



TESTIMONY OF

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Introduction

Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am honored to have the confidence of President Trump and Secretary Noem to serve as the Under Secretary for Science and Technology (S&T) at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I look forward to executing the Trump Administration priorities to make the nation safer through advancement and application of science and technology.

I appreciate the Committee's continued engagement with the DHS S&T Directorate, and I look forward to our work together during my tenure as Under Secretary.

The S&T Directorate plays a unique role within DHS. We are responsible for understanding emerging threats and opportunities, and for ensuring the Department has access to timely, effective, and responsible technology solutions to meet its evolving mission needs. As threats to the homeland become more complex, adaptive, and technology-enabled, S&T's mission is to help DHS stay ahead of those challenges.

S&T works closely with DHS operational components, the private sector, academia, international and interagency partners to deliver solutions that enhance security, improve efficiency, and strengthen operational effectiveness. Our success is measured not by research alone, but by outcomes delivered to operators and the American people.

In my short time in this role, I have been energized by seeing S&T in action and witnessing firsthand the critical role technology plays in keeping our nation safe.

Just last week, I had the opportunity to meet with our partners at operational sites on the West Coast, including our DHS colleagues in the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as our local law enforcement partners. At Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), I observed TSA security operations and gained valuable insight into how emerging technologies can create new opportunities for enhanced safety and security. At SoFi Stadium, I engaged with security teams to discuss how innovative solutions can strengthen our defenses as we prepare to host the FIFA World Cup in the summer of 2026.

I toured the complex operations and technology required for cargo operations and screening by CBP as they ensure the safety of two of the largest U.S. seaports in Los Angeles and Long Beach, California, to cargo operations and screening. At the Air and Marine Operations Center, I met with partners to discuss collaborative activities, such as the Kestrel system which enhances their ability to determine highest-priority threats and make real-time operational decisions and explore enhancements to achieve full domain awareness across our borders and airspace.

My experiences this past week have crystalized for me the importance of advancing the Administration's priorities and my commitment to ensuring S&T remains focused on the needs of our operational components while staying ahead of our adversaries. Our organization is also taking on broader challenges, including leading efforts in areas such as Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems. Secretary Noem recently announced the establishment of the Program Executive Office for Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems, investing to rapidly procure and deploy advanced counter-drone technologies. As Secretary Noem noted, these are critical investments to protect our borders and to keep Americans safe and secure during America 250 celebrations and at 2026 FIFA World Cup venues.

My recent trip also enabled me to engage with private sector partners, which will be a key theme of my service as Under Secretary. Not only does the private sector operate much of the critical infrastructure upon which our nation relies, but they are a major source of technological innovation necessary to protect the homeland. One of my guiding principles will be to seek out and adopt private sector solutions whenever possible. Leveraging existing or adaptable technologies will allow DHS to accelerate delivery to the field.

I look forward to working with Congress on key legislative priorities including the restoration of Other Transaction Authority (OTA). OTA is a critical tool used to partner with nontraditional small- and medium-sized businesses and organizations on innovations that enhance our national security. The expiration of the authority on September 30, 2024, brought to a halt various efforts at S&T to develop solutions across several mission areas.

Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the Committee, S&T is committed to delivering innovative, responsible, and operationally relevant solutions that strengthen the security of the homeland.

We look forward to continuing our close collaboration with Congress, across DHS components and partner agencies, and our external partners as we work to execute Administration priorities, understand emerging threats, and leverage private sector innovation to make the nation safer.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.