

Mayor Eric J. Perrodin

City of Compton, California

Statement for Member and Outside Witness Hearing on FY 2011 DHS Appropriations

**Statement by Mayor Eric J. Perrodin,
Accompanied by Councilwoman Lillie Dobson**

**Re: Member and Outside Witness Hearing of the Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security on the Fiscal Year 2011 Budget**

April 12th, 2010

Thank you Chairman Price and Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Eric Perrodin, and I am the Mayor of the City of Compton, California. The citizens of Compton first elected me to represent them on June 5, 2001, and then again in April 2005. As Mayor, I am committed to improving and protecting the lives of those who work, live, study and play in the City of Compton.

This request will improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities by supporting a flexible, sustainable, secure, strategically located, and fully interoperable EOC. A fully capable emergency operations facility in Compton is a critical component to a comprehensive national emergency management system. The importance of the Alameda Corridor to the national economy is significant. A study conducted by the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority noted that in 2005 the two ports generated \$256 billion in trade value and affected 3.3 million jobs across the country. Moreover, with 43 percent of all container traffic entering the United States through the San Pedro Bay ports going up the Alameda Corridor, it is estimated that any major shut down of the rail corridor damages the national economy at approximately \$29 million per day.

The current first responder capabilities in the City of Compton are insufficient to protect the Alameda Corridor and other nationally significant infrastructure assets located around the City from some of the most salient current threats including a seismic event, a hazardous accident, or a terrorist attack using biological, radiological or nuclear materials. According to a study released by the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism, a major attack using weapons of mass destruction somewhere in the world is "more likely than not" to occur by 2013 unless significant steps are taken. In particular, the Los Angeles Metro area where Compton is located is ill-prepared to respond to and recover from biological, radiological or nuclear incidents, according to statements made by Gene Aloise, Director of Natural Resources and Environment at the Government Accountability Office, before the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology.

An enhanced EOC is necessary to ensure continuity of operations and continuity of government in major disasters or emergencies caused by any hazard. A seismic event, a hazardous accident, or an act of terrorism could cause the bridges that span the Alameda Corridor train trench to collapse, thereby inhibiting the free movement of emergency response services and equipment to this area. The potential to isolate this section of the city also creates an urgent need to have an appropriate site for the EOC. With seriously limited resources, as was the case with Katrina, the predominantly low-income residents of this community are particularly vulnerable in light of the proximity of critical assets along the Alameda Corridor and the Los Angeles metro area.

The possibility of a catastrophic event was borne out in a recent statewide simulation. During the last statewide disaster preparedness simulation, Golden Guardian (spring 2009), the challenge was presented that a fire affected the Alameda corridor and spread throughout the east side of the City of Compton. The simulation revealed that the potential for a fire related shut down of the corridor is not an unrealistic scenario based upon the current configuration of first response capabilities. Consequently, there is an immediate need to construct and equip a new first responders facility that will accommodate more equipment and allow the coordination of various departments to provide an adequate level of protection and specialized services to region one and surrounding communities in area E.(USAR & Hazardous Materials).

Failure to address the need to upgrade the City's first responder capabilities could jeopardize a critical national infrastructure asset, as well as the health and safety of millions of residents and local first responders. Therefore, I am requesting the Subcommittee's assistance to work with Congresswoman Laura Richardson to secure \$2.3 million to establish an enhanced alternative Emergency Operations Center in the City of Compton.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

Your attention and assistance are appreciated.