

Homeland Security: NJ Delegation Urges DHS to Increase Anti-Terror Grants to Region

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All NJ House Members Join Effort to Pressure Administration on Homeland Security Funding

Reps. Rothman and Sires lead delegation urging DHS to increase funding for anti-terror grants to the region.

(Washington, DC)—Today, New Jersey's entire House delegation jointly called on Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff to increase funding for risk-based anti-terror grants to their state. The effort, led by Reps. Steve Rothman and Albio Sires, comes as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) finalizes the amount of Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant funding that the region will receive.

"Since [Fiscal Year] 2003, Congress has directed DHS to target UASI funding to high-threat, high-density urban areas to assist in building security capacity," the members wrote. "We believe DHS has not dedicated sufficient funding to high-risk areas like New Jersey—a situation that should be corrected immediately. We ask for your assistance in addressing previous shortcomings in federal homeland security assistance to New Jersey during the FY 07 UASI grant process."

DHS has indicated that it will not announce final homeland security grant amounts for 2007 until the week of July 23rd. That means there is still time for Chertoff, a native New Jerseyan, to ensure that funding to better secure New Jersey's cities is substantially higher.

"New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation. DHS's failure to sufficiently fund anti-terror efforts in an area where so many people live and work, that is well known to be high on terrorists' target lists, would be inexcusable," says Rothman.

Highlighting the danger of inadequate funding, the bipartisan delegation told Chertoff: "Our state requires a greater portion of homeland security aid due to its vast number of targets, such as the third largest port in America, the fifth largest oil refinery capacity in the nation, and a large concentration of chemical and pharmaceutical plants."

The members also cited the area between Port Newark and Newark International Airport, which has been designated the "most dangerous two miles in the United States when it comes to terrorism," as a major concern. Newark Liberty International Airport is the 22nd busiest airport in the world. Additionally, nearly 60 percent of all the containerized maritime cargo handled by North Atlantic ports goes through the Port of New York and New Jersey and the majority of that cargo flows through New Jersey's docks onto the state's rails, tunnels, and roads.

Reps. Steve Rothman (D-9), Albio Sires (D-13), Scott Garrett (R-5), Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-6), Christopher Smith (R-4), Rush Holt (D-12), Donald Payne (D-10), Jim Saxton (R-3), Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-8), Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-11), Mike Ferguson (R-7), Frank LoBiondo (R-2), and Robert Andrews (D-1) signed the letter.

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