



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
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**“A More Efficient and Effective
Government: Examining Efforts to Address
Law Enforcement, Infrastructure and
Economic Development in the Bakken”**

Statement for Field Hearing of the
Subcommittee on the Efficiency and Effectiveness
of Federal Programs and the Federal Workforce
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

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Chairman Tester and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) recently released *National Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy (Strategy)* and ONDCP's work to coordinate the efforts of Federal, state, local, and tribal resources to address emerging drug threats in the Bakken oil field region.

I am Michael Gottlieb, the National Director of ONDCP's High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program. The HIDTA Program provides assistance to Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to facilitate coordination and cooperation to combat drug-related safety and health consequences in areas determined to be critical drug-trafficking regions of the United States. Thus, as part of our activities we regularly interact with the law enforcement entities working to halt illicit drug use in the Bakken region. There are 28 regional HIDTAs, which include approximately 16 percent of all counties in the United States and 60 percent of the U.S. population.

The *National Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy* is the Administration's plan for substantially reducing the flow of illicit drugs and drug proceeds along our Nation's Northern border. It provides an overview of current counternarcotics efforts in the region and identifies strategic objectives and specific actions that will enable us to achieve our goal. The 2014 *Strategy* acknowledges the inherent challenges in curtailing illicit drug trafficking across the Northern border. Among them are the vastness of the border itself, which extends more than 5,000 miles, as well as the ever-evolving illegal drug production and trafficking trends that confront law enforcement officers.

One such challenge is the emergence of drug trafficking and related crime resulting from the development of the Bakken oil fields of northeastern Montana, northwestern North Dakota, and southern Saskatchewan. In recognition of this emerging threat, the 2014 *Strategy* includes a section dedicated to drug trafficking in the Bakken region and our efforts to address this threat. To highlight the challenges present in the Bakken region, we elected to announce the release of the *Strategy* in Minot, North Dakota, on August 19th.

The 2014 *Strategy* updates and expands upon the Administration's first *National Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, which was released in 2012. Like its predecessor, the 2014 *Strategy* builds upon existing relationships, programs, and policies; seeks further opportunities to pursue national security by disrupting transnational criminal organizations; and improves information sharing, thereby enabling more efficient and effective use of resources to curb the flow of illicit drugs and drug proceeds across the Northern border.

Specifically, the *Strategy* lays out several strategic objectives central to our efforts. They include:

- Enhancing intelligence and information-sharing at the Northern border;
- Interdicting illicit drugs and drug money at and between the ports of entry along the Northern border, on land, in the air, and over water;
- Enhancing counterdrug efforts and cooperation with tribal governments along the Northern border; and
- Investigating and prosecuting dangerous criminal organizations operating along or exploiting the Northern border.

The 2014 *Strategy* contains more than 40 individual action items that will be implemented in the coming weeks and months. ONDCP will oversee this process, which is supported by our numerous Federal, state, local, and tribal partners as well as representatives of the HIDTA Program. The *Strategy* aligns with the Administration's foundational document, the *National*

Drug Control Strategy, as well as the *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy* and the forthcoming *National Caribbean Border Counternarcotics Strategy*.

As we work to substantially reduce drug trafficking and related crime along the Nation's Northern border, we are also engaged in efforts to address the emerging threat of drug trafficking in the Bakken oil field region.

For example, in 2013, ONDCP officially designated Williams County, North Dakota, as part of the HIDTA program. With this designation, \$70,000 in HIDTA funds were directed to Williams County to hire an additional Special Assistant United States Attorney. This position will provide support to the prosecution of organized crime and drug trafficking investigations and potential corruption cases.

The Administration also launched an interagency partnership "Project Safe Bakken" to coordinate law enforcement efforts in the region. Law enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Attorneys for Montana and North Dakota; the Attorneys General for Montana and North Dakota; the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS); the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation; and the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation, have joined together to combat a broad spectrum of potential activity, including drug trafficking organizations and criminal enterprises operating in the Bakken region and the surrounding communities.

In October 2013, Federal law enforcement officials from the Department of Justice (DOJ), DHS's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations

(ICE/HSI), and the Department of the Treasury held a summit in the Bakken region with state and local law enforcement agencies and addressed staffing allocation and increased collaboration on investigations; this has resulted in enhanced intelligence sharing and increased joint operations. Just last month, DEA held a two-week Basic Narcotics Investigators school in North Dakota, with an emphasis on training officers in the Bakken region.

In addition, \$3 million in grants has been allocated to strengthen law enforcement and aid victims of sexual assault. DOJ's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) released two grant solicitations that will provide victim assistance and improve criminal justice response. The first will expand services to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. Recipients under that solicitation are: Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, Poplar, Montana; First Nations Women's Alliance, Devils Lake, North Dakota; Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Helena, Montana; North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services, Bismarck, North Dakota; and Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation, New Town, North Dakota. The second will aid local and tribal criminal justice systems by designating a tribal Special Assistant United States Attorney for the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana and the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota, which will enable the prosecution of cases in both Federal and tribal courts. In addition, OVW is providing specialized training for law enforcement officials on domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

ONDCP's HIDTA Program supports law enforcement efforts in Montana by facilitating cooperation among Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies. Through the work of the Rocky Mountain HIDTA, more than \$900,000 in Federal grant funds are directed to drug task forces operating in the state of Montana. The Eastern Montana, Missoula County, Missouri River,

Northwest Montana, and Russell County Drug Task Forces bring Federal resources together with four state and twelve local agencies.

The Administration also supports drug prevention efforts in the Bakken oil field region.

ONDCP's Drug Free Communities (DFC) Support Program provides grants to community coalitions that are focused on identifying local drug problems and implementing comprehensive strategies that create community-level change. There are currently seven DFC coalitions in Montana, including one in Sidney: the Richland County Partnership for Promise Coalition. This coalition has been collaborating with various sectors of the community to prevent and reduce youth substance use. Each year, DFC Program staff conduct DFC grant application workshops across the country, including special technical assistance sessions dedicated to helping tribes write competitive grant applications.

Within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is providing funding and support to public health programs at the Montana and North Dakota health departments, including epidemiological support. CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) developed an oil and gas fatality surveillance system and will recruit North Dakota oil field workers in a nationwide worker safety and health survey.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is providing funding and support for two community health centers adjacent to the oil field region. HRSA is also supporting 25 National Health Service Corps clinicians, who will provide health care professional services in the region in return for scholarships or loan repayment. HRSA currently funds a telehealth

project that provides tele-mental health and substance use disorder services to Dickinson, North Dakota, that is also linked to other small communities in the Bakken Region.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides state block grants for substance abuse and mental health. SAMHSA also recently funded a prevention grant in North Dakota that issued contracts to all tribal areas and 22 public health units to promote and implement local prevention efforts. ONDCP continues to work with SAMHSA to develop effective prevention, treatment, and recovery messaging and programming for the tribal community.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) provides state and Tribal Family Violence Prevention and Services Grants to support local domestic violence shelters and supportive services as well as grants to State Domestic Violence Coalitions to coordinate state-wide services. ACF is collaborating to expand training and provide technical assistance; monitor demands for hotlines; address needs of victims of domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking; and develop strategies to support homeless youth, the elderly, and reductions in childcare resources.

The Great Plains Area of the Indian Health Service (IHS) increased funding for a contract mental health therapist and part-time counselor; provided training on suicide prevention and substance abuse treatment; and initiated tele-therapy services. Federal agencies are also supporting activities that are exploring the impact of development of the region on housing, homelessness, and the land itself.

As we work to implement the 2014 *National Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy* in the coming weeks and months, we look forward to working with our many Federal, state, local, and

tribal partners to reduce drug use and its consequences on both sides of our Northern border and within the Bakken region as part of a comprehensive Administration effort to address the issues that have arisen from the development of the region.

Thank you.