

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 26, 2014

The Honorable Jeh C. Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson,

We are writing to you today to urge that you use FY 2014 funding for the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) Grant Program to increase the number of jurisdictions funded, and that you make changes to allow flexibility for implementation of funded programs.

The federal government has, since the 2001 "9/11 Act" (P.L. 110-53) which established the UASI program, provided critical funding to ensure the safety of high risk urban areas. With guidance from Congress, FEMA developed a comprehensive formula to rank the risk of a terrorist threat in each urban area. When utilizing the formula FEMA must assess each city's vulnerability, as well as the threat and potential consequences of a terrorist attack or natural disaster.

Many jurisdictions have used federal funding from the UASI program to form regional partnerships across community boundaries and disciplines to address mitigation, planning, preparedness, response and recovery efforts. It is important that the federal government recognize that in order to maintain the capabilities built over the past ten years, local jurisdictions require additional and continuing federal investments. Funding is necessary for planning, training and exercises, as well as for acquiring specialized equipment in order to remain current with evolving technology as the nature of terrorism changes and the catastrophic impacts from natural disasters increase.

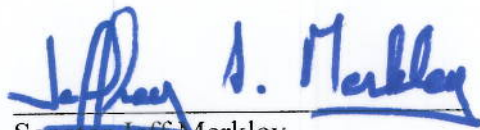
Unfortunately, last year, under the direction of the FY 2013 Continuing Resolution (P.L. 112-175), FEMA was limited to funding only 25 jurisdictions. The Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro MSA, which ranked at number 27, was among the jurisdictions that lost UASI funding because of that decision. This created problems for many jurisdictions and left previous federal investments stranded. These concerns were reflected in the FY2014 Omnibus Appropriations Act, which allows your Department to fund more jurisdictions. We strongly urge you to consider prior federal investments when making decisions to fund UASI jurisdictions this year, as well as increasing the number of jurisdictions funded rather than implementing another arbitrary cut-off of urban areas.

In addition, we would urge you to consider extending the two year performance period to three years. This would allow sufficient time for completion of regional planning and preparedness

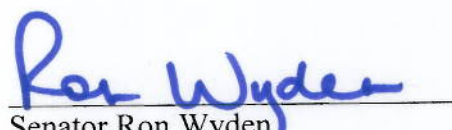
projects. Before any federal grant funds can be expended, it often takes between four and six months to complete the administrative and legal processes required to accept the UASI award from the State Administrative Agency and sign Intergovernmental Agreements with each of the counties that make up the Portland Urban Area. Additionally, many of the planning/emergency response projects require an 18-24 month performance period to complete competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) processes and implement professional services contracts. Regional projects require even more time. Extending the period of performance will provide a more reasonable timeframe to achieve programmatic goals consistent with our Homeland Security Strategy.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.


Sincerely,



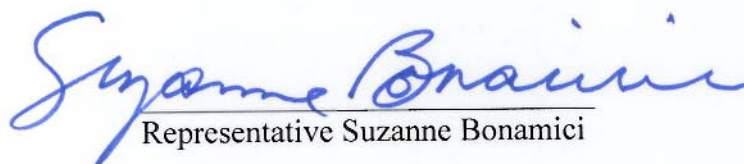
Senator Jeff Merkley



Senator Ron Wyden



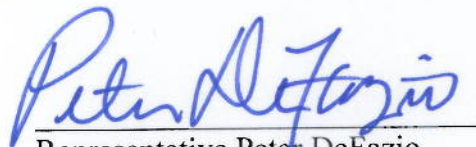
Representative Earl Blumenauer



Representative Suzanne Bonamici



Representative Kurt Schrader



Representative Peter DeFazio