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**before the**  
**United States House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Homeland Security**  
**Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security**  
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Good morning Chairman Correa, Ranking Member Lesko, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. On behalf of all TSA employees, I'd like to express our appreciation for the continued support of Congress, the productive relationship we have with this Subcommittee, and the authorities provided through the *TSA Modernization Act of 2018*, the first reauthorization of our critical security agency. Thank you for inviting me to testify about our implementation of the *TSA Modernization Act* and the work we are doing to keep the nation's transportation system secure.

TSA was created in the wake of the September 11th attacks and through the Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001 was charged with the mission of protecting the nation's transportation system to ensure the freedom of movement for people and commerce. Much has changed since then, but our fundamental mission has not, nor has our most important asset – our people.

I am extremely proud of the 63,000 dedicated professionals who comprise TSA's workforce, who demonstrate our core values of integrity, respect, and commitment and provide security for our transportation systems each and every day. Together, the efforts of our

workforce secures and facilitates the transportation for a daily average of 85 million passengers, cargo and industry with daily revenues totaling over \$2.56 billion, and critical transportation infrastructure across the country. Exemplary of their dedication to the mission, earlier this year Transportation Security Officers (TSOs), Federal Air Marshals, vetting and intelligence personnel, Transportation Security Inspectors, canine handlers, and support staffs worked for 35 days without pay under extraordinarily challenging circumstances during the lapse in appropriations -- despite suffering personal financial hardship. Although TSA was able to leverage the flexibility provided by our authorities and appropriations to use prior year carry-over funding to provide a small portion to our workforce, the impact was real. In fact, our 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results reflected that nearly 44 percent of our workforce indicated the partial government shutdown had a “very negative” or “extremely negative” impact on their everyday work, while an additional 39 percent characterized it as a “moderately negative” or “slightly negative” effect. We are hopeful that such circumstances can be avoided in the future and look forward to working with Congress to develop solutions.

The U.S. transportation system accommodates approximately 965 million domestic and international aviation passengers annually – this equates to the screening of 2.8 million passengers, 1.4 million checked bags, and 5.1 million carry-on bags each day. In surface transportation, there are more than 10.1 billion passenger trips on mass transit per year, approximately 600 million passengers traveling over-the-road buses each year, and more than 1 million hazardous material shipments on trucks every day. Beyond those usage numbers associated with a relatively open network of transportation modes, the physical scope of the system encompasses approximately 138,000 miles of railroad tracks; 4.2 million miles of highway; 616,000 highway bridges; 503 road tunnels; and nearly 2.7 million miles of pipeline.

Although the scope of our transportation system is significant, it is critically important from a planning and execution perspective to also recognize that demands are increasing. For instance, the last twelve months represent the highest volume of air travelers in the agency's history, and we just completed the busiest summer travel season ever, screening more than 262 million aviation passengers and crew between Memorial Day and Labor Day. These increased numbers will likely continue as the aviation industry estimates anticipated annual growth of 4.5 percent for passenger travel and 2.5 percent for cargo over the next 20 years. Thanks in part to the support of Congress, TSA has been able to take measures to address the recent increases in volume, with current staffing levels at 2,100 more full time employees than last year as well as a 20 percent increase in the allocation of overtime to ensure airports have the flexibility to schedule officers during peak times.

Today, aviation and transportation hubs remain highly-valued targets for terrorists. Adversaries whose methods of attack, which now includes the potential use of unmanned aircraft systems (or drones), are more decentralized and opportunistic than ever before. The reality for TSA is that every day we are challenged by a pervasive and evolving threat environment, both in the physical and cyber realms. We are constantly working to address these challenges and recognize that we must both ensure we are effectively countering known threats, while investing in analysis, research, and development to prepare for the threats of the future, including changes to improve our people, procedures, and technology.

TSA's continued success is contingent upon our ability to rise to the challenge of outmatching dynamic threats to our aviation and surface transportation systems and doing so within the parameters of increasing demand – and, importantly, our fiscal environment. We are grateful to Congress for the support it has provided for us to execute our mission. Implementing

the *TSA Modernization Act* is a priority for the Agency. TSA, through its leadership corps and organizational structure, has implemented more than 58 percent of the 180 requirements contained within the *TSA Modernization Act* and continues its efforts to execute those that remain. As part of our implementation approach, in the last year we have provided eight regular status updates on all requirements, including communicating challenges associated with carrying out congressional direction.

The authorities provided by the *TSA Modernization Act of 2018* have provided more flexibility for meeting the challenges the Agency faces today. Our nation relies on the professionals at TSA, and across both the domestic and international transportation community, to protect passengers and commerce traveling to and within the United States. Securing the Nation's transportation system, which is complex, expansive, and interdependent, requires a collective effort; it is not something that the government can accomplish alone. To that end, TSA recognizes the critical importance of partnering with stakeholders in developing transportation security solutions. For instance, pursuant to the *TSA Modernization Act*, we are currently working with Phoenix-Mesa Airport to collect and analyze data associated with automated exit lane technology.

We are also pleased to immediately use the authority provided by the *TSA Modernization Act* to establish a Surface Transportation Security Advisory Committee, which was established in April and held its second meeting last week. TSA is grateful for the invaluable insights provided by this new committee as well as continued support and collaboration we receive from stakeholders through the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, DHS Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Committee's Transportation Systems Sector Coordinating, and other forums. The discussions, feedback, and input provided by those entities, as well as new working

groups we established pursuant to the *TSA Modernization Act* -- focused upon explosives detection, canine capacity, and public area security -- are facilitating formal and regular information sharing between transportation stakeholders and the development of best practices and guidance for countering determined adversaries.

Resiliency is reflected in TSA's people, structure, and doctrine. As required by the *Modernization Act*, we conducted an overarching efficiency review of the organization, better aligned our structure to improve how we execute our surface transportation security, elevated our vetting and air cargo missions, and performed comprehensive reviews of our personnel system. These efforts, along with Congress establishing a five year term for the Administrator, have placed TSA on a sound course for years to come.

The TSA Strategy, which mirrors the *TSA Modernization Act's* emphasis on enhancing security technology and risk based decision making, ensures our focus on capability innovation and threat-informed, information-driven operations. The Administrator's Intent explains how we will execute the Strategy through 2020. The TSA Strategy and Administrator's Intent detail how we will accomplish them. Both documents are posted on our website for public review and transparency. In our Strategy, we list three priorities: improve security and safeguard the transportation system; accelerate action; and commit to our people. These priorities reflect TSA's focus on preserving frontline operations, quickly transitioning to new solutions and capabilities, and creating efficiencies to optimize limited resources.

### **Improve Security and Safeguard the Transportation System**

TSA's operational environment requires robust partnerships and effective security operations across all modes of transportation. We strive to strengthen our operational approach through a proficient and professional workforce, more effective threat detection capabilities,

enhanced intelligence and vetting, and better communication and coordination with stakeholders. Simultaneously, we also strive to improve the passenger experience.

When Administrator Pekoske testified before this Subcommittee earlier this year, he explained the efforts TSA was taking to rapidly test computed tomography (CT) screening systems and expand their use at airport checkpoints. CT technology allows TSA officers to more easily identify potential threats in a less invasive way, and eventually may eliminate the need for passengers to remove liquids, electronics and food items from carry-on passenger bags. This technology enhances the effectiveness of TSA's security screening process and improves the passenger experience. Thanks to the support of Congress, TSA recently awarded a contract for 300 CT units. The deployment of this technology along with Credential Authentication Technology (CAT), which identifies documents that are fraudulent or have been tampered with as well as providing our officers direct access to individual passenger vetting results, is transforming the effectiveness and efficiency of our checkpoint screening process.

TSA has explored a number of other ways to improve performance, manage risk, and use resources more effectively. Consistent with the *TSA Modernization Act* requirement to limit the use of TSA Pre✓® lanes to only individuals with Known Traveler Numbers, which represents approximately 20 percent of passengers traveling through our nation's airports each day, we successfully conducted pilots at two airports, demonstrating that TSA can achieve higher throughput for "pure Pre✓®" lanes. In addition, we also sought to test our Future Lane Experience (FLEX) model at two airports to assess throughput when we provide alternate procedures for processing passengers identified as lower risk; this screening is not as streamlined as what a TSA Pre✓® member would receive but is more efficient than standard processing. CAT units are integral to further expanding these initiatives.

Similarly, TSA conducted joint pilots with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), using the facial recognition system and photo galleries CBP built to meet its biometric entry-exit program mandate, to assess how facial recognition technologies could be used to potentially automate Travel Document Checker (TDC) functions at our checkpoint. TSA recently conducted a pilot program at Las Vegas McCarran Airport, adding an automated facial matching capability to existing CAT systems to assess operational effectiveness for matching a traveler's image to the photo on the ID they present to the officer at the TDC. In carrying out these efforts, which are designed to find ways to both improve security effectiveness and enhance the passenger experience, TSA is committed to ensuring appropriate privacy and data protections are in place. Building upon the biometrics report DHS submitted to Congress earlier this year, we are currently working with DHS Science and Technology Directorate to analyze data derived from the Las Vegas pilot to evaluate camera system and system matching performance and assess any variation in biometric performance based on the reference image source.

Looking abroad, for the last two years, TSA has implemented enhanced security requirements for all commercial flights to the United States. Those measures include enhanced screening of passengers and electronic devices and heightened security standards for aircraft and airports. These new security measures have been implemented at 283 last points of departure airports in 106 countries. These airports service approximately 338 U.S. and foreign airlines, transporting an average of 375,000 passengers on 2,100 flights daily. While those actions are effective in the near term, TSA is focused on raising the global baseline for aviation security through long term partnerships and cooperation. As mandated by the *TSA Modernization Act*, earlier this year TSA conducted a Global Aviation Security Review. Through that process, we identified a number of best practices related to enhancing collaboration with foreign partners on

aviation security capacity and performed focused audit visits to determine compliance with TSA Security Directives/Emergency Amendments. TSA is using that review to advance the improvement of international aviation security standards for passengers.

TSA also continues to improve air cargo security. Earlier this year, per the *TSA Modernization Act*, TSA established an air cargo division, reviewed the effectiveness of the certified cargo screening program, and conducted a feasibility study of the potential use of CT systems for screening air cargo. Consistent with the *TSA Modernization Act* requirement as well as the results of that study, TSA has initiated a pilot program with an all-cargo entity to test the effectiveness of CT for screening in such a setting. As threats continue to evolve, TSA, in cooperation with partners world-wide, will work to improve intelligence sharing and standardize best practices, while also pursuing technological security advancements.

In addition to our aviation passenger screening mission, TSA continues to oversee the security of the surface transportation system. On a daily basis, TSA assists surface stakeholders by conducting vulnerability assessments, analyzing security programs across the surface sector -- from pipelines, to mass transit, to freight rail, to over-the-road bus entities -- providing training and exercise support, sharing intelligence information, and executing collaborative law enforcement and security operations -- such as those operations conducted by the Visual Intermodal Prevention and Response (or VIPR) teams. Since December 2018, TSA, in partnership with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), has conducted four Validated Architecture Design Reviews, which are in depth cybersecurity assessments, at select pipeline companies and has four additional assessments scheduled. We also conducted 18 intermodal security exercise training programs (I-STEP) exercises this past fiscal year to evaluate and enhance the preparedness level of the nation's surface transportation modes. In an



effort to improve the support and services we provide, over the last several months TSA has elevated the Surface Operations leadership position, realigned resources to focus on surface inspections, established the Surface Transportation Security Advisory Committee, and distributed a survey to more than 3,000 surface transportation stakeholders to better assess their needs.

Finally, TSA continues to work to address current and evolving threats by looking at emerging technologies, including from outside the transportation environment, to assess how they might be applied in the surface transportation environment. Through the process of establishing operational test beds, TSA works with surface transportation owners and operators to develop and deploy technology solutions to advance security for different modes of transportation (mass transit, highway motor carrier, pipeline, and freight rail). While TSA does not procure the technology for surface transportation operators and owners, the test bed approach assists with development of their technology requirements, helps inform their acquisition decision making process, and enables TSA to share the results of the testing in various technology forums. As an example of how the test bed approach assists stakeholders, Los Angeles Metro used results from its test bed partnership with TSA last year to support its application for a Transportation Security Grant to procure state of the art stand-off explosives detection systems. These systems are in service, helping to secure the LA Metro system from terrorist threats.

### **Accelerate Action**

In many ways, 2019 represents a year of implementation of a number of initiatives that TSA accelerated last year – specifically, deployment of both CT and CAT technology at the checkpoints. This year has also included a renewed focus on developing the next generation of

Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT) devices. TSA is currently partnering with the DHS Science and Technology Directorate, the Department of Energy, and security stakeholders to assess next generation enhanced AIT systems. Through providing automated target algorithms with more data, these systems should increase detection performance and reduce potential false alarms without compromising an individual's privacy. TSA will also continue to conduct airport trials of alternative AIT solutions designed to reduce processing times and improve performance accuracy.

By embracing emerging technologies, leveraging agile processes, and facilitating collaboration, TSA is positioning itself to keep pace with industry partners while advancing security across all modes of transportation. To that end, TSA has formalized a strategic management process that aligns strategy and policy to operations by leveraging risk assessment capabilities to inform budgeting and investment decisions. We used this approach in the development of the TSA FY 2020- 24 Capital Investment Plan that was submitted to Congress earlier this year pursuant to the *TSA Modernization Act* requirement.

Additionally, consistent with the direction of the *TSA Modernization Act*, TSA conducted a review of advanced security screening technology testing and evaluation, acquisitions, and procurement practices within TSA and, among other things, assessed how it can further encourage innovation and competition among technology stakeholders, including through increased participation of and funding for small business concerns. Through TSA's Innovation Task Force Broad Agency Announcement, we solicited solutions to nine different problem statements related to issues ranging from alarm resolution to identity verification to automated security design. In response to that request, TSA received 85 total submissions from 104 unique vendors, 55 percent of which had never responded to a TSA solicitation before, and 72 percent

that had never contracted with TSA. Of the twelve solutions that were ultimately selected for demonstration in an operational environment, seven were provided by small businesses. In Fiscal Year 2019, over \$460 million of TSA's \$1.87 billion of funding available for contracts, or 24.5 percent, was obligated to small businesses, exceeding our established small business goal of 23 percent for the year. Finally, on October 11, 2019, TSA announced the opening of a window for the qualification of vendor CT systems under the Checkpoint Property Screening System (CPSS) program. The notice also advises industry that resulting solicitations for qualified systems may include set asides for a portion of CPSS requirements.

### **Commit to Our People**

TSA recognizes that our strategic success depends upon our workforce. Our priority to Commit to Our People focuses on our ability to attract, hire, train, develop, promote, and equip our workforce at all levels of the organization. TSA commissioned a Blue Ribbon Panel comprised of public and private sector leaders with extensive human capital expertise to conduct a full review of the human capital service policy and delivery at TSA, including TSO pay and compensation, to identify ways we can improve as an organization. Among a number of findings, the Panel reaffirmed that TSA's authorizing statute, the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), provides TSA with greater authority and flexibility to manage our workforce than the Title 5 General Schedule. Working within that authority, TSA currently has a number of initiatives underway that are designed to enhance our ability to compete as an employer and attract and retain talent.

- Two-Tier Performance System – Based upon input from our workforce, we determined that the way we had implemented our multi-tier performance system was placing significant paperwork burdens on our employees and supervisors without

providing meaningful distinctions between employees or benefits for their professional development. Beginning this month, TSA shifted to a simpler two-tier system for the screening workforce (e.g., meets standards/does not meet standards) that will streamline the process and significantly reduce subjectivity.

- Model Officer Recognition – Also earlier this month, TSA announced a new program that provides the agency with a mechanism to better recognize its top officers for the work they are doing throughout the year with monetary and non-monetary awards for special acts as well as pay increases.
- TSO Career Progression – This initiative provides a clearly defined and transparent career path for uniformed officers with pay increases tied to enhanced skills and training. The first phase of TSO Career Progression was implemented in August 2018, and TSA has updated and rolled out six new training classes this past year.

Over the last few years, TSA has seen significant improvements in the results of the annual FEVS. While we are proud of the advancements reflected through the FEVS, we realize that as an Agency we must continue to innovate and compete as an employer to ensure our workplace attracts, keeps, and develops great personnel. We are confident that the actions we have taken to improve employee communications with senior leadership through reestablishing the National Advisory Council and creating uniformed advisors to the Administrator, as well as the initiatives noted previously, will advance our efforts towards that goal.

### **Conclusion**

TSA is grateful for the authorities provided through the *TSA Modernization Act* and is committed to implementing its requirements as quickly as possible while executing our strategic priorities. While those goals are ambitious, they are necessary to stay ahead of persistent,

determined adversaries while also preserving individual freedoms and the benefits of an open, efficient transportation system. TSA was created in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks on our Homeland, and we are resolute in our desire to ensure that a similar event never occurs in the future. We are confident that through vigilance, collaboration with domestic and international partners, and the continued support of Congress and all of our stakeholders, such an attack will not occur on “Our Watch.”

Chairman Correa, Ranking Member Lesko, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am honored to serve in this capacity along with the dedicated men and women of TSA. I look forward to your questions.