Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2008

James V. Johnson
Director, Office of National Laboratories
Science and Technology Directorate
Department of Homeland Security
Mail Stop 2100
245 Murray Lane, SW.
Building 410
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Director Johnson:

We are writing to urge that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) make officials available to answer the questions of elected officials for the local governments near each of the potential sites for the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). Local government leaders in Granville County have supported the location of the NBAF facility there, but citizens have asked and continue to ask local elected officials about the proposed facility, the impact of the facility on the community, and any possible hazards to the environment or public health that the operation of the facility may present. We fully expect that citizens in the communities near the other proposed sites are asking similar questions of their own local elected officials.

DHS has provided reasonable opportunity for the public to comment in preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS), and will allow further comment on the draft EIS. We have encouraged both local leaders and citizens to use these opportunities to provide input to DHS. There have been limited opportunities, however, for the public and for local government leaders to ask questions about the NBAF facility. The very threats to public health that the research at the NBAF facility would address also give rise to legitimate concern in the community that the facility be operated safely.

It would be preferable for DHS officials to visit with local government officials in Granville County, or areas near other proposed sites if the local leaders request such a meeting, in person to answer questions and otherwise address citizen concerns. At the very least, however, a conference call would help local government officials answer their neighbors' questions.

Thank you again for holding the scoping meeting in Creedmoor in September. We trust that DHS will continue to act in keeping with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act and DHS policy by responding to community concerns about the proposed

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NBAF facility. The community concerns are understandable, and DHS' long term relationship with the local government and community in which the NBAF facility is ultimately located would greatly benefit by addressing those concerns respectfully. Addressing questions now will help assure citizens living near each of the proposed sites that DHS will be responsive to future community concerns regarding the operation of the NBAF facility.

Sincerely,

Brad Miller
Member of Congress

G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress