

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 1, 2016

The Honorable Michael Botticelli
Director
White House Office of National Drug Control Policy
750 Seventeenth St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Director Botticelli:

We write in support of the Northwest Virginia Regional Drug and Gang Task Force's (Northwest Virginia Task Force) request for a HIDTA designation for Frederick, Warren, and Shenandoah Counties in Virginia, which are experiencing an annual spike in heroin-related overdoses, arrests, and seizures.

In 2012, one person died of a heroin overdose in the region covered by the Northwest Virginia Task Force. However, that number jumped to 30 deaths in 2015. Likewise, heroin arrests have sharply increased in the same region each year with 55 heroin arrests in 2012 to 215 arrests in 2015.

Through the collaborative efforts of the Northwest Virginia Task Force, local law enforcement have joined medical professionals, addiction treatment specialists, and educators in developing collaborative solutions to counter heroin trafficking in the region. Progress is being made but further assistance is needed to help local groups cut across geographic boundaries. Joining the Washington-Baltimore HIDTA region will improve interagency collaboration, promote the sharing of accurate and timely information, and provide specialized training and other resources to the participating law enforcement and treatment agencies.

A HIDTA designation would help the task force and our constituent communities combat what has proven to be an epidemic in the Shenandoah Valley. The efforts of all involved local agencies and organizations have proven to be effective in working across multiple jurisdictions to fight crime, drugs, and gangs, but more assistance and collaboration with federal law enforcement is needed to address the growing heroin epidemic in the region.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request. We hope you will give the Northwest Virginia Task Force's application full consideration. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress
Virginia's Tenth District



Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress
Virginia's Sixth District