



# NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Homeland Security, Avian Flu Are Priority Issues At the 74th Winter Meeting of The United States Conference of Mayors**

**Washington, D.C.** – Mayors attending today’s session of the 74<sup>th</sup> Winter Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors focused on two priority issues – homeland security and the Avian flu. Officials from the federal Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services briefed the nation’s mayors on what the Administration is doing to help cities prevent another terrorist attack, in addition to preparing for the new threat of Avian flu.

Homeland Security Task Force Co-Chair Baltimore Mayor Martin O’Malley encouraged the mayors to take the initiative to help each other instead of waiting on the federal government. “Cities are best able to help each other. We understand each other’s issues; we have the right skill sets; and we’re able to mobilize quicker than federal and state governments,” said Mayor O’Malley.

Mayors have consistently expressed a desire to work closer with the federal government on homeland security issues to ensure that their perspectives are included in critical policy decisions. “But we are not waiting to be invited to the table. We are taking action,” said USCM President O’Neill.

Her sentiments were underscored during the presentation of the Mayors’ *2005 National Action Plan for Safety and Security in America’s Cities*, which was unveiled during a meeting with the mayors and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff in October of 2005. The plan makes five key recommendations to Congress and the Administration for better protection of cities and American citizens. Those areas include:

- Fixing the FEMA Disaster Response System
- Military Involvement in Disaster Response and Recovery
- Communications Interoperability
- Enhanced Transportation Security
- First Responder Funding

In addition to homeland security, the mayors discussed the Avian Flu pandemic. Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels presented his preparation plan for an Avian Flu outbreak in his city, and was featured as a model mayor with an innovative ‘best-practice’ approach. Mayor Nickels described an outbreak as inevitable saying, “It is not a matter of if for our cities will be impacted by the Avian flu – it is a matter of when. As Mayors, we are on the frontline; we must work with our health departments to create a model of what to do for any type of pandemic,” said Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels.

Sugarland, TX David Mayor Wallace, Co-Chair of the Homeland Security Task Force, warned against precaution planning done in isolation. Effective preparation must include local, state and regional cooperation,” he said.

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### **Highlights for Friday's Agenda:**

*(All events are at the Capital Hilton Hotel unless otherwise noted)*

#### **Friday, January 27**

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

(Federal A)

#### **HOMELAND SECURITY TASK FORCE**

*Co-Chairs, Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, Sugar Land Mayor David Wallace*

Focus: New First Responder Funding Process --

- Chet Lunner, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security, Office of State and Local Govt. Coordination
- Edward Cash, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security, Local Affairs
- Tracy Henke, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security, Grants and Training

Focus: Transportation Security –

- Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels, USCM Transportation Committee – Transporting Hazmat
- Edmund “Kip” Hawley, U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
- Valarie Long, Service Employees International Union – Raising Standards with the Private Security Industry
- Jeff Gaynor, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security, Critical Infrastructure Task Force – Building Resilient Cities

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon **PLENARY SESSION: *Release of 2005 Metro Economies Report***

(Presidential Ballroom) *USCM President Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill, Presiding*

- Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels – Mayors and Climate Change/followup to USCM Climate Change Resolution of 2005
- U.S. Senator Harry Reid (NV)
- Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick – The State of Metro Economies
- U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (CA)

#### **WHO: The United States Conference of Mayors**

Conference President and Long Beach (CA) Mayor Beverly O'Neill

Dearborn (MI) Mayor Michael Guido, Vice-President, U.S. Conference of Mayors

Trenton (NJ) Mayor Douglas Palmer, Chair of the Advisory Board, U.S. Conference of Mayors

Tom Cochran, Executive Director, U.S. Conference of Mayors

and nearly 200 of the Nation's Mayors

**WHAT: USCM 74<sup>th</sup> Winter Meeting**

**WHEN: Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> - Friday, January 27, 2006**

**WHERE: The Capital Hilton Hotel  
1001 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
202-639-5422/Pan American Press Room**

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*The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.*