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Via Email

June 20, 2025

New England Congressional Members of Senate and House Appropriation Committees
United States Congress
Washington, DC 20515

Re: FY 2026 Budget Proposal to Relocate HIDTA Program and Reduce Funding

Dear Senators and Representatives,

On behalf of the New England State Police Administrators Conference (NESPAC) Board of Directors, I am writing to express our deep concern about the President's FY 2026 Budget proposal, specifically the proposal to move the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (OJP), along with a 35% reduction to program funding. I respectfully submit that this proposal will have the unintended consequence of weakening the nation's most effective multi-agency framework for addressing the threats posed by drug trafficking organizations.

The current structure of the 33 regional HIDTAs under ONDCP leadership is a proven model of collaborative policing that has saved lives, dismantled violent drug trafficking organizations, and built lasting partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement. The unparalleled success of the HIDTA program is due to its regional autonomy, impartial executive board governance, and the independent oversight provided by ONDCP.

In our region, the New England HIDTA continues to provide essential coordination and funding to federal, state and local drug task forces. More than 90% of HIDTA's funding goes directly to state and local law enforcement, making it indispensable in our ability to direct resources toward operations that will have the greatest impact to the threats faced by our communities.

As Colonels of State Police responsible for public safety in our respective New England states, we are deeply concerned by the proposed FY2026 budget changes. These changes risk undermining HIDTA's proven collaborative governance model, reducing operational flexibility, and disrupting critical investigations. The current ONDCP framework empowers state and local law enforcement agencies to develop targeted responses to evolving drug threats—flexibility that is lost under a centralized DOJ model.

We sincerely appreciate your continued support of state and local law enforcement and strongly urge you to carefully consider the consequences of these proposed changes. The value of the HIDTA Program lies in its ability to unify federal, state, and local agencies under a neutral and cooperative structure. Maintaining this structure and funding is essential to sustaining our ability to provide for safer and healthier communities across New England.

Respectfully,



Colonel William G. Ross
Maine State Police
Chairman of NESPAC

Copies to:

Senator Jack Reed – State of Rhode Island

Senator Susan Collins – State of Maine

Senator Jeanne Shaheen – State of New Hampshire

Senator Chris Murphy – State of Connecticut

Representative Rosa DeLauro – State of Connecticut

Representative Chellie Pingree – State of Maine