

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

July 27, 2018

Mr. James Carroll  
Acting Director  
Office of National Drug Control Policy  
750 Seventeenth Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Acting Director Carroll:

We write in support of the application submitted by the Liberty Mid-Atlantic High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (LMA HIDTA) to expand the LMA HIDTA by designating Bucks County a LMA HIDTA county. If approved, this designation will allow the LMA HIDTA to better coordinate its law enforcement efforts, identify and dismantle large-scale criminal organizations, and improve the safety and security of Bucks County and Pennsylvania's residents. We hope you will give this proposal full and fair consideration.

Over the last several years, Pennsylvania has become an epicenter of the opioid epidemic, which has created serious public health challenges and has strained resources of law enforcement. In 2016, Pennsylvania lost 4,624 people to drug overdoses, with 85% of those deaths occurring from the use of opioids. The state's drug overdose death rate in 2016 was 37.9 per 100,000 people, which was the fourth highest in the nation, almost twice the national average, and a 37% increase over 2015. Like many communities across Pennsylvania, Bucks County has experienced high levels of drug overdose deaths. In recent years, the number of drug overdose deaths in Bucks County has been steadily rising, with the county experiencing 124, 185, and 236 deaths in 2015, 2016, and 2017, respectively.

Perhaps no one is more acutely aware of the challenges in combatting this epidemic than our federal, state, and local law enforcement officers, who have been on the front lines of investigations, seizures, and prosecutions in drug cases time and again. Law enforcement agencies in Bucks County have made combatting the opioid epidemic and drug trafficking a top priority, but they need assistance. The increase in fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses in the county coupled with related violence have placed a heavy burden on Bucks County's law enforcement agencies.



Expanding the LMA HIDTA to encompass Bucks County is strategically expedient given its location next to Philadelphia, which the Drug Enforcement Agency has identified as being one of the country's major sites for significant seizures of fentanyl in 2016 and 2017. Philadelphia is a source city for large-scale narcotics flowing into Bucks County. In addition, drug trafficking organizations and individuals use Bucks County as a favored route before distributing to nearby cities, such as Philadelphia, Allentown, PA, and Trenton, NJ.

The addition of Bucks County to the LMA HIDTA will enable the LMA HIDTA to better assess the distribution and use of heroin and fentanyl throughout the county, state, and region, and more

effectively coordinate intelligence sharing among the LMA HIDTA counties. This designation will also enhance Bucks County's ability to target drug trafficking organizations and improve the quality of life for the county's residents and visitors.

We strongly urge you to give full and fair consideration to LMA HIDTA's request to expand to Bucks County.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

Pat Toomey  
United States Senator



Brian Fitzpatrick  
United States Representative

CC: Kayla M. Tonnessen, Associate Director of Legislative Affairs  
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Jeremiah A. Daley, Executive Director  
Liberty Mid-Atlantic High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area