

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 27, 2011

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Nebraska Avenue Center, NW  
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Craig Fugate  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Secretary Napolitano and Administrator Fugate:

We write to express our strong support for the inclusion of the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) as a Tier I funding recipient under the annual UASI grant program. Given a scheduled funding reduction of 44 percent for FY 2011, as well as proposed reductions for FY 2012, we are deeply concerned about the ability of the partnering counties, municipalities, and other participating entities to continue meeting the strategic homeland security needs of the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI. Therefore, we urge the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help safeguard the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI against potential threats by ensuring that it receives the support and resources it needs and deserves.

With over 5.6 million residents living throughout Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties, the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI represents a densely populated, high-threat urban area that is at elevated risk for terrorism and natural disasters. As a center of agriculture, banking, health care, telecommunications, and transportation, it is critical to our nation's homeland security. The Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI includes over 100 municipalities, four international airports, three major convention centers, four international seaports, and other critical utility and water infrastructure. Port Everglades is South Florida's primary storage and distribution center for refined petroleum products, supplying nearly one-fifth of the entire state's energy requirements ranging from propane and gasoline to diesel and jet fuel. Furthermore, the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI is of immense significance to our nation's strategic interests and the public safety, serving as the home to U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), Homestead Air Reserve Base, U.S. Coast Guard operations at Air Station Miami and Station Miami Beach, the National Access Point (NAP) Center of the Americas, Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plant, and the National Hurricane Center.

The Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI also encompasses Lake Okeechobee and the Herbert Hoover Dike, which is central to agriculture, flood control, water conservation, and the preservation of fish and wildlife populations. If the Lake or Dike were compromised, it would disrupt drinking water supplies and agricultural irrigation requirements, endangering South Florida and much of Central Florida. Thus, we request that you score and incorporate appropriate values for Lake Okeechobee, the Herbert Hoover Dike, the NAP Center, and other critical assets and risks that are currently excluded from the risk assessment formula.

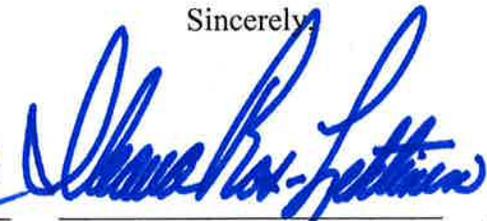
Moreover, as the gateway to Latin America, the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI is of vital importance to our nation's commerce, international trade, and tourism. Millions of legal border crossings occur in South Florida via air and sea each year, representing billions of dollars' worth of activity from passenger flights, cargo operations, cruises, and related industries. Despite numerous significant risk factors, however, the current UASI methodology only takes into account legal land border crossings. The Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI covers over 300 miles of coastline and remains at risk for human, drug, and arms trafficking, organized crime, money laundering, and other threats. Additionally, cruise ships are highly visible targets carrying thousands of passengers and crew in and out of South Florida ports. We request that the Department and FEMA take these threats into account in the risk assessment formula and give credit for aircraft and ship crossings, including the assignment of equal value to passengers filling cruise ship beds as to those who stay in hotel rooms.

South Florida's dense and diverse population, substantial commercial and economic activity, and indispensable transportation and utility infrastructure reflect significant vulnerability, with implications for the entire nation that necessitate Tier I resources. Given the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI's unique risk factors, we request that the Department and FEMA implement comprehensive adjustments, including those mentioned above, to the UASI scoring model in order to reflect regional profiles and give proper weight and consideration to actual infrastructure and transnational threats. Furthermore, we ask that any UASI funding reductions be distributed equally among all UASIs, and based on FY 2010 amounts in order to preserve the existing capabilities developed since 2003.

Secretary Napolitano and Administrator Fugate, as Congress considers future spending and deficit reduction proposals, it is our sincere hope that the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA will assess the merits of the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI fairly and recognize it as a Tier I funding recipient within the UASI program. We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to working together with you to ensure the continued security of our communities, the State of Florida, and our nation as a whole. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

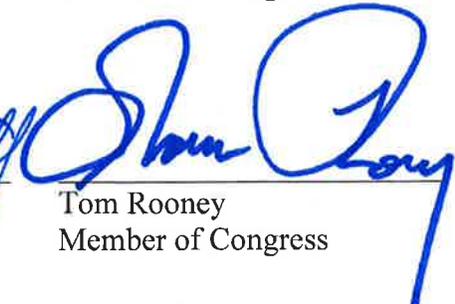
Sincerely,

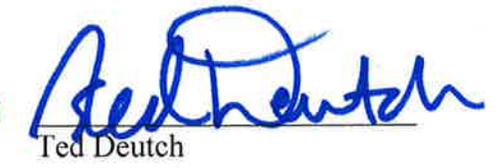
  
Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

  
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Member of Congress

  
Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress

  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

  
Tom Rooney  
Member of Congress

  
Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



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David Rivera  
Member of Congress



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Allen West  
Member of Congress



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Frederica Wilson  
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable Joe Lieberman  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Mary Landrieu  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications,  
House Committee on Homeland Security