

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Ridge:

We are writing to protest the Department's decision not to renew for Fiscal Year 2005 the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant that New Haven, Connecticut received last year to support its homeland security efforts.

The New Haven region, by virtue of its location and the commerce and industry it supports, is faced with substantial homeland security demands. Among other things, the New Haven area encompasses a large harbor and port facility – it is the second largest port in New England – and is a storehouse for the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Greater New Haven, a region of over 600,000 itself, is, moreover, part of the most populous Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area in the nation. Located strategically along I- 95, New Haven's ground transportation facilities provide vital access to New York and the coastal regions further north, as well as to the interior of New England. The \$9.6 million UASI grant that New Haven received in Fiscal Year 2004 will be used to improve communications interoperability for first responders and provide them with additional equipment; protect critical infrastructure; and engage in recovery planning. Ending this funding and leaving these needs incompletely addressed has significant regional implications.

The decision not to renew New Haven's UASI grant raises a number of broader concerns as well about the process by which the recipients of UASI grants are selected. Your staff has offered to arrange a briefing to provide greater detail about this process; we appreciate this offer and our staffs will contact yours to arrange it. In preparation, we request that you promptly provide us with the following information.

(1) Please describe the procedures by which the current methodology for selecting UASI grantees was arrived at. In your response, please include the following information:

- (a) Which individual or individuals have primary responsibility within DHS for developing the methodology by which UASI grantees are selected and the grant amounts determined? By whom was the current methodology approved? Please identify individuals by both name and title.
- (b) What procedures were and are used to verify that the factors employed as part of the methodology, taken together, in fact accurately measure the level of risk, threat and consequence faced by a given area? What evidence does DHS have that the methodology in fact accurately predicts threat, risk and consequence.

- (c) How was the total number of cities to receive UASI grants – 50 this year – determined and why? Who makes the final determination as to which cities will receive UASI grants and in what amounts?

(2) Please explain why New Haven, which was deemed to warrant UASI assistance in FY2004 is no longer deemed to warrant such a grant in FY2005. Has DHS concluded that the likely threats, risks or consequences from terrorism faced by the New Haven region decreased in the past year?

(3) Information provided by your staff suggests that a population cut-off may have been imposed this year and that no urban area with less than 225,000 people within the city limits was eligible to receive a UASI grant. Is this correct?

- (a) If a population cut-off was imposed this year, why was this decision made? Was there a population cut-off in FY2004? If so, what was the cut-off in FY2004? If not, how was population factored in the FY2004 selection of UASI recipients? Please describe how and why any decision was made to give different weight to population in FY2005 than had been done in FY2004.
- (b) Why was the decision made to measure population solely within city limits rather than look at metropolitan areas or rely on other patterns of population distribution? Such an approach systematically disadvantages areas of the country such as New England that are made up of numerous contiguous smaller cities and towns. Connecticut, for example, has one of the highest population densities of any state, but no single legal entity has a particularly large population – this does not mean that there are nonetheless not a lot of people in a relatively small area. Rather than relying on arbitrary (and sometimes centuries-old) political boundaries, why does DHS not focus other measures to determine how to define an “urban area” and how to determine many people are likely to truly be at risk? How do you reconcile the measurement of population solely within city limits with DHS’s focus on regional cooperation and mutual aid?
- (c) For cities that did not meet the apparent population cut-off for UASI grants, did DHS staff perform any analysis of where those cities would have ranked using the remaining factors in the UASI methodology? If such an analysis was performed, did any of those cities face significant risk, threats or consequences from terrorism apart from their relatively lower population? Is there any situation where a city that did not meet the population threshold could nonetheless be deemed to face significant enough risks that it would be eligible for UASI funding.

As you know, we have consistently advocated for substantially greater funding to be devoted to homeland security and, in particular, to assistance for our nation’s first responders, who serve as the front lines in our war against terror. Thus, we were

dismayed when the President proposed, and Congress enacted, less funding overall for homeland security grants to first responders in FY2005 than had been provided in FY2004. As a result, Connecticut, like every other state in the country, will receive less in State Homeland Security Grant Program funds in FY2005 than it did last year. This, coupled with the decision not to renew the UASI grant for New Haven, will adversely affect Connecticut's ability to meet its vital homeland security demands.

We look forward to receiving additional information from you on this urgent matter. Should you believe that your response to this letter will require the disclosure of classified information, please let us know as soon as possible so that we may determine whether alternate arrangements for production are appropriate.

Sincerely,

Joseph I. Lieberman

Christopher Dodd