

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Bonnie Watson Coleman

Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency

Hearing: “Driving Away with Taxpayer Dollars: DHS’s Failure to Effectively Manage the FPS Vehicle Fleet”

Thursday, December 3, 2015

The Federal Protective Service, a subcomponent of the National Protection and Programs Directorate, provides integrated security and law enforcement services to more than 9,500 federal facilities nationwide.

FPS fulfills a critical mission, one rooted in protecting essential infrastructure, federal buildings, and its occupants.

While the presence of FPS is imperative to the protection of federal facilities, it is equally important that FPS performs its everyday functions in an efficient manner, with appropriate management oversight.

Currently, FPS manages a vehicle fleet of approximately 1100 vehicles at a cost of \$10.7 million dollars.

These vehicles assist FPS officers in their coverage of federal facilities and allow them to store and carry their essential law enforcement equipment.

The Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General recently investigated FPS’ management of its vehicle fleet and concluded that FPS is not managing its vehicle fleet effectively, specifically sighting expensive equipment packages, the overuse of sports utility vehicles, and a lack of consistent Department oversight and fleet management.

Even though FPS has 100 more law enforcement vehicles than full-time officers, FPS was unable to provide the Inspector General with justifications for neither the surplus nor its overall methodology in ordering vehicles for the fleet.

In the DC region, 57 percent of the vehicle fleet’s overall miles driven are considered “home-to-work” mileage, yet FPS could not provide sufficient justification to the Inspector General for the proximately 1.2 million home-to-work miles driven in Fiscal Year 2014.

The Inspector General further observed some FPS vehicles did not contain the necessary equipment to fulfill its daily mission, including gas masks, protective suits, and rioting gear.

In response to this particular finding, FPS stated that often times, equipment is unavailable and it sometimes takes several months for an officer to be fully stocked with all necessary equipment.

Even more troubling is the Inspector General’s conclusion that the Department of Homeland Security does not sufficiently oversee FPS fleet management to ensure FPS complies with all Federal and departmental guidelines.

Neither the Department’s Fleet Manager nor NPPD consistently review FPS’ use of the GSA Vehicle Allocation Methodology nor do they review its justifications for having additional law enforcement

administrative vehicles, retaining under-utilized vehicles, and adding discretionary upgrades to the vehicles.

This lack of management resulted in FPS overpaying GSA for law enforcement equipment packages in error.

There is a critical linkage between the Department's operational effectiveness in critical national-security missions on the one hand, and effective management of resources and requirements by DHS leader on the other.

These findings demonstrate a culture of lax management and disregard for resources at FPS, one grounded in the collection of fees from agencies occupying the Government facilities FPS protects.

These lapses in oversight, accountability, and preparedness must be addressed and corrected.

Director Patterson and Mr. Chaleki, I look forward to hearing from each of you today what the Department and FPS plans on doing to address the Inspector General's findings, particularly as it relates to effective management of FPS resources.