

New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services  
Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Public Protection  
January 30, 2018

Testimony of Commissioner Roger L. Parrino, Sr.

Good morning. Thank you Chairwoman Young, Co-Chairwoman Savino, Chairwoman Weinstein and distinguished members of the Joint Committee.

I am Roger Parrino, Commissioner of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the excellent work of my Division over the past year as well as a few highlights from the Governor's public safety budget.

The men and women of the Division are charged with a tremendous responsibility – namely, protecting New Yorkers from natural and man-made disasters through prevention, preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

The Governor's budget provides the resources needed to accomplish our mission and protect public safety. Total appropriations are \$1.5 billion and some notable budget items include: resources to construct a Field Operations Building at the New York State Fire Academy; continuation of funding to support interoperable emergency communications; support for the expansion of disaster preparedness and emergency response efforts; and resources to implement recently enacted legislation.

I'd like to recognize the exceptional work of my employees who rise to the occasion every time they are called upon. I'd also like to thank the families of these men and women, who spend time away from home and loved ones, because of their commitment to public safety. Whether it was the long-term Lake Ontario emergency response and recovery effort, flooding, fires, tornados, snow storms, ice jams, mudslides and other incidents throughout

the State, mutual aid missions in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Florida, and Texas, they continue to assist those in need.

I'm especially proud of the Division's work on Lake Ontario. The long-term nature of severe flooding along the Lake created unique challenges and required creative solutions. The Division worked on the ground with many State agencies and local officials throughout the duration of the event to fill sandbags, utilize new dam technologies, provide insurance information, and even pump out flooded street and basements.

Thanks to this work and our partnership with FEMA, New York State was able to secure a federal disaster declaration during, rather than after, the event. FEMA funds will supplement the relief package that was passed by you and your colleagues last year.

We continue to support other recovery efforts, which includes the reimbursement of over \$7.5 billion for projects related to Sandy, Irene and Lee. I've had the opportunity to speak with several law makers about projects effecting your communities, and I thank you for your continued support.

I'm happy to report that the Swift Water Flood Training Facility at the State Preparedness Training Center (SPTC) is on schedule to open by late Spring. We are fully staffed and expect to begin training emergency responders as early as this summer.

Over the last year, the Division has also worked to ensure that local first responders are better trained to handle an Orlando or Las Vegas style active shooter event. Through the regionally focused Advanced Active Shooter Scenario courses provided at the SPTC, the Division and the National Center for Security and Preparedness trained over 300 law enforcement and emergency medical service personnel from four regions. This rescue task force concept has law enforcement secure "warm zones" for EMS to gain access to victims and ultimately save more lives.

This past year, the Division increased the number of Red Team exercises across the State, evaluating and enhancing the State's overall counter terrorism posture. Red Team exercises have been conducted in all 16 Counter Terrorism Zones, across over 900 locations and businesses and in partnership with nearly 100 law enforcement agencies. These efforts have built upon New York's "See Something Say Something" campaign and has raised awareness among various industries and strengthened their partnerships with law enforcement.

We have developed a new mandatory training for civilian airport workers, which provides them with the skills necessary to assist passengers during emergencies and identify suspicious activities. We continue to grow our team to provide a full day of training to civilian airport workers across the State, and with the Legislature's support, training has already been provided to approximately 6,000 airport workers.

We are also committed to educating the next generation of homeland security professionals. The Division has a strong partnership with the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity, which now has nearly 2,000 students enrolled in the program.

Further, the Division, in conjunction with the National Guard and the Red Cross, has trained over 215,000 New Yorkers as part of our Citizen Preparedness Corps.

While it is not possible to cover all the great work of the Division during my testimony today, I hope that I have provided you with an idea of the Division's priorities for the next fiscal year.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.