



January 5, 2017

Scott Hagerty  
President  
Alameda Board of Supervisors

Dear Sir,

On behalf of fire services throughout the Bay Area, I ask that you approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative (BAUASI) and the Alameda Sheriff's Office. This MOU provides the only mechanism for the Bay Region to receive Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant funds used to pay for the annual Urban Shield Emergency Preparedness and Security Exercise, a critical training provided by the BAUSI Regional Training & Exercise Program and administered by the Alameda County Sheriff's Office.

Urban Shield is the Region's only multi-operational period, multi-disciplinary, and multijurisdictional exercise that involves over 5,000 Bay Area firefighters, law enforcement, EMS, public health professionals, emergency managers and volunteers. This exercise validates the investments we have made in equipment and training as well as areas that need further improvement. First responders only have one time to get it right. Urban Shield provides us the opportunity to develop the necessary mastery required to get it right the first time, and every time, for the citizens we have sworn to serve.

Overlooked in this debate is the training provided by the BAUASI Regional Training & Exercise Program (RTEP). The RTEP provides UASI funded courses at no cost to the Region's fire, law, EMS, public health, emergency manager stakeholders, and other partners in emergency preparedness and security such as schools, mass transit, non-government organizations (NGOs) and private industry. Since its inception in 2011, The Bay UASI Training & Exercise Program has conducted 813 courses and trained over 21,000 students. Some of the topics that have been covered in these trainings include: "Essential Emergency Management Concepts: Earthquake," "Confined Space Rescue Technician," and "School Violence and the Active Shooter." Due to tight budgets, most of the public agencies and private organizations in the Bay Area do not have the money to pay for this training. If the MOU is not approved, the "Fire Discipline" courses planned for calendar year 2017 will have to be cancelled.

While withholding the MOU will not help address the issues of homelessness or social-economic disparity, it will affect the safety of our men and women who put their lives on the line every time they intercede on our behalf, and the ability of emergency managers to ensure a prompt and efficient response to complex emergency incidents when they occur.

Thank you for taking the time to read this e-mail, and to consider my request that the Board of Supervisors approve the MOU between the BAUASI and the Alameda County Sheriff's Office.

Respectfully,

Bill Braga,  
President,  
Sonoma County Fire Chief's Asso.