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**New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Public Protection
February 12, 2020**

Testimony

Good morning. Thank you, Chairwoman Krueger, Chairwoman Weinstein, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee.

I am Patrick A. Murphy, Commissioner for the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Division's excellent work over the past year, as well as a few highlights from the Governor's budget. I have spent the past year working with the dedicated men and women who make up the Division. They have worked tirelessly to ensure New Yorkers are prepared for, protected against, and able to recover from both natural and man-made disasters. It's my honor to share their accomplishments with you.

The Executive Budget provides the resources we need to accomplish our mission and enhance public safety, with total agency appropriations of \$1.6 billion. Also included in the Executive Budget is a \$12 million allocation for further strengthening of New York's emergency readiness posture and enhance response capabilities across the state.

Emergency management and response remains one of our primary missions and at the state level, our Emergency Operations Center was activated 16 separate times in 2019. These activations required coordinating multi-agency responses with other State agencies and localities, and could last anywhere from several hours, to 125 days in the case of Lake Ontario flooding.

In regards to Lake Ontario, what was once an isolated response operation in 2017, has now evolved into a year-round effort to protect the shoreline from flooding. During the flooding in 2019, the Division oversaw the deployment of more than 1.5 million sandbags, more than 11,000 feet of water barrier, hundreds of pumps and numerous other resources. In addition to those efforts, our Office of Emergency Management, has worked with state and local partners over the past several months on a wide range of planning and data collection efforts to better inform preparations for potential flooding in 2020.

As New York's most prevalent natural threat, flooding was not limited to the shores of Lake Ontario. On the evening of October 31st and into the morning on November 1st, a massive storm system impacted the majority of the state and resulted in devastating floods throughout the Mohawk Valley, North Country and Capital Region. The storm and subsequent flooding caused more than \$33 million in damages to public infrastructure, including more than 300 homes sustained damage, with 18 being completely destroyed.

The Division coordinated all state and local recovery operations and among the most impressive was our Office of Fire Prevention and Control's Swift Water Team evacuating 65 individuals from their homes as flood waters were rising. Once ground operations concluded, our Disaster Recovery Office worked with our County Emergency Management partners as well as federal officials to assess damage.

These events demonstrate the danger of flooding and underscores the need for high quality swift water training for both State and local first responders. Thanks to your support in previous budgets, the State's Swift Water Flood Training facility has been operational at the State Preparedness Training Center for more than one year now. This world class training facility provides specialized training opportunities for first responders which they would otherwise be unable to obtain. Since the facility's inception, more than 1,100 state and local first responders have received this training.

The Division's counterterrorism efforts have also continued to expand and adapt to address the latest threats. In 2019, the Division's Office of Counterterrorism completed more than 1,000 Red Team assessments across the state for the second year in a row. These assessments play a critical role in determining the effectiveness of suspicious activity reporting, as well as strengthen the relationships between law enforcement, businesses, and the public.

Our efforts to enhance the public's preparedness continue through the Governor's Citizen Preparedness Corps trainings as well. During 2019, with your assistance, we partnered with the National Guard and the Red Cross to train more than 56,000 New Yorkers. Since the program's inception, nearly 334,000 New Yorkers have been trained in our all-hazards approach to prepare for and respond to emergency situations.

While it is not possible to cover all the great work of the Division during my testimony alone, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.