

Subsequent legislation further sharpened that goal by requiring a comprehensive plan for aviation.

- I believe we have taken positive steps to improve aviation security through technology upgrades and improvements; a federalized screener workforce; and a continued focus on a comprehensive approach to airline and airport security. Make no mistake – the traveling public is more secure today than before September 11, 2001.

- For many traveling this summer, airport security can be a frustrating and anxiety ridden experience. However, TSA has been working with airports to introduce the Checkpoint Evolution also being referenced as “the checkpoint of the future,” which is being demonstrated at the BWI Airport. The program is supposed to introduce new technologies and

create a calming checkpoint experience and I am interested in hearing more about this initiative.

- Further, I have long been a proponent of in-line explosive detection systems (EDS) and have introduced legislation in the past to help generate additional revenue so that more airports can become equipped. In-line baggage screening systems have a much higher throughput than stand-alone systems. If we install in-line systems, more bags will be screened by explosive detection systems instead of less reliable, alternative methods.

- Of the largest 29 airports in the country, 6 have full in-line EDS systems while 14 have partial EDS systems. Fifty-two airports in total have either full or partial systems and 407 of

the federalized airports in the United States do not have in-line EDS system.

- The TSA and airport operators rely on commitments in letters of intent (LOIs) as their principal method for funding the modification of airport facilities to incorporate in-line baggage screening systems. The TSA has issued eight LOIs to cover the costs of installing systems at nine airports for a total cost to the federal government of \$957.1 million over four years.

- In the past, the Government Accountability Office reports that TSA has estimated that in-line baggage screening systems at the nine airports that received LOI funding could save the federal government \$1.3 billion over seven years. TSA

further estimated that it could recover its initial investment in the in-line systems at these airports in a little over one year.

- I am interested in hearing from TSA and GAO on what progress is being made on in-line EDS and where we can expect to see more installations of these systems to optimize our security at airports.

- I am also interested in an update on domestic air cargo screening given that 100 percent of passenger air cargo must be screened by 2010.

- Further, I have concerns with the pace at which TSA is moving to issue and implement security regulations for foreign repair stations. Under current law, the FAA will be prohibited from issuing new certificates to foreign repair

stations, if TSA does not issue a final rule by August 3, 2008.

I am interested to know if TSA plans to make this deadline and if not, what is a realistic timeline Congress can expect a rule.

➤ Finally, I believe the Registered Travelers program and initiatives like CrewPASS are important programs to expedite frequent travelers and crew members through security checkpoints, allowing screeners to spend more time on others. Hearing how each of these programs are developing and expanding would be beneficial.

➤ With that, I want to again welcome the witnesses today and I look forward to the testimony.

➤ Before I recognize Mr. Petri for his opening statement, I ask unanimous consent to allow 2 weeks for all Members to revise and extend their remarks and to permit the submission of additional statements and materials by Members and witnesses. Without objection, so ordered.