

## **Statement of Ranking Member Hansen Clarke (D-MI)**

### **THE NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS REPORT: ASSESSING THE STATE OF PREPAREDNESS**

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Wednesday, May 6, 2012

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When I reviewed the National Preparedness Report, one finding stood out to me: There is a direct connection between the investment of Federal grant dollars and the development of core capabilities. Where we have invested resources, we have developed capabilities. Where we have not invested, we have significant gaps in capabilities.

I represent Detroit. And I know that Federal grant dollars – from the Urban Area Security Initiative to the Assistance to Firefighter Grants Programs – have been instrumental in ensuring that the city has the capability to protect its high-risk infrastructure, such as the Ambassador Bridge and its water treatment facilities.

The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill is slated to be considered on the floor later this week. Although I am encouraged that the bill includes over \$400 million in additional funding for State and local grant programs, I am disappointed that funding for these programs and the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program has seen significant reductions under the current Majority.

The National Preparedness Report proves to those who seek fiscal savings through cuts to important grant programs that cutting grant programs is penny wise and pound foolish. I am hopeful that, as we consider the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill on the House floor later this week, the funding included for important grant programs will remain intact and, hopefully, be increased.

Although I am pleased that we have improved our operational coordination capabilities through the National Incident Management System, increased the number of mass search and rescue teams, and made significant strides in developing medical surge capabilities and facilitating coordination of medical countermeasure efforts across agencies, I am concerned that it will be difficult to maintain these capabilities in light of current budget constraints.

As I mentioned earlier, federal grant dollars are not what they once were. The budgets for State Emergency Management Agencies have shrunk for two years in a row. I will be interested to hear Deputy Administrator Manning's thoughts on how recent cuts to grant programs have impacted preparedness capabilities nationally. I know the impact on Detroit has been significant, particularly given the limited funding at the State and local level.

Along those lines, I was interested to learn that a number of States have assumed significant roles in long-term economic recovery through financial assistance programs to individuals and businesses. Although I am supportive of State governments developing economic recovery plans and coordinating independent funding for those programs, I wondering how those programs are faring as State governments are trying to do more with less.

Given the constraints on the Federal, State, and local budgets and the growing number of disasters, I am concerned that our preparedness and recovery plans may be leveraging resources that may not exist much longer.

In addition to issues surrounding Federal, State, and local funding, I am looking forward to Mr. Czerwinski's testimony assessing how the recently-released National Disaster Recovery Framework will address one of the most significant gaps identified in the National Preparedness Report: Recovery-focused capabilities.

I am also eager to hear more on how we can improve our cybersecurity capabilities. The Full Committee recently considered legislation on the issue. In my opinion, the bill did not do enough, but I will be interested to learn how we can improve the bill should it be considered on the floor."