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Statement of Chair Jane Harman
Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing & Terrorism Risk Assessment

“Private Sector Information Sharing: What Is It, Who Does It, and What’s Working at DHS?”

A few years ago, the Homeland Security Department put out an endless, embarrassing list of “critical” national infrastructure that included everything from miniature golf courses to public swimming pools.

In other words, a list that was almost useless to the private sector and first responders.

Two days ago, this Subcommittee had a Top Secret briefing on the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Infrastructure Protection Tier 1/Tier 2 Program.
And a list that once made people roll their eyes has been transformed.

This is a good news story, and I congratulate the Department for getting its arms around what infrastructure is truly vulnerable and merits scarce federal financial support.

85% of the nation’s critical infrastructure is owned by the private sector.

If we’re to succeed in protecting that infrastructure, a better partnership between DHS and the private sector must be forged – and it must work.

But the news is not all good, and at this hearing we’ll hear from some private sector firms about their inability to engage the Department and work as a team.

As any good business person knows, good customer service means giving customers what they want.

Most importantly, the private sector needs to know how to prepare for and hopefully prevent attacks against facilities, the personnel who work there, and the surrounding communities.

What the Subcommittee wants to know today is where the gaps are when it comes to this kind of private sector information sharing so we can help fill them.

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Here's the bottom line: if intelligence products don't tell businesses what actions to take in response to a threat, then it's not intelligence at all.

It's not as though the Department hasn't tried.

In 2005, the Department's Private Sector Information Sharing Task Force issued a report that detailed how homeland security information should be shared with the private sector and recommended key steps to make it happen.

But we haven't heard from the Department how those recommendations are progressing...

In 2006, the Department's National Infrastructure Advisory Council issued a separate report on public-private intelligence coordination with its own recommendations.

We haven't heard anything on that front either...

I'm hoping our hearing today will shed some light on the status of these reports and how the Department is implementing them.

Our first panel of witnesses today represents the key drivers of private sector information sharing at the Department: the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, the Infrastructure Protection and Preparedness Division, and HITRAC.

I'd like to know what each of their offices is doing to support private sector information sharing, how they are working together, and where – if anywhere – there is duplication of effort.

I also want to know how they are incorporating private sector input into the intelligence products they are creating, how successful those efforts have been, and what they're doing to improve upon past performance.

And I encourage our second panel of private sector witnesses to listen carefully and offer any constructive suggestions for change.

If this Committee has learned anything from the hearings we've held this year, it's this:

The only way to ensure that relevant homeland security information is shared between the Federal Government and its customers – whether in law enforcement, the first responder community, or the private sector – is by working together to identify the products that will provide the necessary information in a useful format.

I hope the Department is making private sector information sharing the priority it must to be.

I welcome all of the witnesses here today, and I look forward to your testimony.

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