

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
SENATOR SUSAN M. COLLINS
Local Role in Homeland Security
December 11, 2001**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening this hearing and for inviting a witness from Maine, Commissioner Joseph Tinkham, to participate.

Our purpose - to examine the local role in homeland security - is of utmost importance. We are here today to learn about the efforts of state and local officials to prepare for, and respond to, acts of terrorism. In doing so, we need to assess the effectiveness of communication and coordination among federal, state, and local agencies and the extent of assistance needed from the federal government. Critical to the homeland defense of our nation as a whole is the security of the individual states, and securing a state presents significant financial and logistical challenges.

Let me illustrate these challenges with some information about my home state of Maine. As Commissioner Tinkham, of Maine's Department of Defense, Veterans, and Emergency Management, has noted in his written testimony, Maine has more than 3,000 miles of Atlantic coastline and the longest international border with Canada in the continental United States. The State has more than 250 airstrips; military bases and two major shipyards; more than 800 dams; a deactivated nuclear power plant with spent fuel rods on site; and the second largest petroleum tank farm on the east coast in the very heart of the State's largest population center. According to Commissioner Tinkham, Maine has identified 25 vulnerabilities that could result in large loss of life or environmental catastrophe.

To meet these challenges and those facing other states, we must improve coordination among federal, state, and local governments, as well as the private sector. We must avoid wasteful duplication. We must have realistic plans and effective training and exercises.

We must also ensure that appropriate information about the presence of terrorists and potential threats is shared by federal law enforcement agencies with their state and local counterparts. As Portland Maine Police Chief Michael Chitwood, who has expressed concerns about not being told of the presence of individuals on the FBI "Watch List," put it, "If there's something that impacts the public safety of a community, the police chief ought to know."

Finally, we must have adequate funding for homeland defense. While the responsibility for homeland security is not the federal government's alone and must be shared by local and state governments, I fully support additional federal financial assistance for the states and communities. For example, I recently joined with Senators Frist, Kennedy, and others in introducing legislation, the Bioterrorism Preparedness Act of 2001, which not only strengthens our federal response, but also authorizes substantial new funding for states, local governments, and hospitals - the people who are on the front lines and will be called upon first in the event of any new bioterrorist attack. Our legislation authorizes almost \$1.5 billion to improve our State and local preparedness capabilities and also authorizes an additional \$60 million to improve the public health laboratory network through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

I believe it important, however, to allow Governor Ridge the opportunity to assess needs and priorities carefully. After that assessment, I expect that the President will propose billions of dollars in his next budget, which we expect to be released in early February. In that regard, this hearing and the testimony of Commissioner Tinkham and the other witnesses will be very helpful in identifying gaps in the system and in setting priorities for this additional funding.

We have a lot of work to do - together.