

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0505

January 19, 2006

The Honorable Peter King
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
202 John Adams Building
Washington, DC 20540

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.
LA-228
Washington, D.C. 20540

The Honorable Dave Reichert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Emergency
Preparedness, Science and Technology
202 John Adams Building
Washington, DC 20540

The Honorable Bill Pascrell
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Emergency
Preparedness, Science and Technology
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.
LA-228
Washington, D.C. 20540

Dear Chairman and Ranking Members:

The Department of Homeland Security recently released a list of 35 urban areas considered eligible to apply for funding through the FY 2006 Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) program. Eleven additional areas, including Sacramento, the Congressional District I represent, were notified that their UASI funding may be terminated in future years if the Sacramento Urban Area does not meet the new risk assessment standards.

National Security is a top priority for America and the UASI program makes certain that we are able to properly prepare for a terrorist attack. While I agree that we need to distribute funds based on risk, I am deeply concerned that the new assessment process will omit numerous sites of critical infrastructure and possible terrorist targets. Such an assessment would put the Sacramento Urban Area and other heavily populated areas at risk of losing UASI funding.

I believe that it is important that each region be evaluated for a wide range of threats. Sacramento in particular has a population of almost two million people and has much at risk should a terrorist attack the area. Additionally, Sacramento is downstream from a major dam and the majority of neighborhoods and business districts sit behind levees, these are considerations, as well as a host of other transportation and critical sites that I believe should be factored in.

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Based on the recent list of 35 urban areas considered eligible, I have concerns about the scope of what is included in the assessment. It is crucial that Members of Congress have the ability to review the new eligibility guidelines for the UASI program and hear from expert witnesses. I respectfully urge the Committee on Homeland Security to hold hearings regarding the new UASI program assessment process and the scope of its new risk standards. I hope that the Chairmen and Ranking Members will work together to hold hearings in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doris O. Matsui". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress