



One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

November 9, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Duke
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

On November 8, 2017, the Committee on Homeland Security held a classified Member briefing with Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Administrator David Pekoske and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Inspector General (IG) John Roth to discuss a recent covert testing audit that assessed transportation security screening vulnerabilities. After the briefing, the Committee held a hearing with the Administrator to examine TSA's role in securing our transportation systems.

Following the hearing, I remain convinced that DHS must act – without delay – to acquire and deploy updated screening technology, including Computed Tomography (CT), at our nation's airports. Such technology has proven more effective at detecting threats than existing systems and is currently deployed successfully elsewhere in the world. Indeed, Administrator Pekoske testified that CT is “probably the most significant improvement we could make” at airport checkpoints.¹ Improved technology, coupled with a fully staffed, well-trained, and appropriately compensated workforce is absolutely vital to better securing America's aviation sector.

Unfortunately, a lack of resources is a primary impediment to deploying CT technology at our airports currently. The Administrator testified that “to invest in CT technology requires funding above what TSA currently has.”² Meanwhile, approximately \$1.28 billion in aviation security fees are diverted from TSA operations annually, ostensibly to fund deficit reduction, leaving the agency without the funds it needs to acquire the improved technology necessary to better identify threats. This is unacceptable and puts American lives at risk.

¹ *Preventing the Next Attack: TSA's Role in Keeping Our Transportation Systems Secure Before the H. Comm. on Homeland Security*, 115th Cong. (Nov. 8, 2017) (statement of David Pekoske, Administrator, Transportation Security Administration).

² *Id.*

Please know that I stand ready to support the Department in obtaining the resources necessary to secure our nation's aviation system. With that in mind, I request you report to the Committee by no later than November 23, 2017, on the funding DHS needs to deploy improved screening technology system-wide and a schedule for deploying the technology as soon as possible.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "B".

Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member