

**TESTIMONY OF DONALD F. PETRI**  
**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
**DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY**  
**BEFORE THE**  
**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS AND**  
**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**

**SEPTEMBER 15, 2003**

Good morning Chairman Shays, on behalf of Governor John G. Rowland and Commissioner of Public Safety, Arthur L. Spada, it is my pleasure to welcome your Subcommittee to the State of Connecticut.

I am pleased to appear before you today to report that substantial progress is being made to provide equipment and training to Connecticut's First Responders. Indeed, they are better prepared to deal with a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive (CBRNE) event than at any prior time.

Two years ago, the horrific events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent anthrax incidents fostered a reexamination of the logistics of Connecticut's public safety and emergency services.

With 169 municipalities, over three hundred fire districts, two tribal nations, significant centers of industrial and commercial enterprises, substantial marine activity and notable population centers within and adjacent to our borders, the diversity of interests, perspectives and priorities seemed overwhelming. Governor Rowland led the effort to marshal Connecticut's resources towards a coordinated strategy for preparedness and response.

Toward that end, he designated the Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security (DPS/DHS) as the lead agency in that effort. By adopting a proactive approach for prevention strategies in collaboration and cooperation with federal, state and local entities, Connecticut pursued, secured and allocated all available Federal funding to outfit and train each first responder within the State.

This was accomplished by building from the pre-existing foundation established by State, Regional and Local entities under the auspices of the State Office of Emergency Management. Prioritizing the most critical needs, a three-prong program has been implemented to enhance existing equipment inventories, provide traditional training as well as practical exercises, and under take a

vigorous assessment of anticipated needs to serve as a realistic planning platform for future funding.

A leading priority is to place each First Responder in a position of knowledge and safety when confronted with a CBRNE event.

All First Responders are being outfitted with personal protective equipment appropriate to their disciplines i.e.: HazMat, Fire, Police, EMS.

Training in use of personal protective equipment, sponsored ODP, has been conducted.

Overtime costs incurred by public safety authorities for training and for periods of heightened alert status have been defrayed.

Metering packages for each jurisdiction within the State have been acquired and distributed, as have specialized HazMat metering packages for Urban and Regional Teams

34 Prime Movers and Mass Decontamination Trailers are being distributed throughout the State with Interoperable Radio Communication Centers.

Each of the primary and secondary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) are now equipped with mobile radio stations at the interoperable frequency.

Key local officials are being assigned portable radios at the interoperable frequency.

“Bomb trucks” and a robotic device for local law enforcement are in place.

An interdisciplinary Urban Search and Rescue Task Force staffed by State and Local First Responders has been established.

Relative to the last point, I wish to publicly express my appreciation to officials across the State who have volunteered their time to develop, recruit, interview and select the highly skilled local volunteers comprising this Task Force.

A key feature of our training regimen is the partnership that has been developed between DPS/DHS and the University of Connecticut in the creation of the Homeland Security Education Center. Integrating the expertise of the Police Officer’s Standards and Training Council, Connecticut Fire Academy, Office of Emergency Management, and academic professionals, this Center will provide a continuous improvement model of organizational development. Specific goals include training 6,000 first responders, elected officials and program administrators in CBRNE awareness, performance and management level training programs currently available through the Office of Domestic

Preparedness. For the first time in Connecticut, the training will integrate a CBRNE Exercise and Evaluation Program within the curriculum.

At this time, Connecticut is participating in a detailed assessment mandated by the Federal Office of Homeland Security. DPS/DHS worked with the Office of Domestic Preparedness to offer each jurisdiction the opportunity to participate in training and receive technical assistance in the assessment process. This task is critical to our future level of readiness. Citizens and officials across our State will build this assessment by investing countless hours in performing unglamorous tasks. These reports must be submitted to DPS/DHS by November 1<sup>st</sup>. A Statewide Strategy based on this data must be compiled, analyzed and submitted to the Office of Domestic Preparedness by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Inclosing my remarks, I wish to acknowledge their efforts, for they are performing truly heroic deeds that will go largely unheralded. It is only fitting that we recognized the broad based citizen participation that is the most essential ingredient in maintaining our free, and secure society.