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| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** Megan Taylor |
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**Heller to DHS: Ensure Las Vegas Has Resources to Prevent Disaster**

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) is asking the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to reconfigure its UASI grant program and reassess the “Risk Profile” for Las Vegas. The current funding formula for DHS does not provide Las Vegas with the resources it needs to adequately protect the city from a terrorist attack.

Las Vegas is not only essential to Nevada’s economy, but they city remains one of the country’s top tourist destinations. In 2016 alone, Las Vegas welcomed nearly 43 million visitors with an economic impact of $60 billion. In fact, there are roughly 35 hotels along the Las Vegas Strip, many of these hotels could 15,000 occupants at once. On top of that, the McCarran Airport sees roughly 200 non-stop flights a week.

**The letter reads in full**:

The Honorable John F. Kelly

Secretary

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

301 7th Street Southwest

Washington, DC 20024

*Dear Secretary Kelly,*

*I write you today regarding the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Relative Risk Profile formula for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI).  Given the recent threats made by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to target locations across the Las Vegas Valley, I appreciate the opportunity to address this issue with you.*

*As you know, the UASI grant program was established by Congress (Public Law 110-53) to provide critical funding to ensure the safety of high-risk urban areas.  With guidance from Congress, FEMA developed a comprehensive formula to rank the risk of a terror threat in each urban area.  When utilizing this formula, FEMA must be certain to accurately assess each city's vulnerability, threat, and consequence of a terrorist attack, but the agency also must rely on data that fairly analyzes each city.  I believe that the current formula fails to accurately depict certain data points that impact the Consequence Component, specifically the determination of Level 1 and Level 2 assets and by ignoring the impact of tourism on localities.*

*As part of a locality’s Risk Profile, Level 1 and Level 2 assets are determined as part of its assessment of both the Vulnerability and Consequence Component.  Unfortunately, the Las Vegas Strip is “clustered” and considered one asset, despite the fact that there are more than 35 hotels along the Las Vegas Strip, many of which have 15,000 occupants at once.  I respectfully request that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) consider each critical infrastructure along the Las Vegas Strip on its own merit rather than including the entire area into one asset.*

*Further, the Risk Profile does not take into consideration a locality’s dependence on the tourism economy.  Given its reputation as the Entertainment Capital of the World, Las Vegas saw nearly 43 million visitors last year, accounting for an economic impact of $60 billion.  In fact, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) found that southern Nevada is among one of the most tourism-dependent economies in the U.S.  If a terror attack were to occur in Las Vegas, Nevada’s tourism market would be devastated beyond repair, further impacting the local and state economy significantly.  I respectfully ask that your department adequately consider this impact when determining rankings for the Risk Profile.*

*Ensuring that Las Vegas has the resources it needs to combat potential terrorist threats is one of my top priorities in Congress, especially in light of threats by ISIS to target the Las Vegas Strip.  I appreciate the opportunity to bring my concerns with the formula to your attention and hope that FEMA will take into consideration the unique challenges that Las Vegas faces as a premier tourist destination as you continue working to prevent terror attacks in the United States.*

*Thank you again for the opportunity to write to you today.  Please contact me or my staff if you have any further questions.*

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