

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

Director Dr. Rahul Gupta
Office of National Drug Control Policy
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20503

February 22, 2022

Dear Director Gupta,

I write in strong support of the request submitted by Sullivan County District Attorney Meagan Galligan to the United States Office of National Drug Control Policy to designate Sullivan County as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) within the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area of New York and New Jersey (NY/NJ HIDTA).

Sullivan County law enforcement agencies have reported a dire need for increased resources to combat the trafficking of heroin, fentanyl, cocaine and methamphetamines, making Sullivan's inclusion in the NY/NJ HIDTA critical. Disturbingly, according to New York's [most recent county-level opioid data](#), in 2020, the opioid overdose death rate in Sullivan County was three times higher than the state average and its per capita overdose rate was the highest of New York's 62 counties.

Moreover, of particular concern is the impact of the high number of county residents suffering with Substance Use Disorder and its effect on Sullivan County's newborns. Specifically, three times as many Sullivan County babies suffer from Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) compared to neighboring Orange County newborns. Moreover, high drug use and availability, as well as these shocking rates of NAS, greatly contribute to Sullivan County's consistently low health ranking as 61st of New York's 62 counties.

Sullivan County and its major transportation routes, including Route 17, also have a well-documented history of drug-related arrests. However, despite these alarming statistics, Sullivan County is the only county in the entire Hudson Valley region without a HIDTA designation. Importantly, Sullivan County's law enforcement agencies, including the Sullivan County District Attorney's Office and the Sullivan County Opioid Epidemic Task Force, have committed significant resources to respond to the drug trafficking problem throughout Sullivan County and the entire region. These are initiatives that would be greatly aided by this designation as a HIDTA county by providing real time data, guiding operations and planning for resource deployment to provide immediate assistance during critical incidents of drug-related activity and violence.

For these reasons, and many more, Sullivan County would greatly benefit from federal, state and local law enforcement resources along with the intelligence sharing that is available through the

HIDTA designation. The Sullivan County District Attorney's Office has coordinated an agreement with every law enforcement agency in Sullivan County to partner with the Hudson Valley Crime Analysis Center to promote active participation to help eradicate the importation and distribution of illegal drugs, not just in Sullivan county, but throughout New York State and beyond.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important request. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my Hudson Valley Regional Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles E. Schumer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" and last name "Schumer" clearly distinguishable.

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator