



TESTIMONY OF

HECTOR MANCHA
Director, Field Operations, El Paso
Office of Field Operations

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Department of Homeland Security

FOR A FIELD HEARING

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Committee on Homeland Security
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ON

“Port of Entry Infrastructure, Technology, and Staffing”

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Chairwoman Torres Small, Ranking Member Crenshaw, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee, it is my honor to appear before you today to discuss the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) mission to secure the Nation's borders while facilitating the lawful trade and travel that undergird the American way of life.

CBP's port operations span 328 land, air, and sea Ports of Entry across the United States and include an intercontinental network of 16 preclearance stations located in six countries around the globe. On any given day, CBP processes over 1.1 million passengers and pedestrians; in excess of 285,000 privately owned vehicles; over 81,000 truck, rail, and sea containers; and approximately \$7.7 billion worth of imported goods. In the same day, CBP will arrest 75 wanted criminals; identify 1,607 individuals with suspected national security concerns; quarantine 4,552 materials posing potential threats to U.S. agriculture, wildlife, and natural resources; and seize \$3.7 million worth of products with Intellectual Property Rights violations. These statistics¹ demonstrate both the important work that CBP does to facilitate lawful trade and travel and evince CBP's commitment to faithfully execute its critical national security mission.

The threat environment in which CBP operates is dynamic and complex. Terrorist groups, transnational criminal organizations, and other adversarial actors are continually improving and adapting their methodologies in order to avoid detection and conduct illicit activities that undermine the economic and national security of the United States. Recognizing these realities, CBP has adopted a risk-management paradigm that employs resources to identify, target, and mitigate the high-risk threats of today while also prioritizing investment in the innovative technologies and port modernization efforts that will secure America's borders tomorrow and beyond.

Advanced Detection Technology

CBP considers the security benefits and operational efficiencies provided by advanced detection technology to be a force multiplier in the agency's multi-layered enforcement strategy. Through the utilization of Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) systems and Radiation Detection Equipment (RDE), CBP is able to inspect conveyances and vehicles for contraband and illicit radiological materials with enhanced efficacy and efficiency.

Presently, CBP's Office of Field Operations utilizes 320 large-scale NII systems and 315 handheld Gemini™ systems at air, land, and sea Ports of Entry. CBP's utilization of NII and RDE systems has been met with remarkable success. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, CBP ports conducted approximately 6.6 million NII scans which resulted in the seizure of 316,203 pounds of narcotics, \$3 million of undeclared U.S. currency, 1,655 weapons, and 200 undeclared passengers hidden within commercial cargo. In addition to this, the time saved by utilizing these advanced detection technologies has resulted in a \$1 billion annual cost avoidance in CBP operations, and a \$5.8 billion to \$17.5 billion cost avoidance to industry by minimizing shipment delays.

CBP's successful integration of advanced detection technology has prompted additional investment in NII and RDE. At the end of FY 2019, CBP procured 75 additional handheld Gemini™ units with planned deployments scheduled throughout FY 2020. CBP is also in the

¹ Based on data from Fiscal Year 2019.

process of procuring new drive through NII technology that will reduce the current time per scan from eight minutes to one minute. Additional planned investments in NII technology will expand CBP's use of NII scans for Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs) and Commercially Owned Vehicles (COVs) crossing the Southwest Border. CBP currently utilizes NII technology to scan less than two percent of POVs and 15 percent of COVs crossing the Southwest Border. By FY 2023, CBP expects to increase NII scans of POVs and COVs crossing the Southwest Border to 40 percent and 72 percent respectively.

Land Ports of Entry Modernization

CBP's network of 167 Land Ports of Entry (LPOEs) stand as both gateways to the United States and bulwarks against adversaries. Through this network, CBP facilitates the lawful trade and travel that promotes economic prosperity while simultaneously combatting the threats of terrorism and transnational crime.

Of the 167 LPOEs that CBP operates, two-thirds have not seen any capital improvements in the past decade. Collectively, these ports have an average age of 39 years—nine years beyond their useful design lives. In an annual report entitled "*Land Port of Entry Modernization: Promoting Security, Travel, and Trade*," CBP, in collaboration with the U.S. General Services Administration and Office of Management and Budget, identifies priority LPOE modernization projects that would significantly improve CBP's ability to efficiently execute its critical mission. With \$2.8 billion in requisite recapitalization funding, this investment would modernize 15 GSA-owned land ports, including provisions to acquire land and procure design work—the necessary prerequisites—for large-scale, phased capital projects at two of them, plus outfitting for four projects already under construction.

In FY 2019, GSA received \$191 million in appropriations to facilitate the LPOE modernization efforts identified in the aforementioned report. In FY 2020, CBP and GSA anticipate appropriations that will support continued LPOE modernization efforts at priority LPOEs on the Southwest Border.

Conclusion

As the shifting risk landscape constantly introduces new threats to America's national security, CBP's efforts to facilitate lawful trade and travel while safeguarding the Nation's borders must continually evolve. CBP's multilayered risk-based security approach combined with the prioritization of investments in cutting-edge technology and infrastructure modernization efforts are essential to the agency's overarching strategy for combatting the terrorist groups, transnational criminal organizations, and adversarial actors seeking to undermine the economic and national security of the United States. CBP is committed to continued engagement with this committee, interagency partners, and industry stakeholders as we work to increase the efficiency of our risk-management efforts while maximizing security.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I look forward to your questions.