

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)**

**Hearing: The Arizona Border Surveillance Technology Plan and its Impact on Border Security”**

**Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security**

**March 12, 2014 at 10:00 AM**

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As a senior member of both this Committee and the Judiciary Committee and as a Member from a border state, I have closely followed DHS’s efforts to deploy much-needed technology and resources to our Southwest border. Unfortunately, DHS has a poor track record with its major border security technology acquisitions.

Most recently, the *SBI*net program was cancelled by Secretary Janet Napolitano in 2011, after delivering only 53 miles of border security technology in Arizona at a cost to the American people of about \$1 BILLION.

Now, three years later, CBP is moving forward with the Arizona Border Surveillance Technology Plan, which is intended to provide additional border security capability in Arizona.

Already though, there may be some cause for concern. The Government Accountability Office released a report today indicating that CBP is not following all best practices and DHS guidance for acquisition management with its new program.

Given the challenging nature of these kinds of acquisitions and the limited staffing and resources CBP has to carry them out, it is imperative that the agency follows all guidelines to minimize risks to the Plan and get a successful result. I hope to hear in detail from our GAO witness today about what the most pressing challenges are with respect to scheduling, cost estimates, testing, and performance metrics for the Plan.

I also hope our CBP witness will provide convincing answers about how they are addressing these challenges to prevent a repeat of the problems that ultimately undermined *SBI*net.

We simply cannot afford to spend another \$1 billion on border security technology that fails to deliver as promised. Certainly, the Border Patrol must have resources that will meet its needs to address the ever-changing threats it faces along our borders.

With that in mind, I am particularly interested in hearing from CBP about how it intends to ensure the planned technology will meet the Border Patrol’s needs, especially given scheduling delays that have occurred and the dynamic nature of the border security mission.

Specifically, it is my understanding that the Chief of the Border Patrol recently communicated that his agency no longer needs as many Integrated Fixed Towers (IFTs) in Arizona and instead requires more mobile technology to deploy to increasingly problematic areas long the border in South Texas.

I hope that the needs of the Border Patrol and the requirements of their mission are always being considered throughout this process, and look forward to hearing from our CBP witness about how this recent request will be resolved.

I thank the witnesses for joining us today, and I look forward to a robust discussion about how we can ensure the Arizona Border Technology Plan succeeds where its predecessors did not.