

United States Congress

February 4, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
301 7th Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Secretary Johnson,

We write to you today regarding the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Relative Risk Profile formula for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). As always, we appreciate the opportunity to continue addressing this issue and the formula utilized by FEMA.

As you well know, with guidance from Congress, FEMA has developed a comprehensive formula to rank the risk of a terror threat in each urban area for the UASI program. As we have reiterated for the past several years, we believe FEMA has a responsibility to accurately assess the vulnerability, threat, and consequence of a terrorist attack for cities being considered under this program. However, there are several concerns we continue to have with the statistics this formula takes into account, as well as transparency regarding how these statistics are weighed to ultimately determine each city's ranking in the Relative Risk Profile.

Firstly, the Risk Profile considers Level 1 and Level 2 Assets as part of its assessment of both the Vulnerability and Consequence Component. Unfortunately, the Las Vegas strip is "clustered" and continues to be considered one asset, despite the fact that there are more than 35 hotels along the Las Vegas strip. We again respectfully request that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) consider each critical infrastructure along the Las Vegas strip on its own merit rather than "clustering" the entire area into one asset.

Secondly, the Risk Profile does not take into consideration the metropolitan statistical area's dependence on the tourism economy. A study from the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) found that southern Nevada is among one of the most tourism-dependent economies in the U.S. If a terror attack were to occur in Las Vegas, tourism to the state would be devastated beyond repair, further impacting the local and state economy significantly. We ask that DHS adequately consider this impact when determining rankings for the Risk Profile.

Lastly, in the interest of transparency and better understanding of how FEMA calculates each city's rankings, we respectfully request answers to the following questions regarding the Risk Profile:

1. In the border index, which is weighed at 10 percent in the Relative Risk Score, how are land crossings, air crossings, and water crossings each weighed within that 10 percent?

2. In the population index, which accounts for 30 percent of the Relative Risk Score, at what percentage is each category weighed within that index, specifically census, commuters, visitors, and population x density?
3. I respectfully request that you provide a detailed explanation as to how DHS defines a Level 1 Asset and a Level 2 Asset?
4. Within the National Infrastructure Index, are Level 1 assets given a higher weight than Level 2 assets? If so, what is the rationale and weight breakdown?

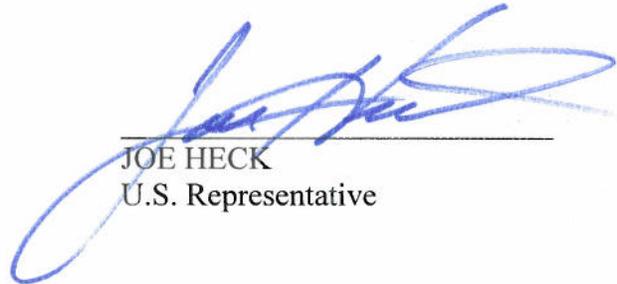
Ensuring that Las Vegas has the resources it needs to combat potential threats is a goal we all share. We appreciate the opportunity to bring these concerns with the formula to your attention and strongly encourage FEMA to take into consideration the unique challenges that Las Vegas, as a premier tourist destination, poses in the ongoing efforts to prevent terror attacks in the U.S.

Thank you again for the opportunity to write to you today. We look forward to your response to this inquiry by February 18, 2015.

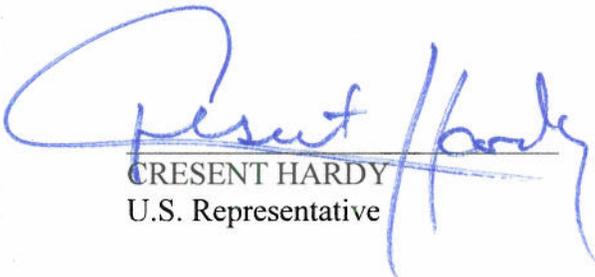
Sincerely,



DEAN HELLER
U.S. Senator



JOE HECK
U.S. Representative



CRESENT HARDY
U.S. Representative