

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 24, 2008

The Honorable Jay M. Cohen
Undersecretary, Science and Technology Directorate
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Undersecretary Cohen,

We are writing to offer our strong support for the efforts related to the Old Dominion University-led proposal for the Department of Homeland Security, University Center of Excellence for Command, Control and Interoperability. We believe the team assembled by Old Dominion University (ODU) has a great deal to offer with respect to knowledge, expertise, diversity and experience in issues and challenges related to enabling diverse stakeholders across multiple levels of government with secured reliable and relevant communication and information.

We understand the importance of this Center of Excellence and its focus on the research necessary to improve and advance the strategic and operational capabilities and resources for command, control, and interoperability. ODU's Virginia Modeling Analysis and Simulation Center (VMASC) will lead a team composed of Hampton University, James Madison University, University of Virginia, Norfolk State University and Virginia State University. We are confident that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will be well served by this team.

There is a particularly strong advantage for locating the DHS University Center of Excellence (UCOE) in the Hampton Roads Region, which is strategically important to the overall security and economic viability of the United States. The Department of Defense infrastructure and operational commands located in this region provide the most significant sustaining capability for U.S. military forces of any geographic region in the country. The importance of major military and commercial air, land and sea lines of communication that begin and end in Hampton Roads cannot be overstated. The potential threat to the security of Hampton Roads' defense and transportation infrastructure make this region one of the highest priorities for DHS mission concentration.

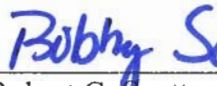
Co-locating the UCOE with universities in Virginia would provide DHS with highly qualified higher education institutions, critical infrastructures, and networks with long standing partnerships, capabilities, and assets in conducting research, experimentation and emergency management exercises that link to military C2 commands. It is imperative that these capabilities be integrated with DHS for overall planning and execution in times of crisis.

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The ODU-led team offers a significant leverage of research investment by the DHS. We are proud to offer our support for this effort. Undersecretary Cohen, we appreciate and thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,


Thelma Drake
Member of Congress


Robert C. Scott
Member of Congress


Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress


J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress


Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress