Jersey are concerned about more than the $600 million that is being cut from preparedness directives within the Department of Homeland Security. They worry about the elimination of the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, the Metropolitan Medical Response System, and the safer firefighter grant program, which will affect local readiness. They have real concerns about the dramatic cuts in the fire grant programs which help all Americans, small towns and large towns, the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program and the various training programs within the department.

Today while we discuss the need for interoperability, let's not forget that the administration's fiscal year 2007 budget also proposes to eliminate funding for the COPS Interoperability Grant Program on the grounds that the program is redundant with the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security.

We're not here to discuss the COPS program, because you wouldn't be able to shut me up. But we are here to talk about, legitimately I think, interoperability programs within that. The Department of Homeland Security does not have a dedicated Interoperability Grant Program, so I look forward to hearing how the witnesses are using their limited resources to address a major priority discussing how we can help improve the directives. Dave and I want to be helpful to you. And I think, please believe us in our actions.

I welcome hearing from today's witness, a group of dedicated public servants who are addressing critical challenges. I salute them and look forward to a lively discussion about issues of enormous national importance.

And in conclusion, we know that every time we act in the Congress of the United States, there is a ripple effect. There are con-

sequences to what we do. I take that extremely seriously, and I know David does, and I'm honored to work with him. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening here.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Pascrell. I want to just mention first, before we get into witness testimony, that this kind of gives everyone a little bit of a flavor of how hearings are held if you haven't had the opportunity to be in Washington, D.C. and be present at a hearing.

Usually there's a number of other members around the table and some witnesses all anxious and eager and ready to answer questions. They can't wait for the friendly exchange that usually occurs. I am eliciting a smile here from Mr. Foresman as he focuses on his notes.

I think there's going to be—it's interesting. You know, I want to make this a very comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. We're in Orting, Washington, the 8th District. And both Bill and I, and I know George, the Under Secretary and all the witnesses here, are pleased to be here. But I want to just emphasize how important this hearing is. We aren't going through the motions here to gather some news coverage. We are here today because we're going to gather some facts, listen to some people who know their business.

And we are crafting legislation, as Bill said, that will change the way you all in this room do business, how you do your jobs, how we as American citizens depend upon you who are our first responders and who are working with first responders in emergencies to protect our community. This is important stuff, and I just want to reemphasize that. Sometimes we lose focus here. This is really important. So thank you again, Mr. Pascrell, for taking the time to be here.

And first, we'll introduce a panel. The first witness that will speak today is the Honorable George Foresman, Under Secretary of Preparedness for the Department of Homeland Security. We also have with us Mr. Jim Mullen, Director of the Emergency Management Division of Washington Military Department; Mr. Steven Bailey, Director of the Pierce County Department of Emergency Management; Chief Mario Treviño, Chief of the Bellevue Fire Department; and Mr. William Mitzel, Risk Control Specialist, Home Office Commercial Lines, the Unigard Insurance Group.

The Chair now recognizes the Honorable George Foresman to testify.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE FORESMAN, UNDER SECRETARY OF PREPAREDNESS, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. FORESMAN. Good morning, Chairman Reichert and Congressman Pascrell.

I very much want to acknowledge my appreciation for your kind remarks. And the one thing I will offer is, the Committee and both of you as leaders on the committee continue to provide good guidance, counsel, and appropriate oversight to us in the Department of Homeland Security, and I appreciate that. Thank you both for the opportunity to appear today before the Subcommittee to discuss the important national preparedness initiatives in the Department of Homeland Security. I'm indebted to you to be here today, and I'm humbled by the fact I've been able to join the local and State

officials who are on the frontline of making America safer and more secure.

I'm particularly appreciative of this field hearing. It allows us time with our local, State and private partners in their communities and on their turf. This type of exposure is critical toward constantly strengthening and improving our national approach to preparedness. A national approach, not Federal but national, requires the integration of levels and functions of government, the public and the private sector and the American people. I would just offer that this provides a parallel opportunity; the more questions that you ask them, the more that I will learn to be able to take back to Washington.

As I have mentioned in the previous testimony before the Committee, over the past 20 years, our Nation has not had a comprehensive national approach to preparedness that was dynamic and flexible enough to react to changes in risk.

The Department of Homeland Security was created as an all-hazards department with a mission to guide the development of a model to steer a national preparedness effort to link all the things that we do to deter, prevent, protect, respond, recover and mitigate against a wide range of hazards. It is important to recognize that this model is a shift from previous practices in which preparedness efforts were narrowly focused on either terrorism and natural disaster preparedness, but not both and not in an integrated fashion.

Our difference in comprehensive approach requires a change in the way that we think about preparedness. It is not simply a step in the continuum what we do to manage the risks to the homeland or the function of readiness. Rather it is the umbrella over the continuum.

Simply put, preparedness is how we will bring together the independent efforts to build one national preparedness system. It is how we make the independent interdependent.

It is essential to understand that, under our current evolving risk management principles, preparedness is not just an administrative function within the Department of Homeland Security. Our direction and mission applies to each office and component within DHS across the Federal areas and communities, and most importantly with our State, local and private sector partners and the most critical element, the American people. Our job is to increase synchronization and integration within and among all of these elements. It is a shared national mission, not simply a Federal activity. To strengthen our national preparedness, we must focus more acutely on connecting the unconnected to achieve unity of effort. In order to achieve a broader and truly national preparedness effort, the Department must coalesce to lessen the many disparate issues at all levels of government and in the private sector while preserving critical missions, cultures and identities of individual organizations.

Central to our efforts is the establishment of National Preparedness Integration Program, or NPIP, which includes a $50 million initiative in our DHS fiscal year 2007 budget request. The NPIP will support our national and departmental efforts by providing a centralized mechanism for promoting the alignments of preparedness efforts across all levels of government, the public and private

sectors. Failure to do so will lessen our ability to support the men and women working every day in our communities to keep American safe and secure.

By developing a common doctrine and approach to planning and training exercises, risk management and assessments, we will unite and integrate currently independent activities across all levels of government. Three examples: When an earthquake or lahar, as you mentioned earlier, or a terrorist attack could impact the people and infrastructure in this region, we must be sure that how we respond, how the Federal Government supports safety in communities is clear, coordinated and consistent irrespective of the hazard that threatens to cause the damage and destruction. At the end of the day, the local public safety officials charged with preventing a mitigation and response of the recovery wants one format process for getting Federal help. Imagine if we as citizens had to call different numbers and follow different procedures if we were dealing with all auto accidents or fire versus a crime versus a medical emergency. This kind of standardization will allow us to better measure performance so that we can individually and collectively assess our progress as a community and state and as a nation. It will allow us to evaluate preparedness from state to state and city to city as well as nationally.

The creation of the NPIP will enable us to build the national preparedness system that was envisioned when Congress created DHS. Critically it will draw on all responsible parties' plans and budgets for preparedness. Without such a system, it will be impossible to answer the question of how much better prepared are we today and how much do we continue to be. How better prepared should we be, and how far do we have to go? Most critically we need to have an integrated approach nationally. The NPIP will provide for this integrated approach.

I would also note that our national catastrophic planning project is currently not as integrated as it should be. Hurricane Katrina was a vivid reminder of this. We trust that existing plans across all levels of government are adequate and feasible, but we do not have a systematic way to ensure that they are fully synchronized on a day-to-day or region-to-region or a jurisdiction-to-jurisdiction basis. This results in a fragmented response to disasters, particularly catastrophic events.

Additionally, the core principle of the national response plan may not be fully operationalized which is needed quickly at the Federal, State or local level. We need a national planning system that will provide the means to achieve synchronization both vertically and horizontally to ensure that the Nation's planning at the local, State and Federal levels are organized and well resourced to be able to effectively respond to a wide variety of threats that we face on a day-to-day basis.

In closing, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Pascrell, the President and Congress have consistently identified the need for specific and measurable goals for preparedness, national cooperation, the application of the systems where the need and risk is the greatest, determination of the central capability of community need, and advanced planning processes that ensure plans are adequate and

achieve the required synchronization to ensure goals interoperability.

The National Preparedness Integration Program and the work of the preparedness directives will allow the Department to meet each of these challenges and will ensure a safer and more secure America; and most importantly, will ensure more prepared communities.

Thank you once again for providing me the opportunity to speak with you all today and for your continued support and valued input. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Forseman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE W. FORESMAN

Introduction

Good morning Chairman Reichert and Congressman Pascrell. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Subcommittee to discuss important preparedness initiatives within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

As you may have observed, over the past 20 years America's approach to preparedness has not been sufficiently comprehensive or dynamic and flexible enough to react to changes in a continuum of risk. National preparedness efforts have too often focused on either terrorism planning and prevention or natural disaster preparedness and response.

In the initial years of the newly created Department, significant emphasis was placed on terrorism-related threats, in recognition of the post-9/11 environment. However, as very evident today, it also had acquired the all-hazards legacy elements associated with many of the components assigned to the Department and the preparedness linkages and responsibilities associated with our State, local, and private sector partners. Thus, we must take a comprehensive approach in our national preparedness planning efforts.

Therefore, I would like to share with you my vision and goals for strengthening America's preparedness and how these initiatives will allow us to meet these goals in support of the overall mission of the Department.

Last July, the Preparedness Directorate was created as a result of Secretary Chertoff's Second Stage Review. This newly formed Directorate was given the distinct mission to coordinate the full range of our national capabilities to prevent, protect against, and respond to acts of terror or other disasters.

For the reasons above, my vision and goals for national preparedness require a change in the way we think about preparedness. I see it more as a transformation of "how" we prepare as being essential to ensuring the safety and security of our citizens in the 21st Century.

This change in thought dictates that preparedness should be understood not simply as a step in the continuum of what we do to manage risks to the homeland or the function of a single entity. Rather, it is the umbrella over the continuum. Simply put, preparedness is how we will bring together independent efforts to build one *national preparedness system.*

In addition, it is essential to understand that under our current evolving risk management principles, Preparedness is not just an administrative function within the Department of Homeland Security. Our mission applies to each office and component within DHS, across the federal interagency community as well as our State, local, territorial, tribal and private sector partners, and the most critical element—the American people. Our job is to achieve integration and synchronization within all of these elements. It is a shared *national mission,* not simply a Federal activity.

Preparedness Directorate Mission

The mission of the Preparedness Directorate is to define, strengthen and measure preparedness capabilities of the Nation to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies.

I believe that to achieve a broader and truly national preparedness, the Department and our State, tribal, local, and private sector partners must coalesce, integrate, and synchronize many disparate initiatives while preserving critical missions, cultures, and identities of individual organizations. Therefore, integration, synchronization, and communication become the foundations to our national preparedness efforts.

Additionally, the Directorate will develop, foster, and instill a national preparedness culture—an imperative established by the White House and the Congress, and

an expectation of the American citizens. This will require extensive leveraging of existing DHS Headquarters and field component resources and program activities. It will also require the dedicated encouragement and leveraging of other Federal interagency, State, local, tribal, and private sector resources to facilitate seamless national preparedness and effective cooperative partnerships.

National Preparedness Integration Program

Central to preparedness integration and synchronization is the establishment of the National Preparedness Integration Program (NPIP), which is included as a $50 million initiative in the President's Fiscal Year 2007 Department of Homeland Security Budget Request.

The purpose of the NPIP is to improve the Nation's preparedness posture—a national safety and security imperative. The basic premise of the NPIP is that effective national preparedness requires an integrated and synchronized approach among Federal, State, local, tribal and private-sector partners to share information and to plan, train, and exercise consistently. The current federal level approach to information sharing, planning, training and exercising is inconsistent across departments and agencies, leading to non-integrated preparedness.

As the preparedness enabling element of the Office of the Under Secretary for Preparedness, the NPIP will oversee the national integrated preparedness efforts to ensure coordinated strategic partnering and development of standard preparedness doctrine. This reflects the vision outlined in Homeland Security Presidential Directive Eight, released on December 17, 2003.

The Department requires a lead preparedness integrator such as the NPIP to support national preparedness transformation. This function will be accomplished at the Preparedness Directorate level and adequately resourced to ensure synchronization and integration of national preparedness initiatives and requirements.

NPIP will link requirements with emerging technology, doctrine, and operational requirements, techniques, and procedures to ensure the integration, interoperability, and operational effectiveness of homeland security capabilities. NPIP staff will work closely with the Homeland Security Institute and DHS Centers for Excellence to ensure preparedness integration projects and requirements are studied through experiments, and tested through combined training and exercise events conducted by the Directorate.

Preparedness standardization also allows us to better measure performance so we can individually and collectively assess our progress, allowing us to evaluate preparedness nationally, from region to region, state to state, and city to city.

Therefore, through the NPIP, we can better develop regional and local resilience to terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

Building a National Preparedness System

By establishment of the NPIP, we will enhance our national preparedness system, which allow us to better answer the question, "What risks should we prepare for and how well must we prepare?" Given the range of roles and responsibilities of DHS, it has proved difficult to ensure homeland security capabilities are internally coherent and collectively competent. These currently bifurcated relationships must be organized within a fully integrated and adaptable national preparedness system.

A fully integrated national preparedness system will result in:

- Strategic and operational flexibility that accommodates risk and uncertainty;
- A capabilities-based framework that organizes the nation to act in concert, and with the speed and operational effectiveness required for effective prevention and response; and
- The means to measure readiness by an individual entity or in aggregate.

This national preparedness system will improve the nation's homeland security and fully leverage the domestic all-hazards emergency response system for natural hazards and other emergencies.

State, local, tribal and private sector partners are not an adjunct to national preparedness system development. Instead, they are integral to development of a functional and successful system—bringing partnership commitment and participation to sustain and achieve sufficient preparedness capacity to ensure the Nation can effectively deal with catastrophic events.

Some of the critical initiatives supporting this system are:

- Finalizing a single national and regional risk assessment methodology to identify the types and magnitudes of risks we face.
- Encouraging capability-based planning that supports synchronization both vertically (across levels of government) and horizontally (across agencies at each level of government).

• Provide risk-based allocation of Federal assistance to state and local governments and other funding recipients and targeted towards building adaptable and interchangeable target capabilities, including capabilities that strengthen citizen resilience.

• Finalize a system of preparedness measures to assess national, regional, and local preparedness.

Several of these initiatives are already underway in DHS and other Federal agencies. The NPIP will help ensure unity of effort and consistency.

Nationwide Plan Review

The NPIP will also support follow-on efforts for the Nationwide Plan Review mandated by President Bush following Hurricane Katrina.

DHS was directed by the President to conduct an immediate review of emergency plans for the nation's major cities. Congress subsequently tasked DHS and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to review plans for all States and territories and 75 of the nation's largest urban areas, with particular emphasis on evacuation planning. DHS launched a two-phase review process in cooperation with DOT.

The overall objective of this two-phase review is to assess the adequacy and feasibility of the nation's emergency plans to deal with catastrophic disasters, whether natural or manmade.

The first phase involved a self-assessment of plans by States, territories and urban areas/major cities using guidance and criteria provided by DHS. The Department, through Preparedness Information Bulletin Number 197 issued November 23, 2005, provided comprehensive guidance to the participating jurisdictions on the types of information required for the self-assessment. The Information Bulletin posed a number of questions designed to determine the status of emergency planning efforts within the participating jurisdictions. It should be noted that participation in the Nationwide Plan Review is a prerequisite for receipt of Fiscal Year 2006 DHS Homeland Security grant funds.

The Department received responses from 98% of the participants. DHS provided a report summarizing Phase I results to Congress on February 10, 2006. The report included the following summary of findings:

• States' and urban areas' plan components are generally consistent with existing Federal planning guidance such as SLG 101 (State & Local Guidance 101) and voluntary standards such as NFPA 1600;

• For States and urban areas, having plans that are consistent with existing Federal planning guidance and voluntary standards does not translate into confidence in those plans to manage catastrophic events;

• The majority of States and urban areas have exercised their plan components within the past two years, though updates to plan components have not been as consistent;

• Plan components that have been updated recently are more likely to be consistent with existing Federal planning guidance and voluntary standards;

• Plan components that have been updated recently are more likely to be considered adequate for managing catastrophic events; and

• More populous States tend to have plan components that are consistent with existing Federal planning guidance and voluntary standards.

The Phase I results suggest the need for more common planning assumptions and methods; stronger integration of grant funding with operational needs; and a common framework for assessing and reporting on plans' effectiveness.

The second phase of the Nationwide Plan Review is currently underway and based on the Phase I findings, four areas were identified as requiring special emphasis in Phase II. These are customarily the most resource-intensive components of emergency plans and include the planning elements of:

1. Mass Evacuation
2. Mass Care
3. Resource Management
4. Health and Medical.

During phase II, Peer Review Teams comprised of former state and local emergency management and homeland security officials will visit 131 States, Territories, and urban areas to jointly validate self-assessments, determine requirements for planning assistance, collect best practices, and recommend corrective actions. The Peer Review Teams will work to jointly validate the self-assessments and determine requirements for planning assistance, and recommend corrective actions for those plans that are determined to require some level of change.

Perhaps just as important, these teams will collect best practices to disseminate to our State and local partners. Through the sharing of best practices we hope to achieve additional progress in the effort to improve catastrophic emergency planning

processes. The results of the site visits and specific recommendations to strengthen catastrophic planning will be provided in a final report to the President and Congress by May 31, 2006.

There's no doubt that our national catastrophic planning process is disjointed and unsystematic. We have had to trust that existing plans across all levels of government are adequate and feasible, but we do not have a systematic way to ensure they are, or that they are synchronized. When I use the word "synchronized," I mean both a process and an effect—that plans are related in purpose, place and time, and that together, our combined plans and pooled capabilities achieve the effect we want: "the city is evacuated" or "the terrorists are eliminated."

The existing Federal, State, and local preparedness and operational plans are not sufficiently coordinated, resulting in a fragmented response to disasters, particularly catastrophic events. Additionally, the core principles of the National Response Plan (NRP) have not been fully operationalized and de-conflicted at the Federal, State, or local levels.

The Department hopes to address the needs identified by States and localities during the course of the Nationwide Plan Review, in part, through the establishment of the NPIP.

Close

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the President and Congress have consistently identified the need for specific and measurable goals for preparedness, national cooperation, application of assistance where the need is greatest, determination of essential capabilities that communities need, and advanced planning processes that ensure plans are adequate and feasible and achieve required synchronization.

HSPD–8 "National Preparedness," Hurricane Katrina lessons learned, and the strategic requirements of the war on terrorism require transformation of national preparedness—a process that shapes the changing nature of homeland security preparedness through new combinations of concepts, capabilities, people, and organization that exploit the Nation's advantages and protect against our vulnerabilities by building and sustaining national resilience.

The benefits of transforming national preparedness include: synchronization with national policy; a strategic approach to national preparedness transformation; and, achievement of the Directorate's vision of creating, through NPIP, a fully integrated national preparedness system.

And lastly, this approach ensures that national preparedness transformation will not be jeopardized and the credibility of the Directorate and Department will not be undermined; that the ambitious shaping of homeland security preparedness will not be impeded; and that we do not miss the historic opportunity to act and correct the shortcomings in the Katrina emergency response as well as in the protection and defense of the United States from terrorism.

Thank you once again for providing me the opportunity to speak with you today and for your continued support to the Department.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Under Secretary. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Mullen.

STATEMENT OF JAMES MULLEN, DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Mr. MULLEN. Thank you, Chairman Reichert and Congress Pascrell, for allowing me to speak to the Committee as part of the national discussion about the state of our preparedness.

Washington State's all-hazards management system predates 9/11 by several decades, including the statewide homeland security stratagem that predates 9/11 by two full years. Our system incorporates broad public and private representation. It is this system that develops and tracks the all-hazards State Homeland Security Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is the foundation of Team Washington's enterprise approach to disaster preparedness.

We have excellent working relationships with our local colleagues within the State. This is not to say that we agree with each other on everything, but we have mutual respect. We interact honestly in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect to the challenges

each of us faces. In emergency situations, as well as during difficult day-to-day issues, that bond is held. With our regional and Federal colleagues, I can say that we have an excellent relationship as well, but miss the days when they were our link to the Federal decision-making process. We trust them, they know us, but they are often cut out of the dialogue by their own command chain.

I've seen some positive signs of that due to the excellent leadership that Region 10 gets at FEMA, but while my remarks may—as we proceed may seem a little pointed, I must stipulate that the regional leadership must be given as much respect in DC as we give it here. We have a great respect for them.

Interoperability is one of the most recurrent themes nationally, and properly so. The State of Washington has a State Interoperability Executive Committee established by the legislature to address this issue. Long-term solutions are complex and potentially very costly. Although technological and administrative challenges and long-term financing issues for statewide interoperability are very real, our emphasis remains on interoperability between first responders. Interoperability, like I say, is as much a management as a technological term. There must be willingness at all levels to coordinate, collaborate and cooperate.

Emergency Management Performance Grants, EMPG, are the Federal match for State and local investments in emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Although EMPG is based on a 50/50 match—50 percent Federal, and 50 percent State and local—the reality is that State and local governments are carrying these burdens at an 80/20 ratio. It is a cruel myth that States and locals are simply waiting for Federal dollars before initiating their own efforts.

Ironically, EMPG is the only DHS grant program that requires any match at all of States and locals, and yet instead of leveraging the local-State investment, the DHS strategy has been to inflict death by a thousand cuts on the one program that provides the best chance to prepare communities to respond in any type of disaster. This flies in the face of any reasonable assessment of what must be done to assure that local and State planning and coordination is enhanced.

DHS still lacks emergency management expertise. Decisions are made daily by DHS about deadlines and program application requirements that impose an unnecessary burden on an already overwhelmed local and State emergency management infrastructure. And DHS still has difficulty in meeting its own deadlines for providing information so grant applications can be completed.

I cannot be certain that Federal disaster assistance will be provided in a timely manner, nor that the Federal assistance will provide what I need when I need it. I can't be certain that my Region 10 Federal counterpart, in whom I have great confidence, will be kept in the loop of information, even when he serves as the Federal Coordinating Officer. In our next disaster, I may be devoting time to damage control from the effects of the Federal effort rather than focus on victims, which would be my preference.

Post Katrina, States must be prepared to work to preserve Federal commitments to assist victims. There exists the distinct possi-

bility that DHS may renege on commitments and parse the words of written assurances.

The Katrina experience, I might say, was merely another milestone in the continuing degradation of the Nation's capacity to mitigate, prepare, respond and recover with respect to disasters. We've seen this happening over the years. FEMA isn't FEMA anymore.

Our Katrina is most likely a major earthquake. That's why mitigation and preparedness efforts have taken hold in our State. Since we won't have four days to observe our disaster approaching, those things that we do to offset consequences and ready our citizens are of critical importance.

In one version of the Katrina-style event, a subduction zone quake could create a tsunami threat within 25 minutes of our coastal communities. We are implementing a coordinated warning system for coastal communities for tsunamis. This will include public education workshops, training and exercises. We do have evacuation plans to support moving people quickly away from an approaching lahar or a tsunami. We in this State must improve our ability to care for a sizable number of citizens when they must move away from a dangerous environment.

A major quake along the Seattle Fault could trigger significant injuries or loss of life. We would see significant damage to the transportation and commerce networks in our State. No part of our economy will be unscathed.

A great deal of cooperative work has positioned Washington State to respond effectively, but clearly the momentum and collaboration needs to continue. We need to continue to build on our partnerships with local government and the private sector, because for a considerable time after our earthquake, we will be on our own. A major commitment of EMPGs beyond the annual levels we have seen would be an extremely helpful development if it were to be administered by emergency management professionals minus the constraining influences that characterizes the Homeland Security Grant Program requirements.

We will be stronger if and when DHS and FEMA rights itself, but even if that happens some day, we know that we have our own work to do out here. With increased planning exercise and training support, we can make great strides to improve the overall capacity of local and State government. We will carry our share of that burden.

We also need to continue to reach out to DHS and FEMA. And when they extend a hand, as they have been doing recently, we need to grab it. We should not just complain. We must keep offering our participation and our advice to help fix the problems we've identified. Mere consultation isn't sufficient. True partnership allows debate, discussion and the merging of expertise before deadlines are established and before policies and requirements become etched in stone. We look forward to any such exchange with DHS.

None of these issues are unique to my State. However, because I think of some earlier failures in leadership and the demolition of existing national emergency management structure with little analysis or consultation, we will need time to restore a national program managed by professionals and possessing the necessary

authority and expertise to not only improve the situation but recognize those positive contributions the DHS model has brought, including the State and local cooperation. But at the same time, we need to restore and enhance what was the FEMA mission until recently. It can be done, but it will have to be done by the professional emergency management community and the public safety sector. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Mullen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF JAMES M. MULLEN

Introduction

Thank you, Chairman Reichert, and Ranking Member Pascrell for allowing me to provide you with a statement for the record on Emergency Planning and Preparedness: Federal, State and Local Coordination. I'll try to highlight key issues that I believe need to be raised as part of the national discussion about the state of our preparedness.

Washington State's all-hazards management system predates 9/11 by several decades, including a statewide Homeland Security stratagem that predates 9/11 by 2 full years. Our system incorporates a broad public/private representation on a statutorily created Emergency Management Council and a statewide Homeland Security Committee (each of which meets every 60 days. These groups liaise with the Governor's Domestic Security Executive Group (comprised mostly of senior cabinet level public safety officials) which meets on a weekly basis, advising the Governor on the state's disaster readiness and on state wide disaster issues ranging from tsunami preparedness to homeland security grant programs involving local, state and private sector participants. It is this system that develops and tracks the State's Homeland Security Strategic Plan, which is truly an all hazards document. The Strategic Plan is the foundation of Team Washington's enterprise approach to disaster preparedness.

Status of intergovernmental collaboration

We have excellent working relationships with our local colleagues within the state. That is not to claim we concur in all things, nor is it to suggest interactions are smooth all of the time. Interactions are unfailingly honest, and this has been helpful during emergency situations, as well as in resolving difficult day to day issues. We have taken the time to develop mutual respect for the professional capabilities and challenges each government level encounters. With our regional federal colleagues, I can say that we have an excellent relationship as well, but miss the days when they were our link to the federal decision making process. We trust them, they know us, but they are often cut out of the dialogue by their own command chain.

Interoperability

Interoperability is one of the most recurrent themes in any credible analysis of an effective and robust emergency management system. The State of Washington has a State Interoperability Executive Committee established by the Legislature, to address this issue. Although technological and administrative challenges, and long term financing issues for state wide interoperability, are very real, it remains our primary focus to support first responders, assuring that a deputy sheriff from one county can communicate at an incident effectively with a fire commander from the neighboring county without missing a beat. Interoperability is as much a management as a technological term—there must be willingness at all levels to coordinate, collaborate and cooperate.

We are also enhancing our logistical capability, first coordinating more effectively within the Military Department between the resources of the Emergency Management Division and the National Guard, and branching out this past year to work with local logistics planners to devise a seamless exchange of information about available resources.7

State and Local Planning and Coordination Capability

Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) are the federal "match" for state and local investments in emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Although EMPG is based on a 50/50 match (50% federal to 50% state/local), the reality is that state and local governments are carrying these burdens at an 80/20 ratio. It is a cruel myth that states and locals are simply waiting for federal dollars before initiating their own efforts.

Ironically, EMPG is the only DHS grant program that requires any match at all of states and locals, and yet instead of leveraging the local—state investment, the DHS strategy has been to inflict death by "1000 cuts" on the one program that provides the best chance to prepare communities to respond in any type of disaster. This flies in the face of any reasonable assessment of what must be done to assure that local and state planning and coordination is enhanced.

Impediments to Disaster Response in a Presidential Declaration of Emergency

DHS still lacks emergency management expertise. The federal performance we have seen in exercises and real time events and the policies we must endure suggests that the next major emergency response may be aggravated rather than alleviated by DHS.

On a daily basis, decisions are made by DHS about deadlines and program application requirements that impose an unnecessary burden on an already overwhelmed local and state emergency management infrastructure. And, DHS has difficulty in meeting its own deadlines for providing information so grant applications can be completed.

During a disaster, I cannot be certain that federal disaster assistance will be provided in a timely manner, nor that the federal assistance DHS/FEMA provides will be what I need, when I need it. I can't be certain that my Region 10 federal counterpart, in whom I have great confidence, will be kept in the loop of information, even when he serves as the Federal Coordinating Officer. This means that in our next disaster I may be devoting time to damage control from the effects of the federal "effort" rather than focus on victims, which would be my preference.

Post Katrina, states must be prepared to work to *preserve* federal commitments to assist victims. There exists the distinct possibility that DHS may renege on commitments, and parse the words of written assurances.

The Katrina experience was merely another milestone in the continuing degradation of the nation's capacity to mitigate, prepare, respond and recover with respect to disasters. We in emergency management have seen this condition unfold over the past several years. FEMA isn't FEMA any more.

Our Katrina

Our "Katrina" is most likely a major earthquake. That's why mitigation and preparedness efforts have taken hold in our state: since we won't have four days to observe our disaster approaching, those things that we do to offset consequences and ready our citizens are of critical importance.

Coastal Communities

In one version of a Katrina style event, a subduction zone quake could create a tsunami threat within 25 minutes for our coastal communities.

We are implementing a coordinated warning system for coastal communities for tsunami. This will include public education workshops, training and exercises.

Evacuation

We do have evacuation plans to support moving people quickly away from an approaching lahar or a tsunami. We in this state must improve our ability to care for a sizable number of citizens when they must move away from a dangerous environment.

Seattle Fault

A major quake along the Seattle Fault could trigger significant injuries or loss of life. We would see significant damage to the transportation and commerce networks in our state. No part of our economy will be unscathed.

Immediate Future

None of these vulnerabilities is a surprise. A great deal of cooperative work has positioned Washington State to respond effectively, but clearly the momentum and the collaboration needs to continue. We need to continue to build on our partnerships with local government and the private sector, because for a considerable time after our earthquake we can expect to be on our own. A major commitment of EMPG beyond the annual levels we have seen would be an extremely hopeful development, if it were to be administered by emergency management professionals, minus the constraining influence that characterizes the Homeland Security Grant Program.

We will be stronger if/when DHS/FEMA rights itself, but even if that happens some day, we know that we have our own work to do here. With increased planning exercise and training support, we can make great strides to improve the overall capacity of local and state government. We will carry our share of the burden.

We also need to continue to reach out to DHS and FEMA. We should not just complain—we must keep offering our participation and our advice to help fix the problems we have identified. Mere consultation will not be sufficient: a true partnership allows debate, discussion and the merging of expertise before deadlines are established, and before policies become etched in stone. We look forward to any such exchange.

None of these issues are unique to my state. However, because of the demolition of the existing national emergency management structure with little analysis or consultation, we will need in time to restore a national program, managed by professionals, and possessing the necessary authority and expertise to recognize those positive contributions the DHS model has made, while restoring and enhancing what has been the FEMA mission until recently. It can be done, but it must be done by the professional emergency management community and its public safety partners.

Thank you.

Note: while the issues below were not covered specifically in my oral presentation, I am prepared to discuss these with the Committee at any time.

Some Additional Thoughts

• **EMAC:** Nationally, we need to continue to foster the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) which in a state to state exchange sent more than 65000 civilian and National Guard personnel to the Gulf States. This system proved adaptable and flexible, and after action efforts will make the program even stronger in its next deployment mission.

• **Federalization:** Any attempt by any Administration to "federalize" a disaster response should be met with opposition from all quarters. This is a constitutional issue and it is uniquely American to insist that the state's governors control efforts within their own states.

• **Public Education:** People in our state in earthquake hazard areas must be trained to drop, cover and hold, and to move to higher ground as soon as they can in tsunami prone areas. Similarly, given the frequency and history of disasters in various parts of Washington State, the particular emphasis on a hazard, and thus the protective measures the public must be schooled in, may differ. Fires, floods, lahars each have characteristics and protective or defensive measures to be conveyed. *The emergency management community is uniquely qualified to present public education for all hazards disaster preparedness, and this is delivered best by local officials at the local government level, anywhere in the country, for any type of hazard that a community may face.*

• State and federal assistance and support is important, but it cannot be a controlling form of support. Washington State is developing a state wide public education strategy that can be tailored to any jurisdiction in the state, and will provide materials and technical assistance to communities. The State will work within the state government family to convey appropriate messaging that will enhance the prospects of key state personnel to be able to respond quickly with a high level of assurance that their own families are protected.

• **Exercises:** A collaborative effort is underway, coordinated by State EMD, but with the indispensable participation of our local colleagues, to try to establish a *rational* exercise regime for the state of Washington. Exercises, to be effective, must be designed carefully, implemented appropriately, critiqued thoroughly and unflinchingly, and followed up resolutely to correct any gaps or deficiencies. If the TOPOFF 2 exercise in 2003 achieved anything at all in our state, it solidified relationships and built trust among a variety of disciplines that is invaluable in these times. The exercise protocols will enable us to develop capability within the State, and will ultimately facilitate expansion to inter state exercises, and even across our international border with Canada as the 2010 Olympics approaches.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Mullen. The Chairman recognizes Mr. Bailey.

STATEMENT OF STEVEN BAILEY, DIRECTOR, PIERCE COUNTY DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr. BAILEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Pascrell. Thank you for inviting me here. As a resident of the 8th Congressional District, I want to welcome the Chairman home. It's good to see him. You'll have to pardon me if in this very formal process I fail to address him properly, because for those of us in the 8th Congres-

sional District, he's just Dave. And so I'll try to say "Mr. Chairman" today, but it's good to see you.

Shortly after 9/11, within three months, Pierce County executive, John Ladenberg, formed the Terrorism Early Warning Task Force with public safety leaders throughout our county. That work has been working since that day to address the preparedness and response issues in Pierce County, and we have made great strides.

And I think it's important, when we get in this debate of the Department of Homeland Security and the FEMA issues and a lot of the negative press that we see, we have made great strides in this county in terms of public safety. And I certainly want to thank the Congress for the support they have given us. It has made specific and drastic improvements in public safety in our community.

We have great leadership. Jeff Jensen, the Director of the Emergency Management for the City of Tacoma is here; Sheriff Paul Pastor, the Sheriff of Pierce County, is here, and they are all actively involved.

We've had a couple of events recently that have demonstrated that. We had an active shooter incident in the Tacoma Mall several months ago. I believe we had fifteen different jurisdictions respond to that in support of the Tacoma Fire and Police Department who did an excellent job resolving that situation. But I think it did demonstrate some of the improvements we've made in public safety in this community.

Then just last week we had a two-day drill—health drill, biological attack involving the CDC and the State Department of Health and Emergency Management and our local community. And once again, we demonstrated clearly that we have made important strides in preparedness and operations at the community level. It's the only way we will survive as a community is to continue to work together. We simply don't have the resources to deal with these incidents on our own.

And of course, another important issue is interoperability communication. There again, we have made some strides with new technology. Under a grant, one of the Federal grants, we were able to purchase a new communications vehicle for this county. It's got technology in it that allows us to commonize the radio frequencies. We used that at the Tacoma Mall incident so that all of the fifteen responding jurisdictions could talk to one another. It works. It isn't seamless. It would cost this county a great deal of money to become seamless, money that we do not have. And of course, as you've said, the frequencies aren't available even if we had the money. So those are issues that we are really concerned about.

The real issue that I really want to stress here—and it's really following up on some things that Mr. Pascrell said—is about community involvement. One of the things, because I've been in this business a long time and people assume I may know something, is I get a lot questions about, what are the ten lessons of Hurricane Katrina? Probably, at my age, I can't remember ten things anymore, so I have to boil it down to one. And that one lesson for me out of Katrina is the expectation of the public for us to meet their needs. It's almost like they think we will be there 20 minutes after the event with a hot plate of food, a warm blanket and a check for $500. If you went to the major 911 center here in Tacoma today,

you would see flashing on the dispatch screen 911 calls that are waiting for law enforcement officers to clear from another event so that they can respond to the new call. We simply are not meeting the daily law enforcement, fire and EMS demand in our community; and that is the reality. And it creates this huge gap of expectation of the public and our ability to respond. Here in Orting we do not have a warehouse with a hundred firefighters and a hundred police officers sitting waiting for the next disaster.

So one of the steps we've taken here in Pierce County is a community program called Pierce County Neighbor Emergency Teams, PC–NET. It is training and equipping neighborhoods and individuals to take care of themselves and their community. It started with a small Federal grant that got us off the ground. We're now up to 250 neighborhoods throughout the county with over 3,000 citizen trained volunteers. This is the future for us in terms of our people being able to take care of themselves.

The problem is, of course, the Federal grant has gone away, and we are now left with a great program with no funding underpinning it allowing us to continue to increase. We have 50 neighborhoods waiting for staff to become available to equip them under this program.

I believe community preparedness needs to be a priority if we are going to effectively respond to major disasters anywhere in this country, and certainly here in Pierce County.

I appreciate Congressman Reichert's assistance last year in trying to assist us in getting some Federal funding to continue the program. We're looking and hoping once again that this will rise to a level that will enable us to continue to fund and support this effort.

The unique thing about our program, although it's based on the Federal CERT program for the disaster preparedness piece, we have also under the leadership of Sheriff Pastor included a crime prevention piece. And the reason we've done that is, preparing people for disasters, sometimes the disaster doesn't come along for quite a while, and they can become disinterested as volunteers. But when you bring the crime piece in, that's a day-to-day interest issue for them. And we have seen on average in our PC–NET neighborhoods a 27 percent decrease in personal property crime. So we're very excited by this two-pronged work and attack that we're doing in our communities.

So I want to thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for the ability to speak. We certainly appreciate the hard work that you're providing for us in Washington. Again, I would like to supplement Mr. Mullen's comments on the grant process. At the local level, the people who need to do the planning and the responding are the same people that have to do the grant process; and every year since 9/11, the grant process at the Federal level has changed significantly. The most significant change is this year. And the due dates are down to yesterday, not months from now or even weeks from now. It's you need to have it in by yesterday. It is hamstringing us to implement the programs that we need to implement.

So my plea would be, if we could stay with a process for a couple years and not change it and let us catch our breath, that would be most helpful.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.
[The statement of Mr. Bailey follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEVE C. BAILEY

September 11, the Indonesian tsunami and Hurricanes Katrina/Rita have, to some, caused a paradigm shift in the world of emergency management—from single level collaboration to new innovative partnerships and cooperation on a multi-faceted level. For many of us, this approach was always the current practice but it is now mandated nation wide. The key to effective mitigation, preparation, response and recovery is coordination and collaboration at the regional level.

Pierce County has made great strides in this arena by creating the Terrorism Early Warning and Response task force, as well as participating in the Seattle/King County Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). Citizens, municipalities, county agencies, local jurisdictions and regional, state and military partners work together on a daily basis to address all hazards facing our communities. In Pierce County, this most recently became evident during a shooting at the Tacoma Mall. Hundreds of public safety personnel from multiple agencies and jurisdictions responded to that incident because of the strong relationships that have been developed. Had we not all trained, planned and exercised together, the outcome may have been very different.

Interoperable communications is the current hot topic in emergency response. The Tacoma Mall incident is yet another example of why interoperability is so important. Many of the responding agencies utilized different frequencies, but because of recent improvements, all agencies were able to talk with on another. More specifically, Pierce County Emergency Management purchased a state-of-the-art Mobile Operational Command Center (MOCC) with homeland security funds that is utilized on a weekly basis. On that unit is a piece of equipment called the ACU 1000 which commonizes radio frequencies at the flip of a switch. Our public safety dispatch centers are equipped with the same technology so this version of interoperability is available countywide, not just when our MOCC is deployed.

Many operate under the misconception that the answer to interoperability is 800 megahertz radios, but there simply aren't enough channels available for public safety and it is cost prohibitive. We estimate it will cost $50+ million for Pierce County to move to the 800 megahertz system and that does not include the cost for infrastructure (towers, etc.). As mentioned above, Pierce County has made great, cost effective improvements, but it still isn't seamless.

Probably the biggest lesson, even above interoperability, is citizen and community preparedness. After years and years of telling the public they need to have a plan and enough supplies to be self sufficient for at least three days, Hurricane Katrina showed us that people just aren't following through on the message. We discovered an enormous gap between what people expect and what government is able to provide. It appears that citizens expect government to appear on their doorstep within 30 minutes of a disaster with a hot plate of food, a bottle of water, blanket and a check for $500. When emergency response disciplines can't meet 9–1–1 call demands on a daily basis, what makes people the response should be any different in a disaster? We do not have the resources.

So what is the answer? The key is individual and community preparedness, for all hazards. During the hurricanes, individuals and neighbors were not prepared and didn't follow the direction of local officials. They fell into what we call normalization, a thought process that makes one think the situation just can't be that bad, or it can't happen to them. Here in Pierce County, we have found something that works.

Pierce County Emergency Management has a national award-winning program called Pierce County Neighborhood Emergency Teams (PC–NET) that is incrementally closing the aforementioned gap in our area. PC–NET is a neighborhood-oriented approach to emergency preparedness and homeland security. It is based on the belief that a cooperative effort between a county and its citizens is the only sure way to protect a neighborhood and to prepare for a major disaster.

If individuals and their neighborhoods are prepared to mutually assist each other, lives can be saved, property can be spared, and emergency services can be freed to respond to the most devastated areas. This is accomplished by organizing block groups into a variety of disaster response teams, each of which has a simple one-page list that clearly outlines necessary tasks. In addition, we have partnered with the Pierce County Sheriff's Department to provide a crime prevention program that, to date, has resulted in a 27 percent average drop in property crimes for PC–NET neighborhoods (up to 50% in some areas).

PC–NET goes beyond conventional community preparedness and crime prevention efforts of simply raising awareness—PC–NET means taking action. People and neighborhoods that are prepared will know what to expect during times of disaster, what to do, and how to come together in an organized, timely response.

The problem is that funding for this program and others like it is virtually non-existent. Pierce County Emergency Management enjoyed a three-year federal grant that got the program started, but the funding was exhausted at the end of 2005. Federal CERT funding only provides $25–65 thousand, depending on the fiscal year, for a two year grant. This does not cover the salary for even one staff member to run a program for our 750,000 residents. Recent attempts to work the funding through congressional representatives have also been unsuccessful. Educating our citizens on how to prepare and training them to respond and be self sufficient for at least one week will have a great impact on all phases of emergency management. As mentioned in the beginning of this testimony, collaboration is critical, not just with those in professional emergency response roles but also with the citizens we serve.

Testimony Outline:

I. Introduction
II. Regional coordination/collaboration
  a. TEW
  b. UASI
III. Interoperable communications
  a. MOCC
  b. ACU 1000
  c. Made great improvements, but not seamless
IV. Emergency Preparedness
  a. Biggest lesson out of hurricanes
  b. PC–NET
  c. Lack of funding

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Steve. The Chair recognizes Chief Treviño.

STATEMENT OF MARIO H. TREVIÑO, FIRE CHIEF, BELLEVUE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief TREVIÑO. Good morning, Chairman Reichert and Congressman Pascrell.

As a point of reference, the City of Bellevue is located approximately ten miles east of Seattle. The Bellevue Fire Department also provides fire and rescue medical services to five other townships, serving a total population of 135,000 people. We're also part of the well-known King County Medic One Program and have the further responsibility of providing Advanced Life Support services to a 300 square mile area and a total population of 250,000 people.

To our visitors, let me also convey my welcome to Washington, and thank you all for the opportunity to speak with you today about regional planning and preparedness, particularly as related to our area of focus, which is how we work together to identify and prioritize Homeland Security allocations.

We're all concerned about homeland security from a national perspective. I hope my background will be helpful in these discussions. In the regional arena, I'm the Chairman of the King County Zone 1 Fire Chiefs, and my national involvement includes serving as Vice-Chairman of the Emergency Response Technology Group of the National Technology Transfer Center, and member and former chairman of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs.

The Puget Sound urban area has a strong history of regional collaboration and mutual support in the emergency planning, management and response arenas. This experience level, combined with effective and working relationships, provide a basis which has

served as a cornerstone for our process and upon which we have added sharp focus in recent years on homeland security issues.

Some examples of this collaboration process include the development of emergency management systems within King County and the subsequent networking to address regional and national issues; also the development of effective hazardous materials training and response capabilities, the City of Bellevue is a member of the Eastside Hazardous Materials Consortium which provides protection for much of Eastern King County; the enhancement of emergency responder safety through training and procurement of PPE's, which stands for personal protective equipment, detection and disposal equipment for explosive devices and hazardous materials; planning for chemical, biological, radiological and explosive response, detection and recovery; joint training initiatives such as Incident Management Team, or IMT, training, which is multidisciplinary and multijurisdictional; also joint training partnerships such as our Seattle-Bellevue exercises recently in rescue systems which respond to structural collapse, high-rise firefighting, weapons of mass destruction scenarios, mass transportation scenarios, and improvised explosive devices, or IED, scenarios; and lastly our pandemic influenza planning.

In February of 2004, the Seattle-King County urban area developed an urban-area strategy. That strategy was developed by the principal jurisdictions involved in the Seattle-King County Core Group, which makes core decisions. Those include Seattle, King County, Pierce County, Snohomish County and the Washington State Military Department. It also featured input from other governmental organizations that fall within the boundaries of that urban area. The City of Bellevue was added to the Seattle-King County Urban Area Core Group as a result of their Urban Areas Security Initiative or USAI 2006 grant.

The urban strategy is closely integrated with the Region 6 Homeland Strategic Plan, which was also developed in 2004 for the allocation of the State Homeland Security Grant Program, or SHSP, funding applied to geographic King County. There's substantial multidisciplinary and multijurisdictional representation among the various groups that develop and implement these plans, which helps reinforce the need and benefit of broad involvement with the emergency responders. With these plans in place, our urban area is poised to deal with the challenges ahead for all hazards and homeland security planning and response.

Some of our recent challenges, however, have come in the area of trying to integrate our established process with shifting Federal processes and priorities. For example, the timelines were condensed during the 2006 grant cycle, making it very difficult to develop a comprehensive, inclusive and thoughtful grant strategy. It is important for Congress to be specific in providing direction to the Department of Homeland Security so that grant processes allow time for sufficient regional collaboration.

Also, grant processes change anyway. They're not reported out in a timely manner which forces changes in our regional processes. Regional partnerships involve difficult and time-consuming work, and dramatic changes to regional processes require significant rebalancing at the State and local level. This results in frustration

and lost time. Ultimately, this means that we spend more time developing the process and less time focused on prioritizing and implementing of projects.

Increased flexibility in grant funding remains a need so that urban areas can target funds to their areas of greatest need. These include coordinated planning efforts to assure critical infrastructure protection needs are prioritized including but not limited to information technology, water systems and facility hardening; equipment procurement and evaluation to ensure interoperability and responder preparedness; training and exercise development, implementation and evaluation to prepare responders, city leaders and elected officials for a major response; and finally, the development and implementation of planning documents which may include State and local governance and continuity of government.

Jurisdictions within our urban area are participating in the current review of the National Response Plan that is occurring in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Catastrophic events require community-to-community, urban area to urban area, and state-to-state planning. It's important that Federal policy encourage continued and further collaboration that spans beyond the borders of our community.

Some of the next steps that I see for our urban area include continuing to build and streamline our partnerships at the regional level; to build our response capabilities further leveraging our existing resources and our existing mutual aid commitments; to streamline and improve the efficiency of our intelligence capabilities; to refine and develop our regional plans; and finally to train across—continue to train across jurisdictional borders.

That concludes my prepared remarks, and I will take any questions you may have.

[The statement of Chief Treviño follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARIO H. TREVIÑO

Chairman Reichert, members of the Committee, my name is Mario Treviño, and I am Chief of the Bellevue, Washington, Fire Department. For your reference, the City of Bellevue is located approximately 10 miles East of Seattle. We also provide fire and Emergency Medical Services to five other townships, serving a total population of approximately 135,000 people. We are part of the renowned King County Medic One Program, and have the further responsibility of providing Advanced Life Support to a 300 square mile area with a total population of 250,000 people.

To the visiting members of the Committee, welcome to Washington, and thank you all for the opportunity to speak to you about regional planning and preparedness, particularly as related to our area of focus—how we work together to identify and prioritize Homeland Security allocations. We are all concerned about Homeland Security from a national perspective, and I should point my background should be helpful in these discussions. In the regional arena, I am the Chairman of the King County Zone 1 Fire Chiefs. My national involvement includes serving as Vice-Chairman of the Emergency Response Technology Group of the National Technology Transfer Center, and being a member and past Chair of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs.

The Puget Sound urban area has a strong history of regional collaboration and mutual support in the emergency planning, management, and response arenas. This experience level, combined with effective working-relationships provide a basis which has served as a cornerstone for our process, upon which we have added sharp focus in recent years on homeland security issues.

Some examples of this collaborative process include:

1. The development of emergency management systems in King County, and the subsequent networking to address regional and national issues.

2. The development of effective Hazardous Materials training and response capabilities. The City of Bellevue is a member of the Eastside Hazardous Materials Consortium which provides protection for much of Eastern King County.
3. The enhancement of emergency responder safety through training and the procurement of equipment such as personal protective equipment (PPE), detection and disposal equipment for explosive devices, and Hazardous Materials equipment.
4. Planning for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Explosive response, detection and recovery.
5. Joint training initiatives, such as Incident Management Team (IMT) training, which is multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional.
6. Joint training partnerships, such as the Seattle/Bellevue exercises in: Rescue Systems (structural collapse); High-rise Firefighting; Weapons of Mass Destruction scenarios; Mass-transportation scenarios; and Improvised Explosive Devices (IAD) scenarios.
7. Pandemic Influenza planning.

In February, 2004, the Seattle-King County Urban area developed an urban area strategy. The strategy was developed by the principal jurisdictions involved in the Seattle-King County Core Group, which makes core decisions: Seattle; King County; Pierce County; Snohomish County; and the Washington State Military Department. It also featured input from other governmental organizations that fall within the boundaries of the urban area. The City of Bellevue was added to the Seattle-King County Urban Area Core Group as a result of the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) in 2006.

The urban strategy is closely integrated with the Region 6 Homeland Strategic Plan, which was also developed in 2004 for the allocation of State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSP) funding applied to geographic King County. There is substantial multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional representation among the various groups that develop and implement these plans, which helps reinforce the need and benefit of broad involvement from emergency responders. With these plans in place, our urban area is poised to deal with the challenges ahead for all hazards and homeland security planning and response.

Some of our recent challenges have come in the area of trying to integrate our established process with shifting federal processes and priorities. For example:

1. Timelines were condensed during the 2006 grant cycle, making it very difficult to develop a comprehensive, inclusive, and thoughtful grant strategy. It is important for Congress to be specific in providing direction to the Department of Homeland Security so that grant processes allow time for sufficient regional collaboration
2. Grant processes change annually, and are not reported out in a timely manner, forcing changes in regional processes. Regional partnerships involve difficult and time-consuming work, and dramatic changes to regional processes requires significant re-balancing at the State and local level, which results in frustration and lost time. Ultimately, this means we spend more time developing the process and less time focused on prioritizing and implementing projects.
3. Increased flexibility in grant funding remains a need so that urban areas can target grant funds to their areas of greatest need such as:
    a. Coordinated planning efforts to assure critical infrastructure protection needs are prioritized, including but not limited to: information technology; water systems; and facility hardening.
    b. Equipment procurement and evaluation to ensure interoperability and responder preparedness
    c. Training and Exercise development, implementation and evaluation to prepare responders, city leaders, and elected officials for a major response.
    d. Development and implementation of planning documents which may include state and local governance and continuity of government.

Jurisdictions within our urban area are participating in the current review of the National Response Plan that is occurring in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Catastrophic events require community-to-community, urban area to urban area, and state-to-state planning. It is important that federal policy encourage continued and further collaboration that spans beyond the borders of our communities.

Some of the next steps I see for our urban area include continuing to:

1. Build and streamline our partnerships on a regional level,
2. Further build our response capabilities leveraging existing resources and existing mutual aid commitments,
3. Streamline and improve the efficiency of our intelligence capabilities,

4. Refine and develop our regional plans,
5. And train across jurisdictional borders.

That concludes my prepared remarks. Thank you Chairman Reichert and members of the Committee for allowing me to participate in this hearing today.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Chief. The Chair recognizes Mr. Mitzel.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM "BILL" MITZEL, MS, ARM, ALCM, RISK CONTROL SPECIALIST, HOME OFFICE COMMERCIAL LINES, UNIGARD INSURANCE GROUP

Mr. MITZEL. Good morning, Chairman Reichert and Ranking Member Pascrell. It is a pleasure to represent private industry preparedness programs and to provide you with information regarding Unigard's program.

Originating with the request from three employees that were also volunteer firefighters to participate in a disaster preparedness training program sponsored by Pierce County in 1987, Unigard's Emergency Preparedness and Response Program was formed. Over a period of several years that included numerous team drills and direction from JoAnn Jordan of the Bellevue Fire Department's Preparedness Division, with thanks to Chief Treviño's staff, the Unigard Emergency Response Team has evolved into seven specialized teams. You have been provided with an organizational chart of our emergency management structure as Appendix A on the written submittal.

Currently 54 employee volunteers make up Unigard's Emergency Response Team. They and supportive senior management, including our president and CEO, Peter Christen, are key to the success of our program.

The December 8, 1990 snowstorm, or 1993 Inaugural Day windstorm, the Nisqually quake in February of 2001 and 9/11 all resulted in further enhancement of our program.

Moving from the history of the program to how it operates, Unigard's Emergency Response Team and Business Continuity program are components of our Risk Management process, which you are copied on in Appendix B.

Training of each of our specialized teams is based on the widely used Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, model with some additional training for Unigard's specific operations. The training procedures in our program are, however, somewhat different from the traditional CERT Program. For instance, only a segment of the full 20 to 25-hour CERT training is needed to be completed in order for employees to be on any specific Unigard Emergency Response Team. This specialized approach takes employees away from their jobs for only four to five hours, it supports their specialized competency, and it's much more accommodating for employees and their supervisors than taking the full CERT training. The required baseline emergency training for all employees and Emergency Response Team members is noted in an article that is provided in Exhibit C.*

I cannot overemphasize how critical the support from Bellevue Fire Department, Medic First Aid, WPS and Applied Technology Council instructors are to our program's success. Officer Michael Chu, Public Information Officer of the Bellevue Police Department,

has also been instrumental in developing the Workplace Violence Prevention Program—portion of our program.

Still another noteworthy element in our program is Crisis Communications Training. The Reverend Mike Ryan, Chaplain for the Bellevue Police Department, has provided this training, which is designed to assist our Humanitarian Assistance Team, primarily made up of human resources staff, in understanding and preparing for various behavioral scenarios in an emergency.

Our program's primary focus is life safety, in addition to expediting the initial building damage assessment. The main concern from a life safety and preparedness standpoint for Unigard, and most in emergency management would agree for the entire Northeast coast of the United States, is a mega-thrust earthquake, as I look at how high the boxes are stacked behind your chair.

We are well into the average cycle for such a catastrophic event. Therefore, appropriate readiness should not be an option.

Going forward, we are planning on providing advanced emergency preparedness and business continuity consultation to our commercial lines insureds and the independent agents that we sell our products through. We will use proven elements of our program as a template in association with proven and easy-to-use features of other programs such as the American Red Cross, the National Safety Council and FEMA, for example, to deliver a best practices product to our insureds. For businesses with advanced preparedness and continuity programs, offering them a reduction in their business interruption insurance premiums is also under consideration.

Regarding Federal incentives to private industry for investing in business continuity and emergency preparedness, and in applying the philosophy of "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," in looking at IRS Form 3800 provided as Exhibit D,* although there is credit for employers affected by Hurricane Katrina, Rita or Wilma, and credit for several other investments, there is no credit for investing in business continuity or emergency preparedness which, particularly when teamed with potential property insurance rate credits, could serve to move most businesses from being reactive on the preparedness pendulum to being proactive.

Thank you for this opportunity.

[The statement of Mr. Mitzel follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BILL MITZEL

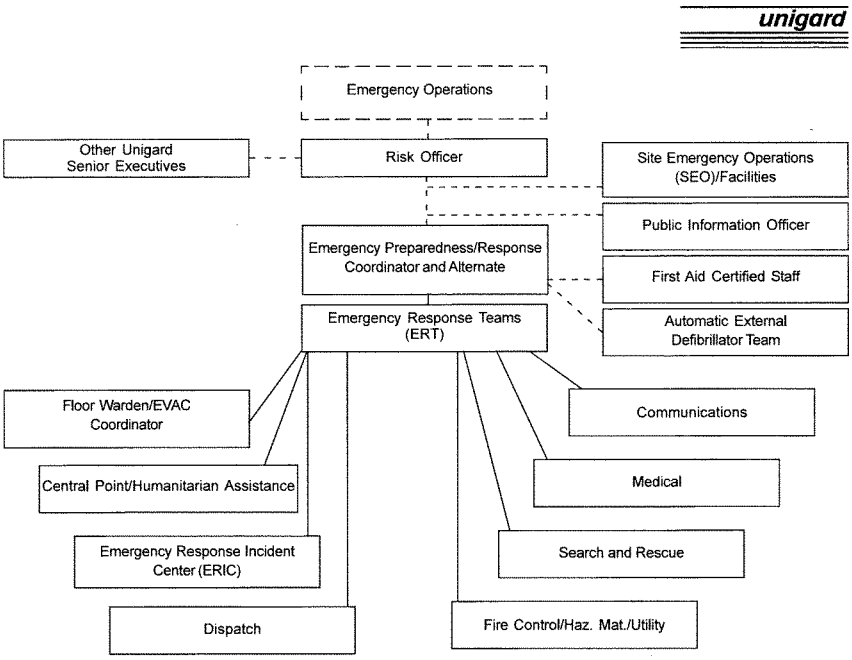
Good morning Chairman Reichert and Ranking Member Pascrell. It is a pleasure to represent private industry preparedness programs and to provide you with information on Unigard's program.

In 1987, the idea of improving Unigard's in-house emergency preparedness program was presented to our CEO by 3 volunteer firefighters that were employees at Unigard. They were from Mason County, Bainbridge Island and the City of Kirkland. Two of these three were also EMT's.

These employee/volunteer firefighters attended a one-week disaster preparedness course sponsored by Pierce County and came back with recommendations to establish Basic Search and Rescue, Fire and Emergency Medical Teams at Unigard and to purchase a 20 foot surplus truck cargo container for the teams equipment. Over a period of several years that included numerous team drills and advise from JoAnn Jordan of the Bellevue Fire Department's Preparedness Division, Unigard's Emergency Response Team (ERT) evolved into 7 specialized teams that each had specific

*See, committee file.

training and protocols that are now in line with NFPA 1600 and the Bellevue Fire Department's recommendations. You have been provided with an organizational chart of our emergency management structure as Exhibit A.



Currently 54-employee volunteers make-up Unigard's ERT. They and supportive senior management, including our President and CEO Peter Christen are key to the success of Unigard's Emergency Preparedness and Response program.

In the early days of our program, as well as improving our program based on lessons learned from drills and from local experts, there were several advances closely related to regional or local events. For instance, on December 18, 1990 when over a foot of snow dropped in the Bellevue/Seattle area, interest in the ERT was boosted, resulting in the purchase of additional equipment and more training regarding improving building damage assessment skills.

In the summer of 1992, an open house of our ERT was held with representatives from Bellevue and neighboring Redmond and Kirkland Fire Departments in attendance. As a result of follow-up conversations, the cities of Bellevue and Kirkland incorporated remotely located truck cargo containers into their Cities Emergency Plans.

In 1993, the Inaugural Day windstorm brought hurricane force winds to western Oregon and Washington. Unigard's Bellevue/Home Office campus was without power for three days. After this storm, we purchased our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) container and installed two Cummins generators, which until recently provided about 30 hours of back-up power. To-date, the generators can provide back-up power for three days without refueling.

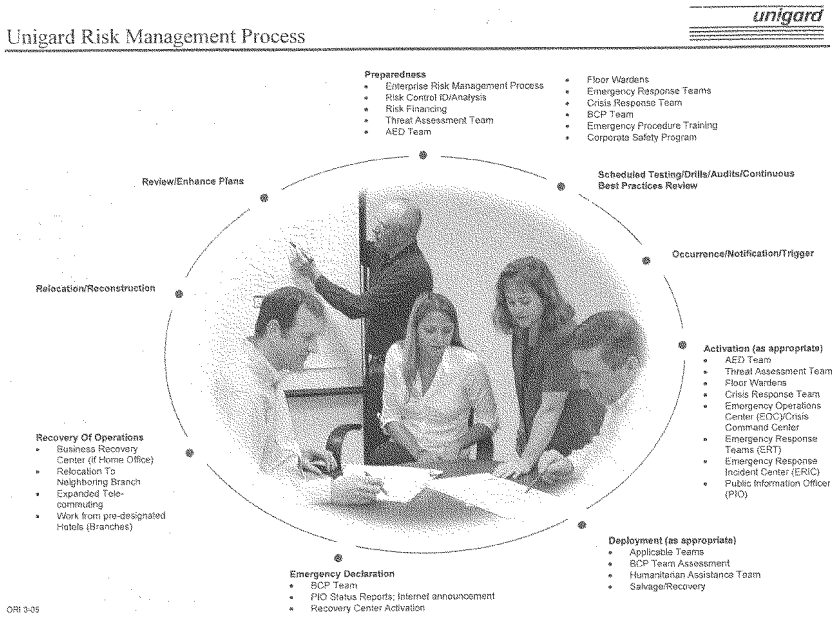
In 1996, Unigard purchased satellite phones from Mobile Satellite Ventures and added twenty-five Motorola MTX handheld radios to improve ERT on-site communications during our drills and actual events.

On February 28th, 2001 we experienced the Nisqually earthquake. Although damage in the Bellevue area was minimal, our telecommunications and employee transportation was disrupted for several hours. The quake led to increased support from senior executives, fine-tuning our team structure/training, and ERT oversight. This included moving ERT under Risk Management rather than Information Technology.

After 9/11/01, as was the case for most of corporate America, the rules changed. As a result, Winterthur, our Swiss parent company, now requires all of its companies to meet higher minimum business continuity, security and emergency preparedness standards. Due to previous activities in these areas, Unigard already met

or exceeded most of these directives when they were put in place. We continue to improve our ERT and business continuity programs and processes.

Moving from the History of the program to how the program operates, our ERT and Business Continuity program are components of Unigard's Corporate Risk Management structure and our enterprise risk management process, which you are copied on as Exhibit B.



Two full-evacuation drills are completed annually by the ERT. Training for each of our specialized teams is based on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program with some additional training for Unigard?s specific operations.

Unigard's ERT program has several unique differences from traditional CERT programs. Only a segment of the full 20–25-hour CERT training is required to be completed in order for an employee to serve on a specific Unigard ERT such as Fire/Utility Shut-off or Search and Rescue team. Additionally, over 15 percent of our ERT members are cross-trained on 2 or more teams with a few trained to serve on all teams.

This specialized approach, takes most employees away from their jobs for only 4–5 hours, supports their specialized competency and is much more accommodating for employees and their supervisors than taking the full 20–25 hour CERT training. After initial team training is completed, they spend about 4 to7 hours per year participating in drills, refresher training as needed and related pre or post-drill meetings.

We are able to keep ERT turnover well under 10 percent annually by following drills with meetings that encourage new approaches and ideas, providing lunch for team members after the drills; and communicating the valued comments and suggestions from drill observers, which include local authorities. Active members also receive copies of letters of appreciation sent annually by senior management to their supervisors. These are timed to arrive just prior to the employee's annual performance reviews.

Baseline Emergency Training For all Employees and ERT Members is noted in the article you have been copied on as Exhibit C. I cannot over-emphasize how critical it is to get support from Bellevue Fire, Medic First Aid, WPS and the Applied Technology Council for important elements of our training. Officer Michael Chiu, PIO of Bellevue PD has also been instrumental in reviewing the Workplace Violence Prevention component of our program.

Another noteworthy element of our program is Crisis Communications training. The Reverend Mike Ryan, Chaplain for the Bellevue Police Department, has provided this training. His training addresses human behavior during and immediately

after a disaster and assists our Humanitarian Assistance Team members in understanding and preparing for various emergency/disaster behavioral scenarios.

On-campus training provided by the Bellevue Fire Department and the Applied Technology Council on assessing building damage after an earthquake is open to neighboring businesses if the classes are not full.

Unigard has a contingency plan with our neighboring Longs Drug Store. This arrangement gives the Humanitarian Assistance Team and the Incident Commander an option in obtaining food and other supplies during a possible prolonged ERT operation. This also provides a method for re-supplying the Medical Team.

Our Program's primary focus is life safety and expediting the initial assessment of building damage. Two Initial Assessment Teams (Red and Blue) made up of damage assessment trained Fire and Search & Rescue Team personnel are dispatched. These teams are typically equipped, organized and dispatched within 12 minutes of the start of a drill.

The main concern from a preparedness and life safety standpoint for Unigard and essentially the Northwest coast of the United States is a mega-thrust earthquake. The Northwest is well into the average cycle for such a catastrophic event, therefore, appropriate readiness should not be optional. A possible worst-case H5N1 pandemic may be the next closest event from a level of a severity standpoint. A lesser, however, still catastrophic event such as a rupture of the nearby Seattle fault, located four miles south of Unigard's Home Office in Bellevue requires the same degree of preparedness.

Lesser events than major earthquakes, to encompass all reasonably foreseeable hazards (a slight adjustment to an "all-hazards" approach) are also addressed in Unigard's program based on periodic vulnerability assessments.

Outside of the Bellevue branch office (located in the same facility as Unigard's home office), there are six other branch offices ranging in size from seven to 25 employees. Emergency Procedure training is also provided at these offices. Procedures are customized for each office based on size, environment and cooperative efforts with landlords.

Going forward, we are planning on providing advanced emergency preparedness/business continuity consultation to our commercial lines insureds and the independent agents that we sell our product through. We will use proven elements of the Unigard program as a template (adjustable based on business size) in association with proven and easy-to-use features of other packaged programs (American Red Cross, National Safety Council, FEMA, etc.) to deliver our insureds a Best Practices product. For businesses with advanced and active preparedness/continuity programs, offering them a reduction in business interruption insurance premium (a component of fire/property coverage) is under consideration. We look forward to continuing to improve our program. We subsequently will share our experience with our community, our insureds, and our independent agents.

Regarding direct federal support to enhance investment in business continuity and emergency preparedness in the private sector and applying the philosophy of "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", in looking at IRS Form 3800, provided as Exhibit D, although there is credit for employers "affected by" Hurricane Katrina, Rita or Wilma, credit for increasing research activities and credit for providing child-care facilities at a place of employment, there is no credit related to investing in business continuity or emergency preparedness which, particularly if teamed with potential property insurance rate credits, could serve to move many businesses from being reactive to being proactive on the preparedness pendulum.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Mitzel. I should mention that Unigard Insurance Group was the recipient of an award in this area. That's why Unigard is represented here today. They are, I think, far ahead of the curve nationwide in their leadership in how private companies can be involved in protecting our communities. Unigard was the recipient of an award for Business Emergency Planning and Preparedness. It was presented by the International Emergency Management Association. So congratulations to Unigard.

Mr. MITZEL. Thank you, sir.

Mr. REICHERT. I happened to be at the presentation of that award, so I participated in that.

Thank you all for your testimony. And Mr. Pascrell and I will have questions here for the next several minutes.

I'd like to start, first of all, with the Under Secretary. Let's get this question out of the way immediately. What is your view of some of the efforts to move FEMA out of the Department of Homeland Security? Where do you think FEMA should be and why?

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, thank you for the question, and I'll just be very direct.

I think it's a horrible idea. I've been in this business my entire professional life. And I say that as an individual who has spent time as a frontline responder, as a State emergency management official, and now at the Federal level in the Department of Homeland Security. We—and frankly, over the course of the past three months since I was sworn in, I've been somewhat surprised with some of the challenges that FEMA is confronting in terms of its internal operations, and they are less about organization and structure in terms of the department and very much about management and leadership. And I think there's a clear lesson that we've learned out of the Katrina events, and that is that we've got to make sure that—and Mr. Mullen highlighted this—that we have good quality professionals in these key positions, whether it be in FEMA, the Coast Guard, Secret Service, whomever it might be, that you've got to have good quality, well-educated, well-trained professionals who have been doing this and understand the roles and responsibilities.

The other point that I would offer is, as we look across our readiness for the upcoming hurricane season which we use as a benchmark, which we all know we can have an earthquake today or a terrorist attack in any area of the country, so while June 1st is the target date, we'd like to have it all done sooner rather than later.

When we talk about preparedness, FEMA is not the only element in preparedness. It's a critical element in terms of our national preparedness efforts. But one of the debates that I participated in as a State official with the Congress is how do we do a better job of prevention in terms of protection, response, recovery and mitigation. And part of that debate was—the result of that was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. So I think that we are making significant progress in terms of strengthening FEMA. We've got a new team that's been nominated by the President. We've got new people onboard in the Department and in FEMA. And we meet with them on a weekly basis. And I've seen literally dramatic progress over just the past 30 days with the logistical system in place, strengthening the communication systems.

I think, frankly, the big issue was, there was an apparent resistance to integration with the broader Department of Homeland Security as a common entity. Those issues have been resolved, and Chief Paulison and the rest of his team are working hand-in-hand in cooperation with the information analysis folks. And we're seeing greater integration each and every day. Frankly we're going into this hurricane season in a much stronger Federal posture because the work that we're doing at FEMA is part of positioning as a critical element in the Department of Homeland Security. We're providing a lot of assistance at the Department level that FEMA didn't have available to them in the event of a major disaster. And I for one having dealt with the issue over the years, that's absolutely critical.

I'll just close with one other issue. I've dealt with a the lot of presidential disaster declarations from State officials. The headlines of FEMA at Katrina are the same headlines that came out of Andrew, and they're the same headlines that came out of the Northwest floods. These are not new issues. But the one thing with this new approach to preparedness in the Department is this gives us a first opportunity, a clear opportunity, to make sure that we don't simply document the lessons learned, but that we challenge them, turn them into an implementation plan and make fundamental changes to what we're doing to ready America at the local, State and Federal levels.

Mr. REICHERT. So I can clarify, in my mind, you're against that FEMA move from the Department of Homeland Security?

Mr. FORESMAN. Absolutely. I think it would cause—any further movement of the boxes would further interrupt the momentum that we're beginning to build. Beyond the grant program, just in basic coordination, no one said putting this Department together was going to be easy. We're going through the natural evolution and the maturity process. And it's beginning to take hold. Just literally in the past three months, I've seen significant progress. And I think we need to get a time and assess where we are and where we're going. This is not an organizational issue; this is a management issue.

Mr. REICHERT. You say you have Dave Paulison there and his assistant, Admiral Johnson. And certainly your experience and expertise in this area is well known. So the fact that we have people in place that do have experience and are looked to for their experience and leadership in this arena, do you see—you talked about not seeing any organizational structure issues. So you don't see anything organizationally that needs to be done at all?

Mr. FORESMAN. Well, I think that Chief Paulison—and frankly I'm spending more time with Chief Paulison than I am with my own family these days. But I would offer to you that I think Chief Paulison needs to have the flexibility to make some tweaks within the FEMA organizational structure that he has that oversight over. But in terms of the macro-organizational structure of the Department in terms of FEMA's relationship, no, I think we're in pretty good shape. There may be some other tweaks.

But at the end of the day—Dave and I have had a lot of conversations. We were down on the Gulf Coast two weeks ago, and we talked about, what are those things that the department needs to do at the macro level to make FEMA a success and to make our National Emergency Management System a success, and we understand that. And his desires are shared by the other component leaders. We need the other component leadership folks on a day-to-day basis; Ted Allen of the Coast Guard and others. Everybody is stepping up to the plate and doing things to support the Department's mission and have made improvements in the strategy.

And I would just offer that we're going through growth pain. Nobody will deny that. But we don't stop growing. We simply need to make sure that we continue to strengthen ourselves.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you. I would follow up very quickly with Mr. Mullen.

Your testimony described a little difficulty in your relationship with FEMA since it's changed and now under the umbrella of the Department of Homeland Security compared with past experience before they were under the umbrella of the Department of Homeland Security. And you mentioned that there was no emergency management expertise, you thought that was a factor that created some difficulty for your communication. The grant applications were not completed in a timely fashion. Commitments were not met. Let's see what else we have. Well, those are just some of the things that you mentioned as kind of main things.

How do you see the relationship now with FEMA and the preparedness you're doing in your daily work?

Mr. MULLEN. Thank you for asking that. I've been on the edge of my chair since Secretary Foresman was speaking.

I thought that the initial creation of the Department of Homeland Security was a precipitous decision taken with almost no analysis or discussion with professionals in the situation. I think that if we reverse it now, it would be the same kind of mistake. I think we've got it; it's there. We need to work with it. Before we make any major overhaul of that system—and I think some of my colleagues in emergency management would agree with me—before we go back and try to reconstruct this thing totally, I think we ought to take a couple years, wait for a new administration, whichever party prevails, and that proposal from the professional communities to whichever transition team is going to have to hunker down after November and figure out how we will run this country and protect it. That's the group that should be looking at the long-term reorganization.

Now we are six years in. We need to spend the next two years seeing if this can actually work. It's like picking up a good novel. Let's work with each other to try to fix that problem and that problem and that problem. There is a better team in place. There's a more sensitive team in place. They seem to be listening. And I don't want to interrupt that. We get a little frustrated every six months when we have a sit-down with DHS and find out half the people there are moving. I would like to see some continuity there for a while. I would like you to be there the next time we talk.

Mr. FORESMAN. So would my wife.

Mr. MULLEN. I can understand that. I think that one of the things that I hope that FEMA will do and the DHS will do is work with the Federal family to try to coordinate them. They have spent a lot of time affecting State and local lives and work programs, but I haven't seen a lot of evidence that there's been coordination at that level. That was really what the DHS system was supposed to do was to pull all those Federal entities together. In fact, with one hand they have, I think, done a good job of telling us to get together and work together. We have done a lot of that. But at the same time obstacles have been thrown into place that affect our ability to work together, that makes Steve Bailey or one of his other colleagues go back to a bunch of people and say this isn't what we've been told before, there's been a change, the application—the deadlines are tighter, we need all this information, we need it today. That kind of thing drives people at the local level

crazy, and it isn't easy on the folks at the State level to pass that burden on.

And so I think that if we can get some stability within FEMA for a year or so in the systems and processes so we have some predictability, I could actually tell my emergency management council and Committee on Homeland Security colleagues what to expect in November when the grant guidelines come out so we can get ready for them. That's the problem right now. We're moving so fast that no one can either catch their breath or remember what the last commitment was. If we can get this under control for the next couple of years and give a fair chance for this program to work, I think that we might make real progress, even if we end up ultimately changing it, reconstituting it. The first thing to do is try to make this work, because we don't have time for another reorganization.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you. What usually happens is we all get five minutes on the panel. Since there's only two of us and we're a little bit more relaxed, I took a little bit longer. I'm sure Mr. Pascrell was ready for his questions, so I'll yield my time to the ranking member.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Secretary, yesterday Secretary Chertoff announced that, because of the debacle of Katrina, that there would be some changes.

And I go back to what Director Mullen spoke about in his testimony in response to the question from the Chairman. Yesterday Chertoff announced that there would be some changes. And I hope that these are not simply rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. That's what we're concerned about.

I wouldn't be too quick to change—see, whether FEMA is in Homeland Security or not is secondary. Whether it's functional, that's the most important thing. And whether there is a seat at the table in the Oval Office, that's critical. We're not only talking about human tragedy, national tragedy; we're talking about terrorism.

In the recommendations that the Secretary presented yesterday, he mentioned that he assumed a greater role for the military. What does that mean, and where did this come from?

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, I was not with the Secretary when he made those remarks at the press conference, but let me address first the issue of the Oval Office.

Secretary Rumsfeld would not go to the White House without the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And I think reasonable expectation is that Secretary Chertoff is not going to go without the FEMA Director to discuss what's going on with the disaster. And the Secretary is committed to making sure that Chief Paulison has the appropriate access to the key decisionmakers. That is an opportunity that is fully embraced when they've got the chance.

To the second piece of the question, as you know, a number of reports have recommended a more robust role for the military. And I think that part of what we're working through with our colleagues at the Department of Defense is to make sure that we're not simply substituting the military for good preparedness at the local and State level. And these are recommendations in the reports. We're evaluating those recommendations. But first and foremost, we see that, with respect particularly to the comments made here today, that our grant programs, that our activities are tar-

geting enhancement in the local and State level. We've got nearly 15 million State and local government employees that are potential responders. That is a far greater number than we have in uniform.

Mr. PASCRELL. I asked the question because I think there were five or six recommendations. But I asked the question because it illustrates what we need to do in terms of the boots on ground here. We need to develop systems from the bottom up. The very people who—those 15 thousand people you're talking about, those local people, we need to ask them what works best rather than we think either in the committee or the Department what we—we think we know what's best for you. That doesn't work, and I would question that.

In the area of funding, you mentioned the question of funding. You worked in the State of Virginia.

Mr. FORESMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. PASCRELL. You did a great job down there. You were a member of Secretary Ridge's special task force established to find out where Federal funding was, and why local governments were concerned they were not receiving funding. I don't care where we go throughout the United States, we hear the same thing. You hear it in Washington. We hear it in Washington also.

The task force released a report in June of 2004, and it recommended that the Department of Homeland Security in coordination with State, county, municipal and tribal governments develop an automated grant-tracking system that would allow for the real-time tracking of the distribution and the use of Homeland Security-related funds. In the Congress, we felt this was a big deal, and I believe it is.

Tell us if this new grant-tracking system has been deployed; and second, what were the findings of the department with regard to Homeland Security funds?

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, with respect to the first part of the question, no, we have not deployed the new system. And one thing, your familiarity with the Firefighters Assistance Grant Program, some of the tracking tools that we're using today that's proven to be a very successful and timely program, we're looking at adapting and adopting those rather than trying to create something new and give our local and State partners a little bit of consistency, which you've seen and you've heard here today. We have not made sufficient progress on that. It is among the top priorities that I have in the preparedness directive, and I ask our folks in the training office we need to be able to give you real-time timely data, and the State and local people need to have that.

Second, with regard to the grant programs, one of the issues that I have identified, and again I've seen today, we sometimes get focused on the product at the expense of the processes. And I think that clearly what we need to do is to find cleaner processes that are unified across the multiplicity of extremes that we have out there, so that if you're a local official or a State official, if you're dealing with targeting infrastructure, protecting lives, if you're dealing with fire-ready rates, if you're dealing with Homeland Security Grant Programs, HSGPs, that you've got a consolidated consistent process rather than differing grant processes.

Part of this that is different is the fact that Congress is providing different levels of guidance for grant programs including the deadlines. But I think the take-away is, we need to bring our State and local partners in, take a deep breath, as Mr. Mullen said, in terms of where we're at right now, look at these grant processes and make sure we've got them as streamlined as possible, because at the end of the day, we want to get the dollars out. We want to spend them in a wise fashion.

But at the same time, you're going to ask us this time next year, how much better prepared are we, and I need to be able to assure you that we've spent the dollars wisely.

Mr. PASCRELL. I have concluded that, while there is criticism that must be directed at local efforts to secure funds for needed materials and procedures, most of the blame is not the local police officers or firemen or EMTs or coordinating agencies within the State. When we hear about money in the—what's the saying—money gets stuck in the pipeline, that's why I asked the question in the first place.

Notice, I'm not going to get into the cuts that have been recommended by the administration today. They're bizarre. And if you listen to the first responders here, the guys and the gals that are on the frontline, I think that there's a lot of explanation that has to be done. But I realize that we won't talk about that today. Isn't that good?

Mr. FORESMAN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Mullen, does the Washington Homeland Security Committee include tribal government representation in its emergency planning and preparedness?

Mr. MULLEN. Tribal governments are able to participate on the Committee of Homeland Security, but they are not on the routine council.

Mr. PASCRELL. Why not?

Mr. MULLEN. Because there's a statutory membership created. That would be something that would have to be adjusted. That's something that we should approach again and take another look at.

Mr. PASCRELL. If it's from the bottom up, we shouldn't exclude anybody, and we should find ways to deal with that.

And it would seem to me—and former—I'd like your reaction to this. Former FEMA Director, Michael Brown, remember him?

Mr. MULLEN. Yes.

Mr. PASCRELL. He complained that—it's nothing earth-shattering, but he complained that the Department of Homeland Security's emphasis on risk has hampered the all-hazards preparedness function of FEMA. What specific metrics or methodology does the statewide committee employ to ensure that all hazardous preparedness, all hazardous preparedness, is also applicable to a terrorist or a risk-based scenario?

Mr. MULLEN. Many of the measures, many of the programs that have been funded, programs that have applicability, whatever the disaster might be, we have employed a risk factor in our designation of where the money should go on our prioritization. And that's been somewhat controversial because risk models are an imprecise science. Some of the information is classified, and I don't have access to some of it.

But as we have worked on this, we have tried to strike a balance between population, population density and a factor of risk to try to be respectful of the Federal till for risk as well as the Washington area and the State, and that has been more heightened in terms of focusing on what is perceived to be the greatest risk that we have.

So it's in there. I believe as we try to assess our critical infrastructure and wade through both issues of disclosure and other things that are going on, we're making progress without having true risk factors to put in. In the meantime, what I have tried to have my focus look at is, what is the kind of impact that an event would have on us, and what would make Washington State less Washington State.

Mr. PASCRELL. And when you've established priorities, somebody is of lesser priority. I mean we have that problem on the Federal level when we try to deal with funding based on risk. Some States felt that what we were trying to do is exclude them, and that wasn't the purpose. However, it would seem to me that, with limited resources, they need the directive to where the greatest vulnerability is.

Mr. Chairman, can I just ask a quick question?

Mr. REICHERT. Sure.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Bailey, what are the standards relied upon to ensure that the equipment purchased in advancing the goals of interoperability, what are the standards derived from? Where do you think they should be derived from?

Mr. BAILEY. Well, that's a debate that has raged.

Mr. PASCRELL. That's why I asked your opinion.

Mr. BAILEY. Thank you. One of the things we've tried to do in this State—and I think we've done it pretty well—and here's why it is has worked, is because the State was smart enough to establish work groups that involved the local people. And Jeff Jensen, the Tacoma Emergency Manager, has been critically involved in the planning process on the equipment from the very beginning along with Chief Vickery who is here from Seattle. So we've had that kind of inclusive planning process that has helped us a great deal.

However, the State of Washington, as Congressman Reichert will tell you, is a very diverse State. We have a mountain range that literally almost creates two different worlds. So to totally standardize equipment is probably not fully attainable, but certainly what we have done is through that work of regional people working at the State level, all equipment purchases are vetted to ensure as much interoperability as possible. And I think thanks to that committee, and the people here today that represent that, we've done a pretty good job of trying to get to those kinds of attainments.

Federal standards, I think, in theory are somewhat probably a good idea. The practicality due to local changing conditions, I'm not sure they're totally attainable either. We have a lot of requirements from the Federal Government already, and I would hate to see further flexibility taken away from the local level personally. So that's how I would address your question.

I would also just like to add that, on our Homeland Regional Coordination Council here in Pierce County that makes the decisions

for all of our homeland security grant spending, we do have a representative from the Seattle Tribe of Indians who is very active in that process. And I think you would find at the local level throughout the State, that the tribes are very well represented.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you very much. Chief Treviño, very briefly, your testimony focused on the frustration you have with DHS's constant revision of the grant guidelines, how that hampers planning, et cetera, et cetera.

Have the new guidelines had the effect of improving the statewide planning process?

Chief TREVIÑO. The new guidelines, once again, are changed, and so we're having to react to those changes just as everyone else is.

Mr. Bailey commented earlier about encouraging DHS to maintain continuity in the guidelines, so that all of us as players and participants in the process could catch up with it, and I'd like to echo that thought.

Mr. PASCRELL. And Mr. Mitzel, how does your company balance your private sector concerns and emergency preparedness?

Mr. MITZEL. Our private sector concerns? Okay. We are a commercial insurance company.

Mr. PASCRELL. Right.

Mr. MITZEL. So what we do, we help our commercial lines insureds with their own emergency preparedness and continuity programs, which vary highly based on the environment that they're located in, the type of business, et cetera.

Mr. PASCRELL. So those folks wouldn't be hesitant to detail their emergency plans because of profit?

Mr. MITZEL. Generally speaking, but they are very open with us as their insured to come in and assist them, so we generally help them with their continuity.

Mr. PASCRELL. We talked about the idea, which you brought up, about credit to those companies who would come forth and put something into effect, therefore reducing risk and vulnerability, methods and processes within the companies to overcome—and to prepare as well as to overcome if something disastrous occurred.

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. Mitzel, are you familiar with the Department of Homeland Security's Community Emergency Response Team?

Mr. MITZEL. The CERT program, yes.

Mr. REICHERT. How does that differ from the Unigard emergency response?

Mr. MITZEL. I would refer to another company that's done an excellent program in our jurisdiction, in Chief Treviño's jurisdiction, and they, in fact, won the same award we did the year before, and that is T-Mobile. And they do train their employees to the full CERT program. They are able to get employees away for that 20 to 24-hour block of time. They have a very successful program, too.

We wanted to specialize our employees a little bit more on just becoming a search and rescue team member or a medic—medical team member versus training them to do a little search and research, a little damage assessment, a little bit of everything, because we felt that the number of drills we were doing, two or three,

we wanted to keep the competency at a higher level than being trained to do everything.

So we took the model, revised it somewhat with the local fire department's approval, and customized the program to what we thought was a better fit with our organization. So there's a wide range of flexibility depending on how much time the senior management is able to give us the employees to participate in training and drills.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you. We had a little discussion about interoperability. That's one of the things we've been working hard on. We've held a number of hearings. I think Washington State is way ahead of the curve across the Nation in our ability to communicate first intraoperatively and interoperatively with other departments.

How does interoperability play with the partnership between the Bellevue Police Department and the Bellevue Fire Department and Unigard?

Chief TREVIÑO. Well, we're fortunate in the City of Bellevue in that the police department and the fire department share a communications center. Our communications are completely seamless, I'm happy to say, and we're able to speak on each others' radio channels on a regular basis.

The same thing applies with Unigard Insurance. We have very good communication with them. In fact, part of their process is working with our volunteer ham radio operators and preparing for the eventuality that our communication systems could go down in the event of a disaster. Every disaster that I've seen going back to our response when I was in the search and rescue team to the earthquake in Los Angeles, the communication systems went down, the cellphones went down, just about everything goes down. So we rely on ham radios as kind of a last tier of backup in our process with them. And we're very involved with them, and I think we're very effective.

Mr. REICHERT. So it's more private sector organizations are involved in the separate emergency preparedness. There is a plan in Bellevue to include them in some sort of communication systems to use the expertise that they have passed on?

Chief TREVIÑO. Yes. And I should also comment that the combined communications center not only provides services to the Bellevue Police Department and the Bellevue Fire Department, but a total of fourteen team fire departments and two police departments. So it really takes on kind of a regional aspect, and the participants and the private agencies within the regional area all benefit from that process.

Mr. REICHERT. Chief, you also mentioned that jurisdictions within our UASI and you participate in that review. Who's leading that UASI review?

Chief TREVIÑO. The way I understand it, you have to remember that Bellevue is a recent participant in the UASI process, and a lot of the planning into the proposals made was already done before Bellevue was named as a participant, so we came onto the process very late. And at our very first entry level, most of the planning had been done.

The next level of review is done at the State and from the State proposal, which comes back to the Federal Government. We're

waiting for the response back at which point further review will be done.

Mr. REICHERT. Anyone else have anything to add to that?

Mr. MULLEN. I chaired a UASI program. And as a voting member, I've had the opportunity to work with it. It was a very exhaustive process. And given the very limited time and the change of guidelines, it was very challenging for everybody involved.

Mr. Bailey was in that group, the Snohomish County emergency manager, Seattle, Bellevue, and the King County Deputy Director. So we had a group of five or six, but working with us are a number of working groups that have fed into the information that is pretty broadly representative. While Bellevue has now joined our core group as a voting member, Bellevue was represented by King County Fire & Rescue prior to that. It's been a pretty collaborative process.

Now, again, I can't say there was great joy about the decisions, but in the end, I think, given the parameters we had, the limited knowledge and the time frame, I thought we made some outstanding decisions, and people really stepped up and put the regional requirements ahead of the major jurisdictional desires. That happens when choices have to be made, and I think the spirit that this group had was very strong.

And it wasn't without its bumps, but we worked through that, and I think we're stronger for it. And we're waiting for the next run we'll have when we find out what we'll divide up and what the methodology of deciding is. Steve was also here.

Mr. REICHERT. Go ahead.

Mr. BAILEY. Mr. Chairman, I think there's one very good example of what we've been able to do in the UASI work group.

The Seattle-King County metropolitan area is the largest populated metropolitan area in America without a public safety aviation program. And that is one high priority we have put in our UASI proposals. We've worked with your staff to seek additional resource funding to help us deal with really what is a huge public safety tool. Given our geography, our limited transportation system, interoperability issues in a disaster, the aviation piece is huge, and we have lagged behind in this region for years. And part of UASI has worked with aviation. Ted Summers has been involved in that, and we've made progress. The solution is funding, and that's the thing we're trying to pursue in that UASI program.

Mr. REICHERT. I know there's been a tri-county effort in the air support area, and we are still working with Pierce County, King County and Snohomish County trying to acquire some funding.

I was sheriff not too long ago. And part of that frustrating process is UASI. But I think it's grown into a great partnership.

I want to mention just quickly before I move back to Mr. Pascrell for some follow-up questions that I had the opportunity to interact with Mr. Michael Jackson also in hearings, but Mr. Pascrell mentioned in the paper today the Secretary saying that the military may play a greater role when it comes to these emergencies. There are other things out there. I know that the Secretary is very much presenting as new ideas, new directions, and one of those—I want to mention some of those besides the involvement what role does the Department have to play in these emergencies. One, I know

that you really want to take a look at the contractual element, the logistics-related tools, who is moving where and why, what the contracts are, better customer service to handle mass dispersion, preidentifying shelters for people who are homeless, enhancing situational awareness, people deploying quickly to areas. These are just some of the things that Secretary Jackson mentioned. Debris removal was a big issue at Katrina. And it seemed like they used the most expensive engineers and contractors and the Corps of Engineers, not local contractors.

Again, the stronger DOD role was mentioned. Reaching out to the locals, which I was glad to see on the list of things that DHS is looking at, how can we work together closely. This is a great start, having a hearing here. Last but not least is financial accountability, cost control, and better management, so all of those things.

Do you have a comment on any of those?

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, if I may go back to the question about DOD, I think that part of what the Secretary may have been also talking about—again, I was not in the room when he made the comments—but in retrospect, as a result of the briefings he and I both did on Monday, update briefings, one of the things that we've been able to do is to make sure that the mission assignments that the Department of Defense may need to do in the context of supporting hurricane response or even an earthquake scenario, there are lots of things we're going to need; heavy-lift helicopters, medium-lift helicopters. We're going to need air transportation. We're going to need aerial reconnaissance using some of the technology of our intelligence community to do some of that, all of these types of things.

We know that we're writing the mission assignment today. And I think a large part of what I would offer to you is, this is basic Core 101; do as much as you can before the disaster strikes. And we're working very aggressively with Secretary Rumsfeld, Assistant Secretary McHale, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and others to make sure that we get as much of the likely DOD missions that are historic missions. They have dealt with them for 20, 30 years, make sure it's prescripted so it's the State of Washington or any local community depending on the State of Washington. If we have to turn to the Federal family of DOD, we're ready to do whatever it takes to make it happen.

So I'll go back and talk to the Secretary, Congressman. I'll provide you all with a written follow-up in terms of what his comments were in relation to the article. Sometimes the information in the statement may not be exactly correct.

Mr. PASCRELL. I just have one final question, Mr. Secretary.

When Secretary Chertoff said yesterday that he desired to upgrade the National Alert System, what exactly can we look forward to with that regard?

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, thank you for that question. That actually goes to a large part of what my colleagues have been talking about today. One of FEMA's critical elements is the ability to notify the general populace at large that we have a variety of situations that have occurred, earthquakes, hurricane, whatever it might be.

The Emergency Alert System, formerly known as the Emergency Broadcast System, has not undergone the transformation to the degree that it was intended when they made some changes in the 1990's. We need to make some policy changes. There are a lot of things upon the broadcast media, text messaging, reverse 911, a lot of technologies that are available today. Don't forget our core principles of the broadcast media. But we need to make sure that, from a policy standpoint, it reflects the 21st Century technology and how we communicate with the population at large.

The other issue is to identify the number of occasions where the Emergency Alert System simply has not worked. The broadcasters are voluntary participants in that program. Some broadcasters in some States have very robust radio and television support for those activities; other States do not. We need to ensure the strength of that system, so we're taking a very systematic look to make sure that the conversion from analog to digital has moved as it should have, that the primary and secondary relay points are up and operating, that the States have in place a good quality plan, and that we're using all the available technology.

Again, at the end of the day, government can be as prepared as we want to be. The private sector can be as prepared as they want to be. But if fellow citizens have problems, then all that preparedness is not going to pay off.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Mullen, do you have a comment on that question?

Mr. MULLEN. No. I think the point that the EAS is voluntary needs to be taken very seriously. It isn't necessarily something that is guaranteed. The warning will go off precisely in the time frame and the manner that we wish.

I actually was reacting a little bit to the discussion about the greater DOD role just for a moment. I think where we get very concerned is, when it sounds like the suggestion is made in the Federal line, we feel very strongly in that, if the troops came in, they should be under the command of the adjunct general working for the government. Building work to support States has helped in the requirement to support the local people.

When we're talking about a National Alert System or any pronouncement coming out of DHS headquarters, we welcome that, but we also welcome the opportunity to and the connection to the local and State officials who actually are responsible for delivering that message to be sure it's done properly. I go back to the Nisqually earthquake when the Nisqually operation was under the Federal level. I campaigned in the boiler room for each jurisdiction getting press release without any consultation from the State and local. Those are the kinds of things that we need to get away from so we're sure that we're all working together. If we're going to be a team, we've got to get our signals straight.

Mr. FORESMAN. Chairman and Congressman, if I might, that's why dialogue is absolutely important. Let me be very clear.

What we're doing with the Emergency Alert System is designed to empower local officials and State officials to be able to use a system that works. The Federal Government is responsible for making

sure there's an Emergency Alert System. We depend on our local and State partners to implement that system and make it work.

In regard to the DOD, I think that the acknowledgement here is that emergency disasters are local events or State events. The role of the Federal Government is to provide support. Nothing in my remarks should be construed to say that we're talking about federalizing emergencies and disasters in the community. What we're talking about is making sure the Federal support is robust and in force.

Mr. PASCRELL. Let's go back to what you just said. It's all right for us to conclude that we want the locals—I mean the extended definition of that—the locals ought to respond to national catastrophes, be it whatever, and that the Federal Government should be called on as a later resource.

That only works if the locals are involved in the process in the first place. That has not happened. You can't expect the locals to be able to respond accordingly when these disasters get out of hand as Katrina did or as a manmade disaster, a terrorist attack, unless those folks are in at the planning in the very beginning and not look just to respond. I think I can't emphasize that enough, Mr. Chairman. If there's anything we keep on hearing over and over again, we expect the locals to take on this huge responsibility and undertaking. Many times locals don't—can't appreciate—they're not in a position to appreciate what's the extent of the resources that will be needed to fight this particular—to respond to the situation. And that is why the Federal Government has a responsibility early on before anything even happens to help us prepare for what—our citizens demand that. Our citizens demand that. And this is the angst, this is the anxiety that's being grated out there, I think, more than in any other area.

The questions about FEMA, how can you separate preparedness from response? I don't know how you do that. I don't think you should do that. That's my point. Thanks.

Mr. FORESMAN. Congressman, you know, I agree. We just need to meet our short-term planning proposals.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you to the panel for their testimony, and I appreciate you asking questions and answering questions.

This Committee has been very focused on three things that we recognize as key components in this process; that's planning, training and communication. I think everyone on the panel will agree, those three are key to our success in keeping our communities safe. The most important part in having any of those three critical areas succeed is the piece that Mr. Pascrell just touched upon, and that is the relationship between the Federal, the State and the local entities. And all have to come together to address this issue, and today I think we have a good start. I think that, as we move forward with friendships and the names that we shared today help build those relationships and make the planning and training and communication piece work.

So thank you all for being here. And at this time, before calling the second panel, we'll take a brief recess. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. REICHERT. I'd like to call the Subcommittee hearing to order. I'll now call the second panel.

The witnesses on the second panel are Sheriff Pastor, Sheriff of Pierce County; Assistant Chief Vickery, City of Seattle Fire Department; Michael Loehr, Director of Preparedness for Public Health—Seattle and King County; and Mr. William Pugh, Director of Public Works and Assistant City Manager for the City of Tacoma; and Mr. Roger Serra, Director of Security and Emergency Management for Seattle City Light.

The Chair recognizes Sheriff Pastor.

STATEMENT OF PAUL A. PASTOR, SHERIFF, PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Mr. PASTOR. First of all, gentlemen, thank you very kindly for coming here and listening to us. Welcome to Pierce County. It is especially good to see Chairman Reichert who give assurance to me that there is life after being sheriff, and possibly even more exalted life. I always thought that being sheriff is the ultimate but—

Mr. REICHERT. It is.

Mr. PASTOR. There are a number of things that we commented on that you've heard about already in Washington State and in Pierce County, things which allow us to apply technology to work and support of one another to prepare for and respond to natural disasters and terrorist attacks. We don't just want to brag though because, if you wear your—if you rest on your laurels, you're probably wearing them in the wrong place, so there is much more that needs to be done.

One thing that we do not have in Pierce County that I will address briefly is interoperable communications. We have kind of a patched commonality to our emergency management, but we need to do more, and we can get there. Getting there is consistent with the goals we have taken with our approach to disaster preparedness and emergency preparedness countywide. And I speak countywide from the standpoint of having the privilege of serving as the sheriff of Pierce County, a county for over 750,000 people with all sorts of territory in 1800 square miles and the mountain that you could see if you could see it in the distance over there. That is our mountain in Pierce County.

Our approach, as you've heard already, to disaster preparedness and terrorist preparedness is an all-hazard approach. That's our doctrine. That's the way we approach this. As you're well aware, most of the preparedness for natural disaster planning, equipment partnership is applicable in the area of responding to terrorist incidents as well, in fact, probably over 75 percent. So we've taken steps, we've made plans, we've equipped, we've drilled, we've trained with the all-hazards/all partners doctrine in mind. We've tried to include people from the public sector and throughout the public sector, local, State and Federal, as well as people from the private sector, private businesses as well. In collaboration with our municipal partners in the county and in even closer collaboration with our colleagues in the Pierce County Department of Emergency Management, we have placed the people in this county, I think, in a strong position with regard with readiness.

And you can pick off the things. You've heard some of them already. Our State is involved with the PC–NET program; computer mapping of schools and critical infrastructures has begun here in

Pierce County; establishing temporary radio frequencies to patch our radio frequencies together; our Terrorist Early Warning Group, which Chairman Bailey has talked about. But we have more to do to improve our position. And we have a complication of, like many parts of the United States, we value local control. We have 19 law enforcement agencies, 23 fire districts, eight Public Safety Answering Points—and God bless us for our dedication to local control of it. But sometimes and in some challenges, that can be an impediment to what we need. Some challenges, terrorism, whether it's international or home-grown—it's important that we recognize that we have both, and we have had experience with both in this county. Large scale disasters and mass civil disturbance events are three examples of challenges which don't always lend themselves to purely local approaches.

For that reason, in Washington State, our State Sheriffs and Chiefs Association has developed a statewide Law Enforcement Emergency Mobilization Plan, so that we can as seamlessly as possible work to support one another if any kind of disaster or mass civil disturbance or whatever breaks down.

One of the things that we need to do—I need—is establish a stronger, more permanent interoperable communication system. And in Pierce County, this week an RFP will go out for a study on that. And the study will cost about $60,000. We are working to use Federal moneys to find out what we should do and how to wisely use resources. The study is intended to provide direction to the most cost effective approach to achieving interoperability. We want to be sure we get the best possible performance. And we really appreciate the Federal government's interest in this area as we carry it further.

So I described the doctrine. I talked about some of our needs, our accomplishments. The question is, what is the proper role of the Federal Government from here on out. And the proper role starts with the idea that, as has already been said, no disaster or terrorist attack takes place at the Federal level. If you remember back to 9/11, even the Pentagon, when the plane crashed into the Pentagon, if you review the videotapes, you'll see Fairfax County Police, you'll see Alexandria Police. Even at the epicenter of what is Federal power, you see locals responding.

In light of this, in light of the co-responsibilities we share, we don't intend to passively ask the Federal Government to solve our problems. But we do intend to ask the Federal Government to partner with us. And I've asked our Federal partners to consider a number of issues. One of them, is this really a good time to cut back on law enforcement technology funding? Mr. Pascrell talked about that. Planning, procuring and deploying interoperative communications is essential for what we need to do. Cutbacks on that may not be the right signal to send at this time.

I would ask that we have the ability to hire personnel to deal with disasters and terrorism issues.

Mr. Chairman, you've heard me say that we have a circuit of gas masks to respond to real events. To prevent events, you need human beings, not just equipment. If it is true that, in the international scene, we are in the midst of something that might be called World War IV. World War IV requires sacrifice on

everybody's part, sacrifice on the part of local officials, on the part of the Federal Government, and especially on the part of citizens to step forward and confront challenges. So we at the local level believe we have a responsibility to step forward. We believe it when the President and the Congress tell us that we're on the frontline of terrorism.

In February we had a major county sheriffs, inner city chiefs meeting in Washington. We heard praise for our effort, and I'm sure that praise was very sincere and heartfelt. But we also heard an inconsistent message, that is cutbacks in the COPS Programs and personnel, cutbacks in technology.

I would ask the gentlemen that you take back to Washington that we're willing to do our part, and we're willing to step forward. We're not interested in just passively holding up our hands. We're interested in rolling up our sleeves and doing the work. We would ask that you join us in that, especially when it comes to resources.

We believe that public safety is not a spectator sport. We say that to our citizens, and we ask that our Federal partners not just cheer us along, but also stay in the game and help us out in the field. We ask that you help simplify the preparedness grants, that you help us prioritize, and that you help us and help the citizens of the United States. Those of us at the point of the spear are the reason actually that the spear exists. And the point of the spear are the local first responders.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Paul. Assistant Chief Vickery.

STATEMENT OF A.D. VICKERY, ASSISTANT CHIEF, CITY OF SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. VICKERY. Chairman Reichert, Congressman Pascrell, thank you.

Just a little background, I have been in fire service 40 years, and I was able to respond to the Oklahoma City bombing, the 9/11 terrorist attack, the FEMA-sponsored Urban Search and Rescue. I'm really unique in that I was also trained as a police officer when I headed the fire investigation unit.

This is a great opportunity. Never before, 25 years ago when I was sitting on a panel with a sheriff on one side and public health official on another. I think it shows we've come a long way in a very short amount of time.

I'd like to emphasize some areas where I think significant progress is made from those of us down here in the trenches. I've also lived in the trench, in the bottom of the trench. And never in my 40 years of service have I ever seen the level of cooperation and mutual respect law enforcement and the fire service have for each other as we do now. It's truly a realization that we've been covering each other's back.

Secondly, I think there have been some big strides. Previous to the National Incident Management System, when the sheriff stood up and pointed and said "fire," I ducked; and when I stood up and said "fire," he grabbed the hoses. Now what we have is a system of language called the National Incident Management System, so that when we do communicate, even though we don't have the relationships face-to-face, that we're talking the same language. This is a huge step forward.

That language ties in with the National Response Plan. If we would all read it and practice it at the Federal and State and local level, it gives us a strategy as well as a language that we can use from all facets of the first response community.

Risk-based funding, and it sounds good, but in practice this is going to be a challenge, because all of America is faced with risk. I do think that focusing our limited resources on areas where we have identified and shared that risk, it's very difficult for us to get information from the Federal Government on where the risk really exists. I think the sheriff and I and the public health feel the risk, but we're not getting a lot of help in qualifying that.

I don't know what the terrorists are going to do next, but I do know what they have done; they've killed people. And where you have large concentrations of people, we have a greater risk simply because of the density of the population.

So from that standpoint, we need to look at focusing where there are large concentrations of people whether they are transient or that's where they live.

A new Director for FEMA, I think we all need to fully support the confirmation of Chief David Paulison as the new Director of FEMA. He's got 30 years of response experience. Let's let him use it for the next disaster.

The focus on terrorism response is not at counter purposes to responding to a naturally-occurring event. If I can respond to a terror event, I should be able to respond to a naturally-occurring event.

The communication systems, the interoperability of the equipment are applicable. But the difference with a terror event is my partnership with law enforcement becomes significantly more important. To bring those to justice who have committed the crime, to protect the evidence, but we also focus on one thing—saving lives. And the tools we learn to respond to terrorism are effective at saving lives in a non-terrorist event.

I believe truly here that the risks that we have—and each time I get closer to Mount Rainier, I get a little more sensitive. I look behind my back to see if the mud flow is coming towards me right now.

So when it comes to responding, in my experience, I do believe that there is such a thing as a perfect storm. I've never seen a perfect response in 40 years. We can always improve our capability to respond.

What areas do I feel that we need enhancement? Communications continue to hamper our ability to appropriately respond to and provide for the safety of the first response community. I applaud the fact that we have patches in technological, but right now I can't talk to a firefighter in a building that's 30 feet away from me. The radio doesn't go through the building. I don't know where it is in the building, nor do I know where those police officers or assistants, where they are in the building. So if something happens, can I protect them?

I've got 1,000 members on the Seattle Fire Department and 600 radios. That means that when there is an emergency of a significant magnitude, I don't have enough radios for all the firefighters who could be called to the scene.

The United States military utilizes satellites in their communication systems, and it really doesn't matter if a hurricane wipes everything off the map, they bounce the signals off the satellites. I can go to Mexico for vacation and get satellite TV. They beam signals all over the world. Why can't we have a federally-funded public safety communications system similar to the military but not compromising the military's need for secrecy.

People are our most valuable asset. I agree with the sheriff. I've got 100 gas masks and 25 fire engines, but if we don't put people on them, we just don't have the capacity to respond.

Right now in the City of Seattle today, there are about a million people. There are 300—a little over 300 police and fire on duty. When that bell hits or that patrol car gets the call to respond, 300 people is a challenge when you've got a million potential people that you're going to deal with. Staffing will continue to be a significant issue, and I think that we need to continue to look at Federal support for staffing both law enforcement, fire and EMS.

I can't help but look at the port. And I see these enormous cranes that just came in on a ship here a couple weeks ago. I see a port in both Tacoma and Seattle that is surrounded by a city unique in many areas; a port that 22 illegal immigrants came in, and from the grace of God they were not hostile. They were actually friendly and looking to get a job in this country. And the security guard, first they were identified by a crane operator, and then the security guard was nice enough to talk to them, smile, and put them in a van. I'm glad their intentions were not hostile. They could have put us at great risk.

So I think we need to continue to emphasize that port security is a critical issue, not only in the prevention of interdiction but in the capability to respond if an incident does occur, and to get our ports back operating if an attack did occur, either an accident or an intention.

Mr. REICHERT. Chief, if I can interrupt just for a second, Mr. Pascrell has to catch an airplane. If we can keep our comments to five minutes for the rest of the panel. Thank you.

Mr. VICKERY. I urge that we fully fund FEMA and populate the agency with professional responders. Without adequate funding for FEMA, it doesn't matter who's at FEMA. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Vickery follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF A.D. VICKERY

Welcome, I'm A.D. Vickery, Assistant Chief of the Seattle Fire Department. I entered the Fire Service in 1966 and, over the past 40 years, have responded to thousands of emergencies. I responded to the Oklahoma City Bombing, the 9/11 Terrorist Attack on New York City, and Hurricanes as a member of our FEMA sponsored Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Team. As head of the Seattle Fire Investigation Unit I completed basic Law Enforcement training and held a Police commission. I've worked as a firefighter/paramedic for 12 years in Seattle.

Preparedness and response to emergencies must build on local capability. The emphasis in government needs to focus on funding and supporting local capability.

I would like to address areas where significant progress is being made, and then areas where enhancements are needed related to local fire, hazmat, and field emergency medical services.

Areas of Significant Progress

- Never in my 40 years of service have I seen this high a level of cooperation and mutual respect exist between the Fire Service and Law Enforcement. Terrorism has taught us that we are mutually dependent. This realization has al-

lowed us to integrate resources and command structures, reduce duplication of effort and standardize equipment.

• Emergency responders now have a common "language" and game plan which integrates local, state, federal and military resources. The common language is the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Previously, when the Sheriff points and yells "fire" it didn't mean the same thing as the Fire Chief yelling "fire". NIMS provides the baseline for emergency response operations and communication.

The National Response Plan (NRP) provides the structure for how local, state, federal and military assets interact and support each other. We all have to read it and remember it.

• Risk based funding. All of America is at risk, from nature and terrorists. Certain areas are at a higher risk. I don't purport to know what a terrorist is going to do next, but I do know what they have done. They kill people, and they kill people in large numbers.

• A new Director for FEMA. We need to fully support the confirmation of Chief David Paulison as the new Director of FEMA! Chief Paulison has over 30 years of response experience. Let's let him use it.

• The focus on terrorism response is not at counter purposes to responding to natural disasters. If you can respond to a terrorist incident, you can respond to a natural disaster. I do believe that there is such a thing as the "perfect storm," I've never seen a "perfect response". We do, however, need to balance our exercises and training to include natural disasters as a component of our overall preparedness.

Areas which Need Enhancement

• Communications continue to hamper our ability to respond effectively and efficiently. We need hardware and redundant systems. In Seattle, the Fire Department has 1,000 members but we only have 600 radios. In a disaster, 400 of our firefighters will not have radios.

There continues to be significant gaps in police, fire, EMS and Emergency Management communication interoperability. The United States military utilizes satellites for ground communications, why can't the government put up communication satellites for Public Safety? We get satellite TV all over the United States, why not provide redundancy for first responders using similar technology?

• People are our most valuable asset. We need to provide federal staffing support for local fire and law enforcement agencies. In Seattle we have approximately 350 police and firefighters on-duty for a daytime population of 1 million people compressed into 90 square miles. We simply do not have adequate staffing to deal with emergencies out of the ordinary.

• We need to significantly increase funding to improve Port security and response. Our major ports are critical assets and there aren't a lot of them, and they are soft targets. Unlike many major ports, the Cities of Seattle and Tacoma surround their ports. This puts residents at risk. We need to fund prevention, response and recovery planning and resources.

• As a responder, when a disaster occurs, I need equipment to continue the response when my local supplies are consumed. We need to fully fund the Prepositioned Equipment Packages which were recently utilized in Hurricane Katrina to reconstitute local public safety agencies. This program has been transferred to FEMA without adequate funding. It absolutely needs to be supported.

• Fully fund FEMA and populate the agency with professional responders. Without adequate funding it doesn't matter who FEMA reports to.

• Increase funding to high risk cities and urban areas. Both natural disasters and terrorists will likely kill and injure more people in densely populated areas.

• Improve our ability to respond to multiple casualty incidents. We have a local capacity to deal with dozens of injured victims, we need the capacity to deal with hundreds. It doesn't currently exist. We need mass casualty field surge capability.

• We need to provide the public with a continuing stream of factual information which will allow them to be self-sufficient for days instead of hours. Never underestimate the ability of the American public to weed out fact from fiction.

In summary, we are making progress in our efforts to improve Homeland Security for prevention, response and recovery from natural and manmade disasters. Success will depend on commitment and a combination of local resources and sustained federal supplemental funding.

Thank you.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Chief.
Mr. LOEHR.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL LOEHR, DIRECTOR OF PREPAREDNESS, PUBLIC HEALTH, SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY

Mr. LOEHR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Pascrell, for the opportunity to speak with you this morning on a subject that is critical to the continued health and safety of our region's residents.

Local health departments have always had a role in disaster preparedness and response. Since 9/11, we've seen significant changes in the threats we face and the level of preparedness we need to achieve. In just a short time frame, we've seen a wave of disasters around the world with significant public health consequences including the anthrax attacks of February of 2001, the SARS outbreak in 2003, tsunamis, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Madrid and London bombings, and now avian flu and the threat of pandemic influenza.

All of these events have focused a spotlight on the Nation's public health infrastructure and its ability to manage the health consequences of emergencies.

In order to meet these new challenges, we have forged relationships with our health care system partners, our first responders, community-based organizations and emergency managers, and are much better integrated into each other's plans. I echo the Chief's comment that, four years ago, we were not in any means together, and now I cannot get away from him. It's a very good thing.

The results of these partnerships can be seen in newly developed response capabilities such as the isolation and quarantine of infectious patients and the ability to dispense large amounts of antibiotics to a large number of people in a very short time.

We have also developed a countywide disease surveillance system in concert with such varied partners as hospitals, 911 dispatch centers and schools, but we cannot afford to stop here. I'd like to offer some specific examples of how we can improve coordination across all levels of government and response systems through better integration of planning, response and resources.

First, we need to improve the way the Federal funding is provided for preparedness so that integration, not fragmentation, is supported.

Over the past four years, public health and hospitals in King County have become fully integrated into homeland security planning, strategic development and exercise. The TOPOFF 2 exercise in 2003, and our bioterrorism planning efforts demonstrate close coordination across disciplines. We have established a Health Care Coalition with over 25 partner organizations that is developing new protocols for making critical, system-wide decisions, managing information and allocating resources. This will foster a unified command approach to health and medical response countywide, something that's totally new in our county, and I think it's actually revolutionary nationwide.

However, Federal funding priorities for public health and hospitals are focused on specific response tasks, specific hazards and

equipment. This fails to recognize that a systemic approach to health care preparedness is needed. Hospitals, public health, clinics, medical practices, and pharmacies all rely on each other during disasters. Planning, training, exercising and responding as an integrated system should be fully supported, if not required, by funding programs.

Just now, we're beginning to see this change. The latest guidance for hospital grants from Health Services and Resources Administration, HRSA, begins to take a systems approach to preparedness for hospitals. This should be incorporated throughout all Federal grant programs. There is no strategy for total health care preparedness at the national level, and there hasn't been for four years. That is probably the greatest tragedy in public health preparedness that we've seen; there's simply no organized set of priorities, no incorporation of local priorities. As Congressman Pascrell mentioned, it is not a top-down system. It shouldn't be. Locals should be communicating what the priorities are and have a say in how the resources should be allocated.

Secondly, the ability to share real-time data with response partners needs to be expanded beyond voice capabilities and beyond traditional first responders. We have over 7,000 medical professionals in King County that we rely upon as the eyes and ears of our health care system. As public health threats emerge, paramedics and hospital staff will be on the frontlines responding to the threat. They are the ones who will likely detect the first signs for bioterrorism or potentially threatening diseases in our community.

Yet, there is no reliable system in place to share critical data between public health and medical professionals. Today it's the fax machine. The hardware and software necessary to track and communicate critical health data between public health and medical professionals is lacking across the county.

Public health response measures including isolation and quarantine of infected patients, and mass dispensing of medications require robust data-tracking systems to monitor in real-time the patients, their status, and the care they have received, wherever they may be located. These are critical infrastructure needs nationwide.

Third, training resources must become a Federal priority and must be appropriate for public health responders. Federal grant requirements for public health have focused primarily on developing response plans; and for hospitals the focus has been primarily on acquiring equipment. Yet training personnel to implement an effective response is essential.

Training resources provided by the Department of Homeland Security simply aren't relevant to the needs and responsibilities of health system responders. Specialized training necessary to carry out specific health-related plans for mass dispensing of antibiotics or isolating large numbers of infectious patients is not eligible under Homeland Security grants and not resourced under CDC or HRSA grants, so we're left basically either not training or eating the cost.

In addition, training resources should be more flexible and accommodate the needs of health care organizations.

In summary, partnerships are the cornerstone of emergency response. We've seen the benefits when they've worked well and wit-

nessed the disastrous consequences when they have not. Federal policies and practices can make a tremendous difference in determining whether the preparations of responding agencies and institutions will be in concert or at odds when the next disaster comes.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you.

[The statement of Mr. Loehr follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL LOEHR

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on a subject critical to the continued health and safety of our region's residents.

Local health departments have always had a role in disaster preparedness and response, but since 9/11 we have seen significant changes in the threats we face and the level of preparedness we need to achieve.

In just a short time span, we've seen a wave of disasters around the world with significant Public Health consequences, including anthrax attacks, SARS, tsunamis, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Madrid and London bombings, and now avian flu and the potential for a pandemic flu.

All these events have focused a spotlight on the nation's Public Health infrastructure and its ability to manage the health consequences of emergencies.

In order to meet these new challenges, we have forged relationships with our health care system partners, first responders, community based organizations and emergency managers, and are much better integrated into each others plans. The results of these partnerships can be seen in newly developed response capabilities addressing isolation and quarantine of infectious patients and mass dispensing of medications.

We have also developed a county-wide disease surveillance system in concert with such varied partners as hospitals, 911 dispatch centers, and schools.

But we can't afford to stop here.

I'd like to offer some specific examples of how we can improve coordination across all response disciplines, through better integration of planning, response and resources.

First, we need to improve the way that federal funding is provided for preparedness so that integration, not fragmentation, is supported.

Over the past four years, public health and hospitals in King County have become fully integrated into homeland security planning, strategy development, and exercises. The TOPOFF 2 exercise in 2003, and our bioterrorism planning efforts demonstrate close coordination across disciplines. We have established a Health Care Coalition with over 25 partner organizations that is developing new protocols for making critical, system-wide decisions, managing information and allocating resources. This will foster a unified command approach to health and medical response will occur countywide.

However, federal funding priorities for public health and hospitals have focused on specific response tasks, hazards and equipment. This fails to recognize that a systemic approach to health care preparedness is needed. Hospitals, public health, clinics, medical practices, and pharmacies all rely on each other during disasters. Planning, training, exercising and responding as an integrated system should be fully supported, if not required, by funding programs.

Just now, we are seeing this beginning to change. The latest guidance for hospital grants from Health Services and Resource Administration (HRSA) begins to take a systems approach to preparedness for hospitals. This should be incorporated throughout all federal grant programs.

Second, the ability to share real-time data with response partners needs to be expanded beyond voice capabilities, and beyond traditional first responders. We have over 7,000 medical professionals in King County that we rely upon as the eyes and ears of our health care system. As public health threats emerge, paramedics and hospital staff will be on the front lines responding to the threat. They are the ones who will likely detect the first signs for bioterrorism or potentially threatening diseases in our community.

Yet, there is no reliable system in place to share critical data between public health and medical professionals. The hardware and software necessary to track and communicate critical health data between public health and medical professionals is lacking across the country.

Public health response measures including isolation and quarantine of infected patients, and mass dispensing of medications require robust data tracking systems to monitor in real time the patients, their status, and the care they have received, wherever they may be located. These are critical infrastructure needs nationwide.

The capability to rapidly communicate and track data with health care providers is as important to us as it is for fire and police to communicate with their colleagues in the field. We believe the federal government can play a critical role in supporting this need.

Third, training resources must become a federal priority and must be appropriate for public health responders.

Federal grant requirements for public health have focused primarily on developing response plans; for hospitals the focus has been on acquiring equipment. Yet training personnel to implement an effective response is essential.

Training resources provided by the Department of Homeland Security aren't relevant to the needs or responsibilities of health system responders. Specialized training necessary to carry out plans for mass dispensing of antibiotics or isolating large numbers of infectious patients is not eligible under Homeland Security grants and not resourced under CDC or HRSA grants.

In addition, training resources should be more flexible and accommodate the needs of health care organizations. For many health care organizations, including our department, a large number of staff that will be relied upon for emergency response support generate patient revenues as part of their daily responsibilities.

Removing them from their regular work creates a double impact in cost—not only for the hours spent for training itself, but for the revenue lost in not seeing patients. Especially in the current state of health care economics, it makes it very difficult for health care organizations to train at the level that's needed.

Partnerships are the cornerstone of emergency response. We've seen the benefits when they have worked well, and witnessed the disastrous consequences when they haven't. Federal policies and practices can make a tremendous difference in determining whether the preparations of responding agencies and institutions will be in concert or at odds when the next disaster comes.

We appreciate your time and interest today, and we stand ready to work with you to further improve our collective preparedness efforts.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Loehr.

Mr. PUGH.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM "BILL" PUGH, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS/ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER, CITY OF TACOMA

Mr. PUGH. Good morning, Chairman Reichert, Ranking Member Pascrell. My name is Bill Pugh. I'm the Assistant City Manager and Public Works Director for the City of Tacoma. I have to confess, I'm a little different from the prior people who have spoken. I'm an engineer, a little bit of an anomaly in this crowd.

I'm here today on behalf of American Public Works Association's 27,000 members and nearly 2,000 public agency members. Public Works officials are first responders. We clear transportation routes, we assess government and primary public buildings, we work alongside police, fire and emergency service professionals to ensure that water is flowing through fire hoses, traffic lights are operating and traffic is moving, barricades are up, debris is removed, and the public is safe. We are often the last to leave the scene as we manage the lengthy cleanup and restoration of any disaster site.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you about emergency and planning preparedness and the indispensable role it plays in securing the safety of our communities. APWA has been and will continue to be an advocate for the development of emergency plans which coordinate emergency response across all levels of government in a way that saves lives, property and restores critical lifelines.

One of the most important components when planning for catastrophe is effective coordination between all of the response players. While the primary focus of such preparation has usually been centered on first-responders, it is crucial not to overlook the significant

preparedness roles that are played by all levels of government, and not just the local community in which the disaster is taking place.

For example, during Hurricane Katrina, there was a total breakdown in communications between the Federal, State and local governments. As a result, response plans were left unimplemented, and valuable time was lost trying to restore basic order to the disaster zone. This could easily have been avoided. Had many Gulf communities practiced their preparedness plans or coordinated with other levels of government before this hurricane season, hopefully a lot of this could have been avoided. However, even the best plans can fail when faced with an unexpected catastrophe. This is why the APWA feels it is even more important to communicate with the government at all levels before an emergency and become familiar with the preparedness plans of others. This way, we can identify where there are bottlenecks, weak spots, and other inconsistencies and then to work together to develop the most efficient recovery and response plan possible.

I'd like to give you two local examples of where I think communications have worked well and not so well. First, during the Katrina aftermath, local agencies within the Puget Sound area met to plan for the possible evacuees. All of those agencies attended, and the State agencies were conferenced in by phone. The groups soon discovered that they were working on very similar planning and preparedness issues, and agreed to meet together to strengthen and consolidate their efforts. Although invited, no one from FEMA attended either of these meetings.

Second, the military bases, McChord Air Force Base and Fort Lewis, have a major presence in the south Sound region. As such, they have the potential to offer significant resources in a major disaster. Pierce County local government has an excellent relationship with the command staff of both of these bases and has entered into a mutual aid agreement with McChord and Fort Lewis. If disaster strikes and the military forces are available, help from them will be also.

And at this point, I'd like to give credit to one of your panelists up here before, Steve Bailey. Through that partnership, they're able to develop that interagency agreement, which I think is the first one in the Nation.

Disasters are inherently local by their nature. They involve men and women providing critical services to preserve public health and protect life and public property. How well they do their job depends on how well we support them. How well we support them depends on how well we communicate. How well we communicate depends on the strength of the relationship. If the relationship falls apart at the top, the men and women providing the critical services will be impacted, and our citizens will suffer the consequences.

The role of the Federal Government is to assist local agencies when disaster strikes by providing the necessary support and resources to mitigate the disaster. We look forward to and rely on that help. The Federal Government, in turn, needs to rely on the local leadership to prioritize and deploy those resources. This can only be done well only if we work well together.

Now that we've developed our local, State and Federal emergency response plans, let's develop the relationships so they can be suc-

cessfully implemented. Get to know your local emergency management professional. Develop that relationship and that partnership. Do it soon before the next disaster strikes.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Pascrell, on behalf of the APWA, I'd like to thank you again for the opportunity to testify this morning. As has been mentioned a couple three times so far, Deputy Chief Jeff Jensen of the Tacoma Fire Department, who is with me is also one of our critical partners in Pierce County.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Pugh.

Mr. SERRA.

STATEMENT OF ROGER C. SERRA, DIRECTOR OF SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, SEATTLE CITY LIGHT

Mr. SERRA. Chairman Reichert and Mr. Pascrell, thank you for this opportunity to share my observations and comments regarding the efforts now being taken for the protection our critical infrastructures, specifically in the energy sector.

As introduced, I am the current Director of Security and Emergency Management for the Seattle City Light. Prior to this position, I was Director of Emergency Management for Snohomish County, and also have served as the police chief.

I also have the distinction to have served in the United States Army where my last assignment was as the Department of Defense liaison for Military Support for Civil Authorities for the entire FEMA Region 10. I have been involved in State, local and Federal activities, and I actively have served on the State committee of Homeland Security and chaired the government subcommittee that produced the Washington general analytical center and the regional intelligence centers that has become a model across the United States for intelligence issues.

I make reference to these career experiences basically to reflect that my diverse career has given me the rare opportunity to approach emergency management from different perspectives that clearly illustrate the interdependency of all the disciplines to plan collaboratively.

Seattle City Light, a department of the City of Seattle, is one of the Nation's largest municipally-owned utilities in terms of the number of customers it serves. Seattle City Light has a service area of 131 square miles and serves more than 340,000 customers and a population exceeding 680,000.

Seattle City Light provides the primary power for the city and the government offices and operations. Its criticality for the region relies on electricity to maintain continuity of government functions and the syntax with the major corporations located in the Greater Puget Sound cannot be overstated. Much of our efforts to date have been to install security enhancement features and reevaluation of accessibility to the public that previously were accessible but now are restricted.

Regional collaboration with the other public utilities in the area is imperative and one which has been cited as a best practice initiative in managing emergencies by the American Public Power Association study of how leading companies have implemented effec-

tive and comprehensive emergency planning. This was all self initiated without the funding from the Federal Government.

Also cited in the best practices initiative was that the excellent relations shift in former regionally liaison established in the northwest utilities are the foundation for successful emergency response and provide valuable insight for other utilities to emulate. The utilities rely on cooperation among multiple functions to handle emergencies and communicate with all involved parties.

Critical infrastructure protection is listed as one of the Department of Homeland Security's national priorities, and as such it deserves priority for appropriate funding, to design, improve and enhance the physical security information technology and communication systems. Unfortunately, critical infrastructure does not have the same attention as first responders would get when it comes to the funding mechanism.

Programs such as the Buffer Zone Protection Planning have been beneficial but one that still needs Federal emphasis that provides assistance for conducting effective risk and vulnerability assessments and funds to implement the recommendations made in the assessments. Energy generation facilities such as dams, power lines, substations are highly visible facilities that have great exposure to threats of attack. Partnering with law enforcement measures employed by—employed in the Conservation of Environmental Design Program, CEDP, are now being utilized and implemented in how to protect our own facilities. Mutual cooperation among law enforcement agencies at the local, county, State and Federal levels is crucial for the protection of critical infrastructure such as Seattle City Light boundary dam located in Pend Oreille County, which is contiguous with the Canadian border. This underscores the need for interoperable communications among law enforcement as well as those people who have to protect our critical infrastructures. There is now a greater focus for hiring dedicated and professional security staff to handle the responsibilities of security and emergency management in the power industry that previously were defined as additional duties to individuals in the organization with excellent operational knowledge but limited security experience. This professionalism is a reflection of the industry's commitment to making sure that things are done properly and consistently with industry standards. Emphasis for continuity of population planning is necessary to ensuring that essential functions are performed and priorities established for the restoration of power to those sectors considered vital to the protection of life and property.

The power industry also recognizes that it must do a better job of communicating to other infrastructure providers when service will be restored and utilize technology that provides the capability to alert its employees and customers during a disaster. Equally important is the need to develop an effective early warning system that partners with law enforcement, with public and private enterprises, and ensuring that appropriate intelligence is shared on a timely basis.

National organizations such as the North American Electric Reliability Council, the large public council, and the Western Electric Coordinating Council serve to network the growing number of utility security emergency management practitioners.

Issues for your consideration is provide directly funds for agencies operating critical infrastructures for the purpose of conducting risk and vulnerability assessment, development of operations plans, conducting exercises and for the purchase and installation of voice and data communication systems, state of the art IT systems and equipment necessary to enhance physical security; expand the list of facilities to qualify for Buffer Zone Protection planning and increase the amount of implementing effective protective systems.

The National Infrastructure Database is out of date; establish regional Department of Homeland Security offices that improve coordination and interaction with its regional partners.

The opportunity to share our concerns, strengths and initiatives with your committee is appreciated, and I'm prepared to answer any questions you may have regarding that subject.

[The statement of Mr. Serra follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROGER SERRA

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Committee on Homeland Security?s Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Science and Technology, thank you for this opportunity to share my observations and comments regarding the efforts now being taken in the protection of our critical infrastructures—specifically in the energy sector.

My name is Roger Serra. I am the Director of Security and Emergency Management for the Seattle City Light. Prior to this position I was the Director of the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management and before that I was the Chief of Police for the University of Washington. It is also my distinct honor to have served in the United States Army where I retired as a Colonel with my last assignment as the Principal Regional Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer for FEMA Region X serving as the DOD Liaison for Military Support to Civil Authorities. I have been involved at the local, state and federal level in the areas of emergency management and homeland security. I served on the State's Committee on Homeland Security representing local emergency managers and chaired the committee?s Intelligence Sub-committee where we developed the concept of the Washington State Joint Analytical Joint Center and the Regional Intelligence Centers. It was also my privilege to serve as the President of the Washington State Emergency Management Association.

Seattle City Light, a department of the City of Seattle, is one of the nation's largest municipally owned utilities in terms of the number of customers served. Seattle City Light has a service area of 131.3 square miles and serves more than 345,000 customers and a population exceeding 680,000. Seattle City Light provides the primary power for the cities and county's governmental offices and operations. It's criticality to the region's reliance on electricity to maintain continuity of governmental functions and its impact to the major corporations located in the Greater Puget Sound Area cannot be overstated. Regional collaboration with the other public utilities in the area is imperative and one which has been cited as a **Best Practice Initiative in Managing Emergencies** by the American Public Power Association study of how leading companies have implemented effective and comprehensive emergency planning.

Also cited in the Best Practices Initiative was that the excellent relationships and formal regional liaisons established in the Northwest utilities are the foundation for successful emergency response and provide valuable insights for other utilities to emulate. Utilities rely on cooperation among multiple functions to handle emergencies and communicate with all involved parties.

Critical Infrastructure Protection is listed as one of the DHS National Priorities and as such deserves priority for appropriate funding designed to improve and enhance its physical, information technology and communications systems. Programs such as the Buffer Zone Protection Planning have been beneficial, but one that still needs federal emphasis that provides assistance for conducting effective risks and vulnerability assessments and funds to implement the recommendations made in the assessments. Energy generation facilities such as dams, power-lines and substations are highly visible facilities that have greater exposure to threats and attacks. Mitigation efforts such as utilizing the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) measures to reduce vulnerabilities is one initiative, when

applied, has proven effective. Mutual cooperation among law enforcement agencies at the local, county, state and federal levels is crucial for the protection of critical infrastructure such as the Seattle City Light Boundary Dam located in Pend Oreille County and the Canadian border.

There is now a greater focus for hiring dedicated staff to handle the responsibilities of security and emergency management in the power industry that previously were assigned as "additional duties" to non-qualified individuals in the organization. This professionalism is a reflection of the industry's commitment to making sure that things are done properly and consistent with industry standards.

Emphasis for Continuity of Operations planning is necessary in ensuring that essential functions are performed and priorities established for the restoration of power to those sectors considered vital to the protection of life and property. The power industry also recognizes that it must do a better job of communicating to other infrastructure providers when service will be restored and utilize technology that provides the capability to alert its employees and customers during a disaster. Equally important is the need to develop an effective Threat Early Warning System (TEW) that partners law enforcement with both public and private in ensuring that appropriate intelligence is shared on a timely basis.

National organizations such as the Large Public Power Council (LPPC) and the Western Electric Coordinating Council (WECC) serve to network the growing number of utility security and emergency management practitioners.

Issues for your consideration:

Provide direct grant funds for agencies operating critical infrastructures for the purpose of conducting risk and vulnerability assessments, development of Continuity of Operations Plans, conducting exercise and for the purchase and installation of voice/data communications systems, state of the arts Information Technology systems and equipment necessary to enhance physical security.

Expand list of facilities to qualify for Buffer Zone Protection planning and increase amounts for implementing effective protective systems.Establish Regional DHS offices to improve coordination and interaction with regional partners.

The opportunity to share our concerns, strengths and initiatives with your committee is appreciated. I am prepared to answer any questions you may have regarding my roles and responsibilities.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Serra. I have a few questions, and then I'll move to Mr. Pascrell. He'll have several questions also.

Mr. Serra, are there critical infrastructure services of power, water, transportation, are they integrated into the UASI preparation plan?

Mr. SERRA. They are a component in the overall discussion on how the funds will be distributed. There is a group that meets to decide how those things are going to be.

There is a preference for critical infrastructure. Unfortunately, we only have one representative that represents all the utilities in the UASI program, and that process is something that I'm just now beginning to better understand having just come to Seattle recently. But there is a role, and there is a position that we have in the overall discussion. And certainly with the new grant guidelines for the fiscal year 06 grants for investment justification, critical infrastructure was one of the areas that rose to the top as one that required some immediate attention.

Mr. REICHERT. So it may play a greater role?

Mr. SERRA. We are hoping it will play a greater role in this area.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Pugh, is there an evacuation plan for the City of Tacoma?

Mr. PUGH. Yes, there is. As to exactly what it is, I don't know. I'd have to yield to Chief Jensen.

Mr. REICHERT. The next question was, does the Department of Public Works have a part in that plan?

Mr. PUGH. We have had a part in that plan. And I'll tell you frankly, we haven't in the recent years had the involvement that we need to. And I don't think that's through any fault of really the fire department or anybody else. I think that involvement becomes with leadership from the top. There hasn't been leadership, at least from a management standpoint, within the City of Tacoma. And I recognize strongly that we need to get together and do our job better.

Mr. REICHERT. Any discussions taking place hopefully includes Public Works.

Mr. PUGH. Yes. I think the partnership we've had over the last two or three years with Public Works and both police and fire has been stronger than it's probably been in the last fifteen.

Mr. REICHERT. So are there training opportunities and exercises for Public Works people to participate in in conjunction with the fire department and police department?

Mr. PUGH. Yes, totally.

Mr. REICHERT. So that's happened?

Mr. PUGH. Yes, it has.

Mr. REICHERT. What about the City of Seattle?

Mr. VICKERY. The Public Works is integrated into our Disaster Response Plans. In fact, we provided the equipment and training for all public employees and a select group of Public Works employees who would be engaged in the response. Public Works also includes the Department of Transportation. We can't move people or materials. You can get a front-end loader and push the street open, but how do you control the traffic. There's a very close line between law enforcement and the Department of Transportation. They are integrated into our plans.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Loehr, in the event of a pandemic, what in King County leads the way in that? Who is your primary Federal partner?

Mr. LOEHR. That's an excellent question. The health and medical response, as I mentioned, public health, particularly the local health officer, would direct the health and medical response. But we are changing significantly how we look at our health system and incorporating, as I mentioned, more of a unified command approach. The reason is hospitals simply don't have the capacity to operate facility by facility. Public health simply doesn't have the resources to operate independent and in competition with other health care entities. Again, this is revolutionary in the country. We are really operating as a single organism, a single entity, with a single person in charge, if necessary. And there are some tough decisions that we need to make, changing standards of care. People aren't going to recognize the health care system during a pandemic. They really won't. Making the decision to cancel elective surgery, it will be on the shoulders of the hospital CEO. There's going to be a health officer saying in every hospital, we're going to a red plan, or whatever you want to call it. Now is the time to implement it. So we feel very good at how our health care coalition is pulling hospital partners together.

When it comes to other consequences in a pandemic, we will become a new government and pull society together. We do have a regional disaster plan in King County which even given that is a

home rule state and a home rule county, somebody has to be in charge. But we recognize that we're going to have to make decisions in a cooperative manner, we're going to have to share some resources. Through our regional staffing plan, these organizations are going to have to work together.

But when it comes to coordinating the Federal partners, I don't believe we have one for planning for a pandemic response. It has not been demonstrated to me at all that there is any strategy prepared at the Federal level for public health, and I certainly haven't seen any indication of Federal support for health and emergency management that I would consider reasonable or reliable.

Mr. REICHERT. Are you familiar with the position of the chief medical officer that has been implemented?

Mr. LOEHR. I have heard that that has occurred, and I'm curious as to how that person relates to other Federal health organizations, the CDC.

Mr. REICHERT. Hopefully we'll get that together.

Mr. LOEHR. Thank you.

Mr. REICHERT. One of the things that this Subcommittee will be focused on here in the future, once we've at least attempted to solve the interoperatively issue, is the health care preparedness issue. We understand, at least in our initial investigative questioning, that there is a concern—big concern about a service capacity. Can you explain that?

Mr. LOEHR. Yes, I can. The ability for any health organization to essentially create additional capacity, whether it's space or personnel, doesn't exist in this country. The health care system is a for-profit industry. Just like any other business, the idea is cost. And costs have been cut so drastically that there simply is no extra left in the system where we have an emergency. For example, for half of the hospitals in this country today, the situation is very similar to what was described after 9/11. They are operated overcapacity. You're seeing medicine performed in the hallways. And that exists in King County, and it exists in half of the hospitals in the country. There is no extra capacity.

So the health care system are another issue that we certainly can't solve through any Federal preparedness grant. But with the cards we've been dealt, how do we use the system that we have most efficiently. It is not by funding specific response capabilities or specific pieces of equipment for hospitals; it's by looking at this system, as underresourced as it is, and overcapacity as a single entity where we can move resources around, at least within our own jurisdiction. And that has not happened in four years. It is beginning to happen, but a certain capacity is going to have to happen. We're talking about adding hospital beds. It's not going to be in the UASI hospitals; it's going to be a building like this where we're going to need cots, we're going to need medical supplies. We're going to have to use our own staffing. We're going to have to find our own facilities.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Loehr. Chief Vickery, in tailoring responses to this specific region, what recommendations do you have to provide for early warning to the public?

Mr. VICKERY. I think it starts with an ability to share information with the response community, particularly in a terrorist event.

I think what Pierce County has done with the sheriff down there with terrorism early warning center gives you an ability to scrub the material.

As a firefighter, I do not need to know the ethnicity or the name of a perpetrator. I do need to know the threat. And the ability of a terrorism center to share that information with people who may not have a security clearance or who don't have the need to know—I hate to use that word—is very important. Then that information needs to be transmitted to the public in a way that doesn't create panic. And I don't think we're there yet.

The fact that we're a red in the Nation doesn't really mean much to me. I love the color red on the planet right now. I love the color red. I'm all for it, but it doesn't mean much; what degree, what shade of red. Well, I think there's a necessity to change the alert system where it can be localized. And certainly even within our own region, the threat that you would have in Tacoma may not be at the same level as it is in Seattle based upon your population density and the nature of the threat. A threat that is the release of a substance, what's the weather, what are the weather conditions, what's the staffing. So we do not allow the local community the ability to just assimilate that information. It needs to be a graded threat system rather than red, yellow, green.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you very much, and thank you for your forthright answers so far. And Chief, thank you for pointing out the lack of Federal funding, the COPS Interoperatively Program. That would be eliminated under the present budget or present proposed as redisposed, and we'll see what happens when we get going here.

Chief Vickery, you know, we now have a FEMA Director. He's no longer active. He came up through the fire ranks, as you well know, the first fireman, first fire responder. That's the first, second or third level management in the entire Homeland Security. So we know the nature of the problem. We know the nature of the problem.

And what we're trying to do is put some beef into the words. We need this to be a bottom-up situation. I think that is important, and you will feel better about each of your tasks, I think, if we do implement that.

There have been suggestions that, in looking at FEMA—and as I said before, simply not rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, there will be some real change.

Of the following, I would like to know what you think of each of these suggestions about FEMA in your experience. We need to have a fully-staffed FEMA within the Department of Homeland Security. Do you agree with that?

Mr. VICKERY. Professionally staffed.

Mr. PASCRELL. Do we have a fully-staffed FEMA right now?

Mr. VICKERY. To the best of my knowledge, no. They're still at somewhere 30 percent the positions have not been filled.

Mr. PASCRELL. That's correct. Second, preparedness and response be recombined at FEMA, we've talked about that in the first panel. I would probably think they would agree with that. Do you?

Mr. VICKERY. When you say "recombine," sir—

Mr. PASCRELL. Right now they're two separate divisions. Preparedness and response are no longer together in FEMA.

Mr. VICKERY. They need to be integrated. We can't prepare and respond separately.

Mr. PASCRELL. We now have an experienced emergency person at the top which we didn't have before. That's a good sign, correct?

Mr. VICKERY. It is, sir.

Mr. PASCRELL. And the Director of FEMA has direct contact with the President during incidents of national significance. Wouldn't you agree?

Mr. VICKERY. Absolutely.

Mr. PASCRELL. Here's my question. Do you think that these steps would take FEMA in the right direction that you want to go?

Mr. VICKERY. The answer is yes. And my empathy and support is of Chief Paulison for this reason: He stepped into a situation where the city is already half on fire. So I'm glad you appointed me fire chief of a city while it's burning.

Mr. PASCRELL. He's got to deal with the hand that he's dealt. He's a big enough person to do it. I am confident that he will do it. But just enough—the Director has to have direct access to the President of the United States. We cannot have to go through the Department of Homeland Security Secretary, Mr. Chertoff. In fact, in the testimony that came out, he said why bother, you know, what the heck is going down from?

And Mr. Loehr, am I pronouncing that correctly?

Mr. LOEHR. Loehr.

Mr. PASCRELL. Loehr, I'm sorry. Do you sense urgency in any of the things—on a Federal level on any of the things that you brought up—

Mr. LOEHR. Well—

Mr. PASCRELL. —on the Federal—in the Federal Government.

Mr. LOEHR. I think there is urgency in the sense of certain programs that have been initiated for control for preparedness. There's an urgency in getting funding out and imposing requirements on local health departments to accomplish certain risks. There has been no urgency in actually developing the strategic approach, and I think one of the glaring deficiencies that I would see from the absence of a strategy is pandemic flu. Still no local jurisdiction in this country has received any funding for that yet. We're waiting for that. It's now on our doorstep, and we've been preparing for over two years.

Mr. PASCRELL. As you watch the spread of avian flu, if we chronicled this over the last two or three years, something is happening out there. Is it not?

Mr. LOEHR. Yeah. Half the world is now infected with avian flu. And it's estimated that within the next six months, it will come from Alaska, Canada into North America. And we're still waiting as a country to have some resources to fight that.

Mr. PASCRELL. You're waiting for the signal.

Mr. LOEHR. Right.

Mr. PASCRELL. Are the public hospitals in this county able to communicate with each other during emergencies?

Mr. LOEHR. Yes. I'm actually very happy to say we've been integrated with our response partners, police and fire, for a long time.

They're experts when it comes to this type of communication. We've been integrated into their radio system. We have backup radio systems. We have an interactive website for sharing information about possible bed capacities; very crude, but it is effective.

Mr. PASCRELL. You talked about that there is such an environment when that happens. You talked about where the beds would be and how the hospitals might operate.

Have you reached out to the HMOs, for instance, as to what their role would be in such an emergency situation?

Mr. LOEHR. Great question; absolutely. As part of the Health Care Coalition, we realized it's not just hospitals. There's a couple jurisdictions in the county that have looked at the hospitals as a single unit that we share our resources with. We have to go way beyond that. The health plans, large medical practices, they're got physicians, they've got nurses. And with the staffing shortage of 100,000 nurses in this country right now, we can't afford not to use everybody we can get our hands on. So they are directly part of our health care coalition just to make sure we prioritize our resources whether it's where do we find beds to where do we find staff.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Serra, we've had many discussions in Washington about various infrastructures, let's say. How do you protect the chemical industry? New Jersey's big problem is a stretch along the New Jersey Turnpike that encompasses a tremendous part of the chemical industry in this country.

The question is, who has that responsibility? Should we impose on the chemical companies, or should the Federal Government take charge? Is there a sense of urgency about that issue? My question to you is, how do you protect the utilities in your mind, and are we going in the right direction?

Mr. SERRA. I think there is a direction that we're going. I think it's a slow process. One of the things that I had evaluated in the last few years is that we're unable to determine what type of security enhancements need to be done or response before—until such time as we can do a risk and vulnerability assessment. To me the risk and vulnerability assessment is the first step in doing what we need to do in the future. There is no fund or a limited amount of funding, especially for—well, in the public sector to be able to conduct the assessments needed to do that and—

Mr. PASCRELL. Are you telling us that—we're waiting here, we're in the waiting room. You're not telling us that the utilities themselves have put a plan together to protect the infrastructure within that particular utility?

Mr. SERRA. No. I'm just saying—

Mr. PASCRELL. You're not saying that?

Mr. SERRA. No. We are doing—

Mr. PASCRELL. What are you saying?

Mr. SERRA. We are continuing to do the steps that we need to do in order to protect our present infrastructure.

Mr. PASCRELL. What does that mean? What are you doing? I want to ask you a specific question. Have you hired more people to protect the infrastructure of the utilities which provides energy, electricity, to folks in this area?

Mr. SERRA. The answer to that is no, we have not done that.

Mr. PASCRELL. How do you protect the industry then?

Mr. SERRA. The way we're doing it right now is to contract security to come in and do the security functions for those critical infrastructures.

Mr. PASCRELL. Would you repeat that, please?

Mr. SERRA. Contracting with private security firms to—

Mr. PASCRELL. Who are these private security firms?

Mr. SERRA. These are private security firms that are hired in the public and private sector that are private security agencies, not full-time—

Mr. PASCRELL. You're still not answering me, because as you saw with the airline industry, when they did it before 9/11, they hired rent-a-cops. It didn't work out, besides a lot of other things, and that's one of the reasons why they're being sued by some of the victims' families of 9/11. And we certainly wouldn't want that to happen in the energy area, would we?

Mr. SERRA. I share exactly your feelings. Coming into this field is that, you know, I think we need to have some full-time individuals that are specifically charged with the security of the critical infrastructures. As I mentioned in my comments is that, it's just recently that critical facilities like energy have begun to hire full-time security and emergency managers that understand what they're supposed to do. This is a function that had always been an additional duty for other people within the industry, and so it didn't have a priority that it probably should have had.

I don't disagree with you that there should be full-time employees dedicated to the protection of those critical infrastructures, not hiring it out to other people to take care of those infrastructures.

Mr. PASCRELL. What I'm hearing from you, Mr. Serra, with all due respect is what I get from the chemical industry, and it is not acceptable. The public has a right to know that the very resources that they depend on day in and day out are, to the best of everybody's ability, realizing there's no such thing as a seamless, perfect system—you're certainly not going to get it from Washington—that is not acceptable to me. I can only speak for myself. It's like we're waiting for something to happen. What is the industry doing on its own to try to make it happen so that you can then, if you take it at least through some point, and you look at the Federal Government to assist you to complete the activity, that's one thing. I don't hear that. Nor do I hear a sense of urgency on your part.

Energy is critical. I don't have to tell you; you can tell me. I don't feel that we have that sense of energy with regard to the utilities of this country.

I might add, Mr. Chairman, I don't think it's any different here than it is throughout the United States of American. These are major, major activities that people depend upon, that the police will depend upon, and fire will depend upon. And if those activities are not able to sustain themselves, there is something wrong. You can't expect the sheriff's department to hire more people so that they can look after that utility, unless we give them more resources to do that. These things aren't going to happen, my friend, like they just fall out of the sky. It doesn't work that way. It does not work that way.

So here we're talking about two major areas—I can talk to you about them—two major areas. I brought the subject of chemical industry up—and the utilities, energy; that we need to take a very serious look at yesterday in order to protect them, God forbid, if there is a terrorist attack or some kind of natural calamity.

I have no further questions or comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Pascrell. Just a follow-up, Mr. Serra. The infrastructure organizations, are they looking at technology in assisting them in protecting our infrastructures?

Mr. SERRA. I think you have to have a balance of the technology with which to protect the facilities and actual individuals to actively be doing the job they're required to do. Perhaps the urgency has not been there because it has not been a priority for the industry to do that as far as funding available to hire these individuals, but I do have the sense that it is coming around. I think through the networking among the professionals that are now in place is that there is a push to have that kind of resource by the utilities.

Mr. REICHERT. Do the contracts also with the local law enforcement hire sheriff departments and/or police officers in addition to the security personnel?

Mr. SERRA. In certain areas like in the remote areas where we have Skagit and the boundary, we have contracts with the sheriff's department. But unfortunately that results in just one deputy that is then hired to provide 24/7.

Mr. REICHERT. I think the point that Mr. Pascrell was trying to make, is there an effort by the community you represent to hire dedicated staff; and if there is an effort to hire dedicated staff, are you finding difficulty in finding that staff to do the job?

Mr. PASCRELL. There is an effort to do exactly that, is to hire these people full-time. There's a matter of convincing upper management that this is really important to put that much money aside to say we need to have on-staff security.

Mr. REICHERT. When you say there's an effort, is that from the bottom up?

Mr. PASCRELL. It is from the bottom up. And perhaps much of that is just an educational process with regards to the importance of having security in place.

Mr. REICHERT. Is there a place that you represented on UWAGA?

Mr. PASCRELL. I am still involved with UWAGA, but not in the role that I used to play.

Mr. REICHERT. So that critical intelligence information as far as risk of threat assessment gets to the community it represents, there is an understanding by the people in the upper echelon that there is a need for security, tighter, security?

Mr. PASCRELL. Right. And unfortunately, with regards to the intelligence sector and the UWAGA and the regional intelligence group is we have not taken the next step in how we transmit or share the information that is gathered with the intelligence groups or other agencies that are not law enforcement.

Mr. PASCRELL. I want to add something here.

You say in your testimony—Mr. Serra, you said the critical infrastructure protection is listed as one of DHS's national priorities, and as such deserves priority for appropriate funding designed to

improve and enhance its physical information technology and communication system. Programs such as the Buffer Zone Protection Plan have been beneficial but one that still needs Federal emphasis.

Let me tell you how I read it. I wouldn't read the rest. You can read the rest of it. This is how I read it. Okay? What you're waiting for in my estimation is a Federal bailout. You haven't started the process really, because what can be said about energy in most of the States of the union can be said about water and the protection of our water supply. I don't have to tell you how critical water is in any time of a tough situation or a catastrophic situation, be it manmade, terrorism, or be it nature. That's not acceptable to me. I'm sorry.

So what I would do is go back and tell your superiors that the committee or certain members of the committee don't find it acceptable that you're waiting for the government to protect your infrastructure. You haven't really started down the path. And we could say this across the United States of America, Mr. Chairman. I mean this is a partnership, or it isn't a partnership. And if you're waiting for the Federal Government to come forward, because there's parts of the Federal Government that do not see the urgency either; and if they do, don't want to come up with the money. And if they do want to come up with the money and place other priorities in the path of coming up with that money, we are not going to do this. We are not going to accomplish it. Let's not fool the American people either. Let's not fool them. They have been fooled enough.

So private industries in priority areas—water is pretty much of a priority. Energy is another priority. So you're waiting.

The airlines took that same position. And if they had taken some real precautions, those murderers would have never been able to do what they did on 9/11. That's my contention. We blame the CIA and the AIC and the FBI and the IBF. That's all baloney. We have a mixed audience. And the point of the matter—

Mr. REICHERT. And we're not in New Jersey.

Mr. PASCRELL. And we're not in New Jersey, that's true. But you understand what I'm saying?

Mr. PASCRELL. Yes, sir, I do.

Mr. PASCRELL. Don't take anything I'm saying personally. I have heard it before. I just wanted you to know that I heard it. I was listening.

Mr. SERRA. I appreciate that, sir.

Mr. REICHERT. Gentlemen, I want to follow up on the theme that Mr. Pascrell has been asking questions in follow-up, and that's really on the priorities and the frustrated part of funding and the Federal Government.

My background is in King County government as a police officer and as sheriff. And if you experience some frustration in the Federal government's inability to recognize partnerships, there's a couple examples I could give where the Federal Government has come to the sheriff's office and said, we're from the Federal Government, and we're here to help. And the first thing everybody says is run for cover.

And in this post-September 11th world that we live in, we see the same sort of offer. And I think that there has been a lot of improvement, but there are those areas where we see some gaps or some inability to comprehend and understand really what happens when we take the position of saying, we want you to help us, we're not going to help you. That's frustrating experience with your local law enforcement, your local firefighters, local people trying to get the job done.

So I want to go to the sheriff and ask a question about the COPS funding and the Department of Homeland Security grant funding, because I know that, my first year in Congress, last year, I got into a little battle with the cardinals of the party that I represent over the COPS funding process. And when you give a $600 million increase to a Federal agency, and then you cut $80 million from a local effort, that's not a partnership. And that was the point I tried to make.

So my question to you, Sheriff, is, as you've been operating now under this umbrella of the Department of Homeland Security and the grant process and seeing the COPS grants slowly dwindle, have you seen the—has the Homeland Security grant really been a help to you over what COPS used to be, or is there a balance there, or are you on the negative side?

MR. PASTOR: Two things. There's been no question that there has been a benefit, so one would appear to be inordinately ungrateful if one were to suggest that there hasn't been a benefit. There has been a benefit. So shading it all one way is just not accurate. That's number one.

Number two, there has also been frustration that's coming forth, as we have discussed before, with the issue that we are a people of intensive enterprise. No matter how much technology you adopt, ultimately there are people who need to carry out things. You can put in surveillance technology, but there has to be a person to respond to it. There has to be a person to react to it. Only human beings, properly trained, properly deployed, can prevent a terrorist attack. That was my gas mask analogy; yes, you can put on a gas mask afterwards, but a man or woman, whether they have this kind of badge or a fire badge, whether they're involved in public health or other kinds of responder roles, are the people who are going to be able to get ahead of the curve to do this.

The issue of resources relates to what I said about sacrifice. Citizenship involves sacrifice. It becomes a focus like a laser in time of war; and we are at war. And for some reason we don't dig inside ourselves and say at war we must sacrifice. We treat citizenship as if it is consumerism, as if we can gather as many goodies to ourselves as possible. Citizenship isn't about that. It's about obligation, it's about duty, it's about something bigger than that.

And so when we ask people with badges on and a military uniform on to sacrifice, we also want to ask citizens to sacrifice. We want Federal Government leaders and local government leaders to lead citizens toward the path of sacrifice in order to preserve the country, preserve our freedoms, preserve our liberties.

Mr. REICHERT. You should run for Congress. Mr. Pascrell, do you have any additional comment?

Mr. PASCRELL. No, thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank the panel. Great job.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, panel. And thank all of you for being here today. It's been a valuable experience, I think, for all of us. Members of the committee may have some additional questions for the witnesses, and we will ask that you respond to those in writing. The hearing record will be open for ten days without objection.

Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]