

**STATEMENT OF
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Before the
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I have been asked to testify today by Senator Fred Thompson. I am here speaking on behalf of Tennessee Governor Don Sundquist and the many agencies and departments which make up the resources and personnel of the State Government of Tennessee. After serving with the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency for thirty-five years, the last eight as Director, I am able to provide a unique perspective on the readiness and capabilities of State government in being able to handle the increased amount of duties and responsibilities placed upon us by the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

I would like to divide my testimony into two separate parts. First, I would like to address the programs and activities which we have put into effect or enhanced as a result of September 11th. Secondly, I would like to address the needs of state and local government as we try to meet the many missions and issues which have suddenly been thrust into our arena.

Tennessee's Governor Sundquist formed several years ago, a Multi-agency Task Force to deal with Domestic Preparedness and Weapons of Mass Destruction issues. The Task Force continues to deal with Emergency Consequence Management planning, multi-agency electronic and intelligence communication coordination, and resource and equipment pooling. This group brought together operational and planning leaders from both state and federal agencies as well as law enforcement and first responders from local government organizations.

In most instances, these meetings opened lines of communication which had not previously existed. The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, The Federal Bureau of Investigation and local law enforcement were able to come together and learn the capabilities of the State Health Department laboratories and technicians. This sharing of information and education of personnel reduced the time required in determining the presence of biological and chemical contamination. Interagency cooperation proved to be valuable following post 9/11 hoax's which have continuously plagued our communities.

TEMA has conducted an intense threat and vulnerability assessment of its most critical infrastructure and a capability and needs assessment of the State's ability to respond to terrorist incidents involving Weapons of Mass Destruction. TEMA has also assisted all 95 counties in Tennessee in preparing multi-hazard risk/threat analysis assessments for their Local Emergency Management Plans.

TEMA and local jurisdictions respond to major emergency events using an all-hazard response plan. We have not altered or replaced event-tested and proven plans as a result of the new terror threat. For decades, our emergency plans have integrated radiological, chemical, biological, and other hazardous-materials and the response phase remains the same, only adding a few precautionary and safety measures.

Due to the operations of Sequoyah and Watts Bar Nuclear Facilities in Tennessee along with the Oak Ridge Compound, TEMA has developed partnerships with local governments, in establishing emergency management and evacuation operating procedures. These emergency plans have become the standards by which these type facilities are now measured against.

The Tennessee Valley Authority and U.S. Department of Energy have entrusted TEMA with establishing planning partnerships with local jurisdictions which protect the population and infrastructure of dozens of counties. This leadership role is unique to the Nuclear industry in America and TEMA is proud that we have twenty years of planning and documentation through exercises showing these partnerships to be rated as the most efficient in the nation.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recently asked us to conduct a Joint Assessment of Terrorism Preparedness. FEMA and the Office of Homeland Security used this data to identify shortfalls for planning and budgetary constraints due to the increased threat atmosphere after September 11. Fortunately, we had a great amount of the needed information on hand and were able to respond to this request under short notice.

The joint assessment ask the State to consider its preparedness status with respect to various aspects of its plan, protocols, procedures, personnel, logistics, facilities, equipment, training, exercises, mitigation, and laws and authorities, as they pertain to terrorist incidents.

I can truthfully say that during the past twenty years, TEMA has responded to every conceivable disaster or emergency prominent in our State and that our Emergency Operations Plans have been successful in protecting millions of Tennesseans.

The reason I am driving home this point is that it's my contention that Congress must select one flow-through system to provide funding for planning, equipment, training and the conduct of exercises for State and local jurisdictions. We, in emergency management, feel that we have an effective and proven delivery and tracking system, already in place,

which will provide you with the ability to judge the value and performance of the terrorism preparedness programs which you are funding.

In the past four years, many federal agencies have stepped forward and proclaimed that they were capable of providing the expertise to oversee the funding and compliance issues as they relate to terrorism programs. As each agency has attempted and struggled with the mission, we have seen just about every one of them proclaim that the issue is too big and too complicated to be effectively and efficiently guided.

I am here to advise that the most cost-effective means to provide our local communities with terrorism preparedness is through the state and local emergency management systems that are already in place and have proven time-after-time their leadership and ability.

The Department of Justice and FEMA need to work together to see that the Congressional funding gets into the hands of the state emergency management agencies and therefore to the local jurisdictions. DO NOT create a new agency or bureaucracy to oversee the distribution and accountability of this funding.

Let me quickly touch upon some of the types of actions we have planned or placed into effect in just the past few months:

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture will hire two chemists, two FDA inspectors, four pesticide inspectors, two microbiologists, another staff veterinarian and two veterinarian diagnosticians to address bioterrorist threats.

The Department of Safety will start a new trooper class (forty to sixty individuals) which will be trained in hazardous-materials and bio-chemical and radiological response techniques.

The Department of Commerce and Insurance, State Fire Marshall's Office will staff and continuously operate the state-of-art Tennessee Fire Academy to train all levels of first responders in terrorism consequence management and domestic preparedness activities.

The Department of Health will increase lab-testing capabilities by hiring eight lab technicians and twelve epidemiology experts and create a new statewide tracking/communications system for disease.

The Department of Veteran's Affairs will provide and staff and administration for the new Office of Homeland Safety.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation will hire eight criminal intelligence agents and six intelligence analysts as well as enhancing statewide computer and telecommunications systems for law enforcement sources.

The Department of Military will purchase specialized response and testing equipment needed for bio-chemical and radiological response.

And lastly, TEMA will improve and expand its statewide emergency communications system and provide emergency planning guidance and assistance to state and local county agencies and governments.

TEMA also will provide new training courses and educational venues as well as

coordinate and conduct local, regional and statewide exercises to evaluate performance and assess accountability.

All of these measures were developed and guided by Governor Sundquist and TEMA as our state's answer to the brutal September 11 assault on our nation's security. These measures totaling nearly \$10 million will come from State of Tennessee funding sources exclusively.

In addressing my second point of, "How we can address those areas of need which were identified by our capability and needs assessment". In going through the assessment county-by-county, TEMA was able to identify approximately 77,000 pieces of equipment needed by first responders in the 95 counties to address present shortfalls. The counties also identified education/training opportunities and exercises which would increase readiness and evaluate efficiency. The equipment and related emergency preparedness would cost over sixty (\$60 million). This would just be the starting point, providing a base-level response capability in all parts of Tennessee. Funding would also be needed to maintain equipment and to sustain the level of preparedness and readiness needed to deter terrorism.

In closing, I want to assure you that we at the state level have been "assessed and queried" to no end in the past few months. We now need the funding to fulfill those shortfalls that have been consistently identified. We have all the plans in place and we have the expertise, but unless you give us the funding quickly then what appears to be an effective terrorism preparedness program is just a mere 'smoke-and-mirrors' attempt that leaves the public unprotected and questionable in their faith of government. Provide us the funding, NOW IS THE TIME FOR US TO ROLL.

Thanks you for your time and consideration today, I will be glad to answer any questions which you may have.