

Position Statement regarding the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations report: "Federal Support for and involvement in State and Local Fusion Centers"



The InterAgency Board is a voluntary collaborative panel of emergency preparedness and response practitioners from a wide array of professional disciplines that represent all levels of government and the volunteer sector. The IAB provides a structured forum for the exchange of ideas among operational, technical, and support organizations to improve national preparedness and promote interoperability and compatibility among local, state, tribal and federal response communities.

The state and local first responders of the InterAgency Board for Equipment Standardization and Interoperability (IAB) feel that the Subcommittee's critical report of fusion centers may reflect a misunderstanding of the essential role that fusion centers perform related to vital intelligence and information support functions for state and local jurisdictions and regions. Responding to, interdicting, and preventing terrorism builds upon both local and Federal capabilities.

Your recent Subcommittee report provides a useful starting point for enhancing the effectiveness of fusion centers to address state, local, and Federal information sharing and intelligence analysis, production and dissemination to address the complete range of threats facing the nation. However it overlooks the contributions to terrorism prevention made by the centers. Narrowly defining intelligence production with a Federal focus, driven by and supporting Federal objectives only, weakens the ability of fusion centers to effectively support regional efforts to address operational concerns.

While terrorism is always a key concern, other issues--including transnational organized crime, gangs, epidemics, natural and technological disasters--all benefit from information and assessment. Fusion should involve integrating and de-conflicting collection, collation, analysis, production, and dissemination for **ALL** threats, not just terrorism. Fusion centers must produce actionable intelligence that meets national needs and provides local context. Enhanced training and connectivity across the fusion center community are essential. These efforts must recognize that protecting civil liberties are paramount.

Fusion centers enhance the preparedness and response capabilities of the entire first responder and public safety community of this nation. For this reason, they need continued support at all levels of government.

**Please contact the InterAgency at info@interagencyboard.us with any comments, feedback, and questions. Additional information on the InterAgency Board is available at www.IAB.gov.