



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BISHOP JOINS SEN. CLINTON IN CALLING ON DEPT. OF HOMELAND SECURITY TO ADDRESS SECURITY CONCERNS AT PLUM ISLAND

Washington, DC: Representative Tim Bishop and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton recently called on Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff to address concerns surrounding the Department's oversight of the security of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC).

"We are particularly concerned that DHS has not been meeting the security needs of the facility since Federal Protective Service (FPS) agents were removed from the island," Bishop and Clinton wrote. "The important research conducted by the Plum Island facility requires careful oversight and security. The pathogens and diseases studied are crucial to the safety of our food supply, and also involve broader health and security risks to our region and the nation."

The following is the text of the letter to Secretary Chertoff:

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our concerns about the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) oversight of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC). We are particularly concerned that DHS has not been meeting the security needs of the facility since Federal Protective Service (FPS) agents were removed from the island.

As you are aware, we have worked very closely with the DHS to improve and ensure the safety and security of Plum Island's facility and operations, and to protect the surrounding communities. We have also worked hard to establish an open line of communication regarding these issues. Accordingly, we request answers to the following questions:

1. If PIADC's current director continues to serve on an interim basis, when do you intend to appoint a permanent director?
2. How are the law enforcement operations previously assigned to FPS currently performed?
3. Which federal agency is responsible for overall security of the facility or which agency supervises the security if it is currently provided by a private entity?

4. Which agency coordinates the first response in the event of an accident or emergency?

5. How are the communications between PIADC and first responders coordinated?

As you are well aware, the important research conducted by the Plum Island facility requires careful oversight and security. The pathogens and diseases studied are crucial to the safety of our food supply, and also involve broader health and security risks to our region and the nation. Please contact us as soon as possible with answers to the above questions as well as any other information that will help us carry out our responsibilities and achieve our mutual goals of protecting and securing the Plum Island Animal Disease Center.

Sincerely,

Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States Senate

Timothy H. Bishop
United States House of Representatives

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