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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: March 29, 2018

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator 

Re: **March 26, 2018 Letter from Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Arizona Region**

Supervisor Bronson recently received the attached letter dated March 26, 2018 from the Southwest Border HIDTA Arizona Region and asked that I provide copies to the Board since it does not appear that other Board members received this information.

Based on the Board tabling of the recent HIDTA grant for the Sheriff, I have asked Assistant County Administrator John Voorhees to conduct an intensive review of the County's involvement in the HIDTA program within Pima County. This report will include; the length of the program, involvements, typical funding received by the County, use of those funds, and whether or not the County has any other law enforcement officers or other agencies assigned to the HIDTA program.

I would expect a comprehensive report from Assistant County Administrator Voorhees within the next 30 days and once received I will distribute same to the Board.

CHH/lab

Attachment

c: The Honorable Mark Napier, Pima County Sheriff  
John Voorhees, Assistant County Administrator



**N. DAWN MERTZ**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**SOUTHWEST BORDER HIDTA**  
**ARIZONA REGION**

602.426.0771  
5350 N. 48TH STREET, SUITE 225  
CHANDLER, AZ 85226  
WWW.AZHIDTA.ORG

March 26, 2018

Sharon Bronson, District 3  
Pima County Board of Supervisors  
130 W. Congress Street, 11th Floor  
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Supervisor Bronson:

The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program is a grant-funded initiative of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and provides assistance to Federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug trafficking regions of the United States. HIDTA helps improve the effectiveness and efficiency of drug control efforts by facilitating cooperation between law enforcement agencies through resource and information sharing and providing funding to Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement organizations to confront drug-trafficking organizations. Funds are also used for demand reduction, education, and prevention efforts and resources.

The Arizona HIDTA was established in 1990 as part of the Southwest Border HIDTA, which includes California, New Mexico, and Texas. The Arizona HIDTA's mission is to facilitate Federal, state, local, and tribal multi-agency Task Forces to increase the safety of Arizona's citizens by reducing drug trafficking, money laundering, drug-related crime and associated violence, using an intelligence-driven, threat-focused strategy to target significant drug trafficking organizations impacting Arizona. The long-standing law enforcement partnerships facilitated by the HIDTA program are an essential component of an effective national drug control strategy. HIDTA is truly an agency-neutral program that serves only to facilitate and coordinate the efforts of Federal, state, tribal, and local law enforcement. The strength of the HIDTA program is found in its innovation, neutrality, flexibility, and diversity.

The nation is in the midst of an alarming drug problem which threatens the future of our youth and country as a whole. Illegal drugs, such as methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and other synthetic drugs, continue to be smuggled into our country. It is imperative to have a coordinated effort to combat these drugs and the operations of the drug trafficking organizations and

transnational gangs causing this damage to our country, state, and Pima County. The sobering reality is that drug-induced deaths have surpassed motor vehicle deaths every year since 2009, with overdose deaths reaching approximately 64,000 in 2016.

To address this threat, the Arizona HIDTA facilitates, supports, and enhances collaborative drug control efforts among law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations with a common voice and unified strategy to significantly reduce the impact of illegal trafficking and use of drugs throughout Arizona and the United States.

In Arizona, the positive impact of HIDTA is undeniable. HIDTA funds coordinate and support the efforts of 582 full-time and over 200 part-time participants from 70 agencies. Twenty-two (22) initiatives (task forces) are located in the nine designated HIDTA counties (Cochise, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, and Yuma). There are seven HIDTA task forces located in Pima County. HIDTA funds salary and overtime for the Pima County Sheriff's Department, Pima County Attorney's Office, and Pima County Probation, as well as additional monies for services and the Pima County Sheriff's Regional Training Center.

The Arizona HIDTA Investigative Support Center provides analytical support to investigators, as well as strategic intelligence products, to further combat drug trafficking in our region and across the United States. In addition, the HIDTA program provides our law enforcement agencies with nationwide connectivity with other HIDTAs, increasing the exchange of information and enhancing joint investigations. In 2017, Arizona HIDTA Initiatives<sup>1</sup>:

- Dismantled/disrupted 53 drug trafficking organizations
- Arrested 8,113 drug traffickers and violent offenders
- Seized illicit drugs with a wholesale value of \$910,208,835
  - Methamphetamine – 3,090 Kilos
  - Heroin – 432 Kilos
  - Fentanyl – 50 Kilos
  - Cocaine – 1,085 Kilos
  - Marijuana – 159,977 Kilos
- Deprived drug trafficking organizations of over \$25 million of illegally gained cash and assets
- Provided mission-focused training for 2,749 students for a total of 43,813 hours
- Provided Demand Reduction training
- Developed and provided numerous prevention materials to law enforcement, health agencies, and prevention coalitions

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<sup>1</sup> From HIDTA's Performance Management Process System (PMP) as of March 15, 2018.

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Additionally, Arizona HIDTA, Arizona Department of Health Services, and Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) have launched an Opioid Monitoring Initiative to provide assistance in identifying, predicting, and reducing the number of opioid-related fatalities and overdoses by sharing current data/trends with law enforcement, healthcare providers, and communities to promote public safety, education, and increase awareness.

Pima County agencies are an integral part of drug law enforcement within the HIDTA, and the task forces serve as a force multiplier for drug law enforcement within Pima County and the State of Arizona.

Please feel free to contact me at (602) 426-0771 if you have any questions or if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Dawn Mertz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "D" at the end.

N. Dawn Mertz  
Arizona HIDTA Executive Director

cc: Chuck Huckelberry, Pima County Administrator