

**New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Public Protection
February 26, 2015 10:00 a.m.**

**Testimony of Andrew X. Feeney
Deputy Commissioner for Special Programs**

Good morning. Thank you Chairman DeFrancisco, Chairman Farrell and distinguished members of the Joint Committee.

I am Andrew Feeney, Deputy Commissioner for Special Programs for the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services. With me today is Michael Perrin, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance.

On behalf of Acting Commissioner John P. Melville, I am pleased to appear before this joint session today and appreciate the opportunity to highlight the agency's accomplishments over the past year, and outline our plans to further fortify our State's infrastructure, heighten our communities' preparedness and resiliency, and strengthen our capacity to protect our citizens from future emergencies and disasters.

The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services is a dynamic agency: the Offices of Emergency Management, Fire Prevention and Control, Interoperable and Emergency Communications and Counter Terrorism have varied responsibilities and functions; however, the Division's ultimate goal is the safety and security of the citizens of our State.

As Governor Cuomo embarks upon his second term, he continues to reinforce his commitment to building and maintaining the most effective and efficient emergency management system in the nation.

The field of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is incredibly complex, particularly given the challenges in our great State. The Governor's Opportunity Agenda encompasses a sophisticated vision to ensure that the State's efforts and resources are more than equal to the challenge of evolving threats in the coming year. With your support for the Governor's initiatives within the Division, New York will be better prepared and responsive to future disasters.

Past events have shown that New York is a top target for terrorists, and we have continued to experience more than our fair share of natural disasters. The need to keep the various disciplines moving, improving and transforming is of paramount importance to keeping the citizens of the state safe and secure.

In terms of security, the Governor firmly recognizes the diversity and persistence of threats targeting the State, particularly by individuals directed or inspired by overseas terrorist groups. The terrorists' prolific use of social media to recruit and compel lone wolf actors to undertake small-scale, and largely difficult to detect acts, presents continued challenges.

In response to this threat and in an effort to target harden our infrastructure, in his Executive Budget, Governor Cuomo has earmarked \$40 million for a host of counter terrorism activities, including a top down review of prevention and preparedness efforts, increased international collaboration and, the most publicly-visible counter measure: a ramping up of security presence of National Guardsmen and New York State Troopers at key transportation infrastructure locations through Task Force Empire Shield.

These initiatives complement some of the work we have accomplished over the past year in the area of infrastructure protection. As an example, the Office of Counter Terrorism's Critical Infrastructure Unit conducted twenty-two risk and vulnerability assessments during this past year which further assists various entities with target hardening. These assessments are in addition to the more than forty site visits to chemical, commercial, energy, agriculture, government, healthcare and public health, water and wastewater facilities, financial service providers, and transportation infrastructure, and planning assistance for mass gathering events such as the Belmont Stakes and the New York State Fair. These assessments are conducted for local governments, chemical, commercial, energy, agriculture, government, healthcare and public health, water and wastewater facilities, financial service providers, and transportation infrastructure stakeholders.

Augmenting the Governor's planned investment in counter terrorism activities are the State's federal funding sources. This past year, New York State received approximately \$78 million in State Homeland Security Grant funding and over \$178 million in Urban Area Security Initiative funding for the New York City urban area. This year, eleven New York State law enforcement entities received \$1.2 million in Operation Stonegarden funding and will be working with the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol on federally-approved operations.

The Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant program has helped create thirteen regional communications partnerships across the State. The partnerships, which are inclusive of local and state public safety agencies, will create interoperable emergency communications systems for first responders. Towards this goal, \$225 million has been awarded to all 57 counties and the City of New York to date. The 2015 Executive Budget appropriates an additional \$75 million for this purpose. The appropriation supports the continuation of key programs, including \$50 million for competitive grants to counties for large-scale radio projects; \$10 million in annual formula-driven grants to counties to support ongoing operations of public safety communications centers; and \$15 million for technology to interconnect State and local radio systems and public safety dispatch centers, within and between regions. We appreciate your continued support of these vital programs.

During the past few years, New York has increasingly been the target of severe weather events. In 2014, New York State experienced two-federally declared disasters. The first in May due to severe storm flooding in 11 counties for which New York received over \$18 million in public assistance grants. This funding will go towards the repair and replacement of state and local infrastructure including roads, bridges utilities and schools. The second was approved for the November storm that descended on Buffalo rapidly dumping seven feet of snow. All the while, we continue to manage storms that,

while have passed; the aftermath and rebuilding process remains very much a top concern for many of our citizens.

Each year, Governor Cuomo has consistently focused readiness efforts on three fundamental factors: information, resources and training. This year's Executive Budget is no different. In his Executive Budget, the Governor outlined a series of innovative proposals to transform New York State's disaster response.

As a fundamental principle, response and decision-making is only as good as the information we have at the time. A \$23 million federal investment is going towards the installation of 125 state of the art Mesonet weather detection stations around the state, to provide a broader picture of current weather conditions by collecting real-time data every 1 to 15 minutes. The Mesonet system will establish New York as only the sixth state in the country to use this technology for greater detection, prediction, risk assessment and analysis.

To better coordinate emergency response across the state, New York State will develop a comprehensive emergency program aided by technology named STORM. When fully implemented, it will be used by all state and local emergency managers. The system and training improve on our ongoing efforts to strengthen our ability to manage disasters. STORM will be establishing uniform protocols in command and control, communications and tracking of assets. This unified approach, supported by the latest technology, will also incorporate tracking of disaster damage and response expenses to speed potential federal disaster declarations and the funding that they make available.

One of the most important facets of emergency response is having the right tools to handle the emergency at the ready with real-time location tracking. The Executive budget also requests \$50 million for new emergency vehicles, snow plows and GPS systems for asset tracking. With our State having witnessed numerous major storms in the last several years, from Irene and Lee to Sandy and the snow and flooding since, we believe the routine refreshment and building upon our cadre of equipment can no longer be viewed as a luxury and now must be treated as a necessity.

A very important focus of the Governor this past year was the increased transport of crude oil through the State. Through Executive Order, the Governor directed several state agencies to conduct a thorough review of accident prevention and response capacity related to rail and water shipments of crude oil from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota, Montana and Alberta, Canada. One of the results of the study and recommendations includes the State's need to acquire and stockpile firefighting foam so that our Office of Fire Prevention and Control may better assist in the unfortunate event of a crude oil tanker fire. We ask for your support of the Governor's proposal to expand the State oil spill fund cap from \$25 to \$40 million to advance this purpose.

The Governor recognizes and urgent need to train and educate our future homeland security and emergency management leadership to confront modern day threats and challenges. As such, the Executive Budget outlines a \$15 million investment to open the nation's first emergency preparedness college. The proposed College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity within SUNY will

grant advanced degrees in both academic and professional aspects of law enforcement, security, public and international affairs, counterterrorism, emergency management, cybersecurity and forensics. The proposal envisions the location of the College to be located at the University at Albany with a satellite campus at the State Preparedness Training Center in Oriskany.

In 2014, the Training Center coordinated training for 17,262, well in excess of our annual goal of 15,000 students trained. In June of this year, New York State will proudly be partnering with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Justice to host the 2015 Raven's Challenge Exercise, which is aimed at enhancing the operational coordination between public safety Bomb Squads and Military Ordnance Disposal Units.

In conjunction with this effort, the Governor directed DHSES to train County Chief Executives, County Emergency Managers and other local officials as part of the Emergency Management Certification and Training program. The training program is designed to provide local officials, including County chief executives, emergency managers and other stakeholders with uniform emergency management training so that we can all respond more effectively during a crisis. To date, thirty-one trainings have been completed for more than 950 individuals. We continue this training and have received very positive feedback from participants and will be holding another training session later this year.

Other training conducted by DHSES in 2014 included the training of: 1,356 first responders by the Office of Emergency Management; 50,000 members of the fire service by the Office of Fire Prevention and Control; and 27 exercises supported by the Office of Interoperable and Emergency Communications.

The training of our citizens is also a priority of the Governor. As you would imagine, there are inherent challenges in being able to train citizens who are occupied with the general obligations of everyday life, but even with those challenges, the State has managed to train over 40,000 individuals in person and online. We continue to march towards to the Governor's goal of 100,000 citizens trained. The Executive Budget includes \$3.2 million in new funding to continue offering a citizens emergency preparedness course, in collaboration with the National Guard.

These are just a few the highlights of what New York State is doing to address the spectrum of natural and man-made threats we face. We've heard many times of the dangers of complacency; the Governor's proposals illustrate the fundamental reality that prevention, preparedness and response capacities are not static. We need to embrace the continual evolution of progress and the perpetual adaptation to meet and overcome the challenges we will undoubtedly face in the coming year. We appreciate your continued support of past programs and of the homeland security proposals in the Governor's current Executive Budget.

Thank you for allowing this opportunity to appear before you today to outline some of our proposed initiatives for the coming year. I am pleased to answer any follow up questions.