



**GOVERNORS
HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORS
COUNCIL**

May 6, 2021

Mr. Mike Sena
President
National Fusion Centers Association
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Sena,

Our country continues to face complex and evolving threats to the health and safety of the American public. This year alone, we have seen a rise in threats from natural and manmade disasters, domestic violent extremism, violent crime, and cyberattacks on critical sectors. It is our responsibility as homeland security advisors to advise the nation's Governors and share critical information and expertise to prevent and respond to such threats. To support our collective homeland security mission, the Governors Homeland Security Advisors Council (GHSAC) relies on the National Network of Fusion Centers (National Network) as a key partner in protecting the public. We are happy to reaffirm the importance of and our commitment to the National Network and their crucial role in meeting the threats of today.

Established in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, the National Network is comprised of 80 state and locally-owned and operated fusion centers which serve as focal points for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating real-time threat information. The role of fusion centers has since expanded beyond counterterrorism to include an all-hazard approach, underscoring their importance to various mission areas and facilitating collaboration across jurisdictions and sectors to detect, prevent, investigate, and respond to threats and incidents effectively and efficiently.

Now more than ever, Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial officials are relying on the National Network to ensure the timely and secure sharing of actionable threat information, identify potential suspects, and fully integrate a variety of agencies and departments. A fusion center is comprised of a multidisciplinary set of liaisons from Federal, state and local law enforcement, fire service, healthcare, emergency management, corrections, parole, probation, and many others. They work together 24/7 within their jurisdictions and across state lines to carry out their missions in a manner that ensures First Amendment rights and civil liberties of U.S. citizens are protected while effectively sharing information and ensuring decisionmakers have strong situational awareness and data to make operational decisions.

The National Network continues to provide value in a host of ways and is often at the forefront responding to and mitigating mass casualty incidents, assisting first responders with real-time analysis of the size and scope of incidents, vetting suspicious activity reporting for actionable intelligence, identifying individuals that demonstrate violent intent, and building bridges among partners across the public safety and emergency response disciplines.

In March 2021, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary, Alejandro Mayorkas, testified in front of the House Homeland Security Committee about the importance of ensuring fusion centers have sufficient resources to help partners address ongoing homeland security and public safety threats.

Also in March 2021, Jill Sanborn, Assistant Director for the FBI Counterterrorism Division testified in front of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Senate



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Committee on Rules and Administration about the value of information sharing between federal partners and the National Network of Fusion Centers.

As we mark the twentieth anniversary of September 11th, we must not forget the lessons learned following that incident and continue to strengthen our efforts to disseminate and share accurate, actionable threat information with our Federal, state, tribal, territorial, and local partners. On behalf of the GHSAC, thank you for your commitment to the fusion center network especially during these challenging times. We stand ready to work with you to identify ways to strengthen the partnerships and operational performance of the National Network.

Sincerely,

Lt. Col. Chris A. Kelenske
Chair, GHSAC
Deputy Homeland Security Advisor
Deputy Director, Michigan State Police
State of Michigan

Walter F. "Pete" Landon
Vice-Chair, GHSAC
Director, Homeland Security and Deputy Chief of Staff
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