

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 27, 2009

Edward H. Jurith, Acting Director
Executive Office of the President
Office of National Drug Control Policy
Office of State, Local, and Tribal Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Acting Director Jurith:

We write to express our strong support for the petitions of Mercer County, New Jersey, and Middlesex County, New Jersey, for inclusion within the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (NY/NJ HIDTA).

The expansion of the NY/NJ HIDTA to include Mercer and Middlesex counties will improve the effectiveness and coordination of Federal and State law enforcement agencies statewide and regionally in combating drug trafficking and related violent gang activity.

As their petitions detail, Mercer and Middlesex counties both confront significant drug and gang violence threats to public safety. With their proximity to major Interstate highway systems, including the New Jersey Turnpike, which runs through both counties, rail stations, *international* airports, and the Port Newark-Elizabeth Marine Terminal, it is not surprising that these counties confront serious illegal drug trafficking issues. Drug traffickers and drug trafficking organizations use this transportation infrastructure to transport drugs from, among other places, New York City and Newark, into Mercer and Middlesex counties for further distribution to neighboring counties. Increasingly, the drug trade in Mercer and Middlesex counties and throughout our State is associated with gang- and gun-related violence.

Inclusion of Mercer and Middlesex counties in the NY/NJ HIDTA is necessary to enhance these counties' and our State's ability to combat violent crime and drug trafficking through a regional approach and through increased cooperation, coordination, and communication among Federal, State, and local agencies. Accepting the petitions of Mercer and Middlesex counties for inclusion in the NY/NJ HIDTA will show a strong commitment to improving and securing the public safety of the residents of New Jersey.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of these applications and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Laukenberg

Robert Menevay

Rud Holt

Chris Smith

Leonard Lincee

Frank Paltow

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