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January 16, 2007

Secretary Michael Chertoff
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

The recently released Tactical Interoperable Communications Scorecards will assist my work in Congress to ensure that our first responders have the communications tools necessary to work across urban areas (UA) that have a high risk of future threats. As we unfortunately saw on September 11, 2001, our emergency services were ill-equipped to give each other the crucial information necessary to keep themselves and the citizens they serve safe in the face of terrorist threats.

I am pleased to see that the Newark, New Jersey UA received generally high marks in all the areas which were scored. Given the size of the area and the many municipalities included, there appears to have been great progress made in recent years.

Unfortunately, the report separates this northern New Jersey UA from the New York City UA. As you are aware, the 9/11 attack required the coordination of emergency forces on both sides of the Hudson River. The bridges and tunnels connecting New Jersey and New York continue to be a top terrorist target and any mass event in New York will certainly require New Jersey services to react swiftly and in coordination.

Because of the close connection of these areas I would be interested in a report that details the interoperability of these two UAs. Reports for Louisville, Kansas City, the National Capital Region, and other UAs reached across state lines and I also would like to have information on the ability of the first responders in my district to communicate across the river.

Again, thank you for the work put into this report and for your department's ongoing efforts to improve interoperability. I look forward to the continuing opportunity to work with you to make the country safer from the threats of terrorism and natural disasters.

Sincerely,



Scott Garrett
Member of Congress