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House Committee on Homeland Security
“Evolving Threats: Security and Safety in a Post 9/11 World”
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The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is a vast multi-modal transportation agency that builds, operates, and maintains infrastructure, including:

- ✓ five (5) airports, including JFK, Newark Liberty International and LaGuardia
- ✓ two (2) tunnels – the Lincoln and Holland
- ✓ four (4) bridges, including the George Washington Bridge
- ✓ the Port Authority Bus Terminal
- ✓ the PATH rail system that connects New York and New Jersey
- ✓ the iconic 16-acre World Trade Center (WTC) complex and
- ✓ the Ports of New York and New Jersey

Port Authority facilities have the unfortunate distinction of being targeted multiple times by terrorists. In 1975, an explosive device was detonated at the TWA baggage reclaim at LaGuardia airport that killed 11 and injured 74. In 1993, a truck bomb was detonated beneath the North Tower of the World Trade Center, killing 6 and injuring over 1,000 people.

On September 11, 2001, the Port Authority lost 78 civilian employees, as well as 37 police officers, who responded to the World Trade Center attacks and helped save countless lives. This was the worst single-day loss of life of any Police Department of the United States.

In 2017, in an MTA corridor at the doorstep of the Port Authority Bus Terminal a would-be suicide bomber partially detonated an IED injuring 4 people, including the suspect.

Two decades after 9/11, the transportation sector continues to be an attractive target of terrorism. Particularly acute are the Port Authority’s high-throughput assets that are vital to the region and the nation, as we operate the largest airport system, the busiest bus terminal, the most traveled bridge and the busiest port system in the United States.

This legacy has resulted in a tireless commitment to safety and security to protect our facilities and those who depend on them. This is evident, as security accounts for 26% of the agency personnel and 26% of the operating budget. Additionally, since 9/11, \$1.7 billion dollars has been invested in capital projects to harden and strengthen existing facilities.

The Port Authority employs a risk-based, multi-layer security approach to protect its employees, customers, and critical transportation assets.

The layers in this methodology include:

✓ **Measuring Risk Through a Layered Assessment Process**

The Port Authority has been proactive in assessing risks, prioritizing vulnerabilities, and developing solutions designed to mitigate those risks. In doing so, we have enhanced both physical and operational security, hardened our assets, and improved agency-wide resiliency.

✓ **Investing in Capital Security Projects and Strengthening Programs**

Utilizing the findings of the agency risk assessment, the Port Authority completed projects that preserve life and safeguard facilities from threats. Such projects include, but are not limited to:

- Column hardening at our facilities, such as the Port Authority Bus Terminal
- Hardening of our underwater tunnels and installation of protective mats. In 2019, the PATH Underwater Tunnel Breach Mitigation Program received a Designation Award from the DHS SAFETY Act office. The PATH was the first rail transit property in the country to receive such a comprehensive Safety Act award.
- Strengthening of suspender ropes, hardening of our bridge towers, and pier fender installations – adding enhanced protection of the George Washington Bridge, Bayonne Bridge and Outerbridge Crossing.
- Bollard installation to prevent the use of vehicle borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED).
- Enhancements to airport perimeter fencing and hardening of guard posts.
- Construction and implementation of redundant PATH Train Control Center.

✓ **Utilizing Best-in-Class Security Technology Solutions**

The Port Authority is constantly researching and piloting best-in-class security technology solutions, adding another layer of security to our facilities. In addition to our 8500 plus CCTV cameras, the Port Authority's security technology portfolio includes:

- Robust card access control systems with door alarms at every facility.
- Perimeter intrusion detection systems at our airports and at PATH underwater tunnel entrances.
- Detection devices to help protect against chemical, biological and radiological threats.
- Agency-wide P25 Radio System to ensure seamless internal and interoperability with our local Port District partners.

- License Plate Readers at our facilities
- And most recently – the installation of a gunshot detection system at Liberty Newark International Airport Terminal B.

The Port Authority is also an active participant in the New York City Mayor’s Office Security Technology taskforce that was established to foster collaboration with local partners to develop and pilot cutting-edge technology solutions to enhance police and security operations.

✓ **Deploying Police and Security Guard Assets**

The Port Authority has a highly trained police force of over 2100 members that maintain a 24/7 command presence at our transportation facilities. Since 2001, the Port Authority Police department uniformed staff has grown significantly to respond to new terrorism threat landscape.

In addition to routine uniformed patrols, our policing deployments include:

- High visibility counterterrorism teams and Emergency Service Unit patrols
- Explosive detection canine (K-9) unit patrols
- Radiological detection and CBRNE capabilities deployments
- Vehicle checkpoint and commercial vehicle inspections
- Bag, bus and PATH train inspections

The Port Authority Police Department also maintains a presence in 29 Federal, state, and local law enforcement task forces, to include: the FBI JTTF in both New York and New Jersey. We are confident that we are connected to receive important and actionable intelligence and information.

Additionally, we have an important contract security guard force who are trained in behavioral recognition techniques and counterterrorism awareness. These security officers are posted at locations throughout our facilities and staff a 24/7 Security Operations Center.

✓ **Maintaining a Strong Emergency Management Program**

The Port Authority has its own Office of Emergency Management (OEM) that is vital to this multi-layered security plan. The OEM leads our agency-wide business continuity program and execute agency-wide training and full-scale exercises. These training and exercise programs integrate our regional first responders and focuses on the incident command system and unified command principles, active shooter response, rail emergencies, aircraft incidents, acts of terrorism and other natural and human-made hazards.

✓ **Developing and Maintaining Strong Federal, State, and Regional Partnerships**

The Port Authority understands the importance of maintaining strong relationships with our federal, state and local partners. These cooperative partnerships are integral to our intelligence, counterterrorism, security technology, and training efforts. The support received through these partnerships helps us better secure our assets and the information exchange is mutually beneficial to all partners.

In addition to our partner agencies noted above, the Port Authority has strong working relationships with various federal agencies and programs, to include:

- DHS Office of Science and Technology (DHS – S&T)
- DHS Office of Health Affairs (BioWatch Program)
- DOD Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)

These partnerships are essential to information sharing regarding emerging security technologies and have led to the development and pilot of a variety of programs at Port Authority's facilities.

We ask Congress for their continued support of funding to these research agencies to assist with the development and testing of future technologies which aim to increase the effectiveness of detection devices, screening devices, and police personal safety devices.

✓ **Performing Ongoing Quality Assurance and Seeking Independent Review**

To maintain a prepared, unified, and accountable security operation, the Port Authority regularly measures, audits and inspects its programs and systems. These internal auditing programs allow us to proactively identify and mitigate issues and concerns before our adversaries can exploit them.

Additionally, for over a decade, the Port Authority has successfully utilized the DHS SAFETY Act office as an independent third-party to review and validate the effectiveness of our security programs and technologies against industry best practices.

Prior to 2013, SAFETY Act certifications and designations were awarded to individual technologies. The Port Authority in collaboration with the SAFETY Act office, helped redefine the eligibility criteria for awards, and in 2013 we received a groundbreaking SAFETY Act designation for the LaGuardia Airport Security Program. Since then, we have continued to leverage the SAFETY Act office and have received awards for some of the Port Authority's most used and relied upon facilities, including the George Washington Bridge, World Trade Center, and PATH.

The SAFETY Act office has expanded its portfolio of participants to include large private entities such as the National Football and Major League Baseball. Although, the program continues to grow, the SAFETY Act budget has remained relatively flat over

the past 15 years. We would request that Congress continue to support the SAFETY Act program and provide the much-needed additional funding and resources to ensure its continued success.

The Importance of Federal Grant Funding

A critical component to the implementation of this multi-layered security approach is federal grant funding. The Port Authority does not receive tax revenue from New York or New Jersey and relies primarily on revenue generated from facility operations. That being said, and especially considering the COVID-19 pandemic impacts to agency revenue, federal grants are vital to the continuation of our security programs, that can never remain static or, even worse, fall behind against the backdrop of the ever-evolving threat landscape.

In 2023, the Port Authority received \$13.5 million in federal grant funding from the DHS FEMA Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP), Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), and the Port Security Grant Program. FEMA grant funding has long supported security initiatives to include:

- Counter-terrorism programs
- Police training and equipment
- Cybersecurity programs
- Installations of CCTV and Access Control Systems at PATH, Ports, and the Port Authority Bus Terminal
- Bollard protection initiatives
- Protection of the PATH tunnels
- Building column protection at the Port Authority Bus Terminal
- WTC Transportation Hub security initiatives
- Emergency preparedness training and exercises and business continuity Programs

Furthermore, the Port Authority received \$2 million dollars in grant funding through the DOJ Bureau of Justice Assistance Body Worn Camera program. This funding allowed us to outfit our police department with Body Worn Camera technology that enhances accountability and provide transparency to the communities we serve. We intend to apply for 2024 grant funding through this program to further enhance our training capabilities.

We appreciate Congress' support of federal security grant funding and ask that you continue to fund these vital programs; they are essential to the Port Authority's financial ability to maintain safety and security at our facilities and implement initiatives to address the challenges of the evolving threat landscape.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology and our Congressional delegation for their unwavering support that allows us to better serve our employees and customers and better protect our regional transportation infrastructure and all those who depend upon it.