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and

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Good morning Chairmen Katko and Donovan, Ranking Members Watson Coleman and Payne, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittees. We are grateful for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) efforts regarding surface transportation security and technology initiatives. Today's hearing is timely, as technology deployment for both aviation and surface transportation systems will be critical to TSA's success in 2018 and beyond.

TSA appreciates the continued support of this Committee and its Members, as we carry out our vital security mission. We are grateful for the constructive relationship TSA enjoys with this Committee, and look forward to our continued work together to ensure the security of our nation's transportation systems.

The U.S. surface transportation system, which is comprised of roads, bridges, tunnels, mass transit systems, passenger and freight railroads, over-the-road bus operators, motor carrier operators, pipelines, and maritime facilities, is an extremely complex, interconnected, and largely open network. The various transportation modes within this system operate daily in close coordination with and proximity to one another. In fact, many of the modes use the same roads, bridges, and tunnels to function. Americans and our economy need and depend on the surface transportation system to operate securely and safely.

To illustrate the magnitude and importance of the system, which is moving people and commodities on an essentially continuous basis, consider that over 11 million passengers daily travel on the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NY MTA) system alone. Every year more than 10 billion trips are taken on 6,800 U.S. mass transit systems, which range from very small bus-only systems in rural areas to very large multi-modal systems, like the NY MTA, in major cities. Over-the-road bus operators carry approximately 750 million intercity bus passengers each year. Almost 4,000 commercial bus companies travel on the four million miles of roadway in the United States and on more than 600,000 highway bridges greater than 20 feet in length and through 350 tunnels greater than 300 feet in length. Those same roads, bridges and tunnels support the movement of goods throughout the country by eight million large capacity commercial trucks. As for our railroads and pipelines, more than 500 individual freight railroads carrying essential goods operate on nearly 140,000 miles of track, and 2.5 million miles of pipelines, owned and operated by approximately 3,000 private companies, transport natural gas, refined petroleum products, and other commercial products.

As these facts demonstrate, securing surface transportation is both a critically important and complex undertaking. Recent terror attacks and plots – like the attempted suicide bombing in the New York City Port Authority Bus Terminal and vehicle ramming attack in Manhattan, serve as compelling reminders of the vast challenges of securing a “system of systems” that is designed to quickly move massive volumes of passengers and commodities.

When assessing risk in any particular transportation mode, TSA considers the threat, the vulnerability, and the consequence, should an incident occur. TSA takes the threat to the surface mode very seriously. Although we have invested significant resources and implemented numerous programs and policies to reduce identified vulnerabilities and minimize potential consequences, in the current climate, vigilance and preparation can only take us so far. For this reason, TSA is reexamining its approaches and actively assessing how best to leverage and enhance its surface expertise to strengthen our partnership with surface stakeholders.

Unlike aviation, where TSA has been heavily involved in day-to-day security operations since the agency was created in 2001, we have primarily approached surface transportation security as a partnership with the owners and operators of the system. This difference in approach is reflective of the characteristics of the system. The interconnected, varied and expansive scope of the surface transportation system creates unique security challenges that are best addressed by system owners and operators and federally supported through stakeholder communication, coordination, and collaboration. To best assist surface transportation owners and operators with their security needs, TSA focuses its efforts on system assessments, voluntary operator compliance with industry standards, collaborative law enforcement and security operations, accurate and timely exchange of intelligence information, regulatory oversight, and technology expertise.

TSA invests its resources to help surface owner and operators identify vulnerabilities and risks in their operations, and then works with them to develop and implement risk-mitigating solutions to address them. The inherently open and expansive scope of surface passenger transportation and the evolving threat to it requires TSA to continue researching and developing innovative processes and technologies to increase security without creating undesired financial or operational burdens. Engagement and partnership with surface transportation owners and operators is the key to fostering innovation and ensuring the system is secure both today and in the future.

TSA incorporates the needs and capability gaps of surface transportation owners and operators into our work to influence and stimulate the development of new security technologies in the marketplace. Our approach is designed to make more readily available innovative and advanced technologies useful for public area security. TSA actively follows the fast-moving advancement of security technologies to assess whether emerging technologies, including from outside the transportation environment, could be applied to address current and evolving threats to the surface transportation system.

TSA accomplishes this goal through its Intermodal Division by working closely with surface transportation owners and operators to introduce new technology and approaches to securing surface transportation. We establish collaborative operational test beds for different modes of transportation (mass transit, highway motor carrier, pipeline, and freight rail), and critical infrastructure protection security technology projects to address the increasing threat demonstrated from attacks world-wide. TSA's Intermodal Division's Surface program was established in 2004 following the Madrid and London attacks and has been fostering "innovation" within the surface transportation system for more than a dozen years. Working in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), TSA's Intermodal Division provides security technology recommendations and solutions for surface and aviation transportation venues by evaluating existing security technologies and developing requirements for new technologies. The Division's mission areas reflect provisions in the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 and other public laws, executive orders, and National policies and plans.

Since its creation, the Intermodal Division has stimulated the marketplace and assessed numerous technologies, ranging from those effective and suitable for person-borne threats to technology that protects critical infrastructure, to detection of chemical and biological threats. TSA is also a national leader in providing analysis tools and mitigation means for explosive blast in passenger rail vehicles.

TSA's surface security technology program has progressed as threats and risk have grown, with the expectation that threats overseas would eventually manifest in the United States. Our efforts have included short-term technology demonstrations in venues such as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's PATH system and the Manhattan Bus Terminal, Amtrak, Staten Island Ferry terminals, NY Mass Transit Authority infrastructure, ferry terminals in Long Island and Cape May, hazardous materials pipeline cyber security vulnerability assessments and mitigation recommendations, and infrastructure protection work in the Newark and Jersey City areas.

TSA has formal agreements with leading and higher risk surface venues to serve as test beds for promising technology. New Jersey Transit Police was TSA's first test bed partner over ten years ago and continues to work with us on assessing various technologies to address their security needs. In fact, TSA currently has ongoing test beds with five of the 10 highest risk mass transit and passenger rail venues, and agreements in principle from NY MTA and Port Authority for the World Trade Center Oculus. We also have agreements in principle with Los Angeles World Airports Authority and Burbank Airport to serve as public area security testbed partners. The results of that public area security technology testing will support potential use in both surface and aviation venues. Finally, TSA has formal agreements with several freight railroads for technology to protect key rail infrastructure such as bridges, high risk rail lines in urban areas, and rail yards, as well as with the nation's largest hazardous materials pipeline operator.

For example, TSA is presently working with New Jersey Transit, Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, Amtrak, and Los Angeles Metro to assess the effectiveness of technologies designed to address threats associated with person- and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. Through such efforts, as well as intelligence, information sharing, and active engagement with surface owners and operators, TSA helps technology manufacturers develop their products to better meet the security needs of the surface transportation system, and serves as the technology surrogate for the many smaller transportation authorities that cannot afford or support expensive technology development and assessments. As a result of TSA's security technology support efforts, surface owners and operators can make informed decisions about funding and acquiring security technologies to meet their operational needs.

TSA and DHS S&T are long-term and close collaborators. We have a clear understanding of each other's roles and missions and take great care to optimize our work together. DHS S&T specializes in longer-term research and development (R&D) and proof of concept technologies while TSA engages the marketplace for technologies that are more mature. In most cases, TSA is considering pre-production prototypes that can immediately benefit from operational user feedback and stimulus to enter the marketplace more rapidly. As needed, TSA makes its test beds available to DHS S&T for early user impressions of emergent R&D technology and design recommendations.

TSA is committed to securing the Nation's surface transportation system from terrorist activities and attacks. Chairmen Katko and Donovan, Ranking Members Watson Coleman and Payne, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittees, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. We are honored to serve in this capacity and look forward to your questions.