

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 5, 2015

Mr. Michael Botticelli  
Director  
Office of National Drug Control Policy  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Director Botticelli,

We write today in support of the Police Chiefs of Bristol County's application for the county's inclusion in the New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program. The inclusion of Bristol County will be a critical factor in that region's efforts to combat a growing opiate crisis.

Bristol County has a population of 554,194 residents and covers 553 square miles in southeastern Massachusetts. Interstates 95, 195, 295, and 495 as well as U.S. Route 1 run through the county and serve as pipelines to send drugs from Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic states to central and northern New England. According to both law enforcement and public health statistics, the threat and danger posed by opiates, primarily heroin and prescription drugs, has dramatically increased in the region in recent years. This has greatly stretched the resources of local and county law enforcement as well as treatment resources and while Bristol County law enforcement officers are committed to developing an effective response to the growing epidemic, federal resources are necessary to fully and successfully address the situation.

The HIDTA designation and related support from ONDCP would enable increased cooperation and coordination among local, state, and federal officials to diminish the sale and use of heroin and other illegal drugs. In particular, Bristol County would be better positioned to conduct coordinated interdictions and operations along the state's border with Rhode Island, allowing investigators to have the tools and resources they need to identify and attack the vulnerabilities in the supply, transportation systems, and financial infrastructure of major drug trafficking organizations known to be operating in the two-state region.

The county has in recent years seen a rise in heroin "milling" locations within the county and surrounding areas. With the price of heroin on the decline and the amount of drug dependent individuals in the county on the rise, the demand for heroin is high. Law enforcement has witnessed both the increase in wholesale heroin sales coupled with the drastic rise in sales at the

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street level as well. The hub cities of Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford and Attleboro are being used as centers to break down and package large amounts of heroin for street level drug sales throughout Bristol County and the surrounding region.

Law enforcement agencies in Bristol County are committed to developing an aggressive and appropriate response to address the growing opiate epidemic in the region. We believe with the additional resources and coordination that a HIDTA designation brings will make those efforts more successful. We urge you to grant the County's petition for HIDTA designation and thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress



Elizabeth Warren  
U.S. Senator



William Keating  
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey  
U.S. Senator