



Committee on
HOMELAND SECURITY
Chairman Peter T. King

Opening Statement

May 9, 2012

Media Contact: Shane Wolfe

(202) 226-8417

**Statement of Chairman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL)
Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and
Communications**

Joint Hearing

**“Fire Responder Technologies: Ensuring a Prioritized Approach for
Homeland Security Research and Development”**

**May 9, 2012
Remarks as Prepared**

I’m pleased our two Subcommittees are once again meeting to consider a topic of mutual interest and concern. Our Nation’s first responders are vital members of the Homeland Security Enterprise. First responders at the State and local level are first on the scene of a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other emergency and we must ensure that they have the training, equipment, and technology they need to get the job done.

The Department of Homeland Security’s Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate, through its First Responder Group, has taken steps to work with Federal partners, the first responder community, and the private sector to research, develop, and get to market technologies that will enhance response capabilities. I want to thank Dr. Griffin for bringing some of the

technologies that S&T has developed along with him today. They provide great examples of S&T's ongoing work.

I'm interested in hearing from our Federal witnesses about how technology requirements and standards are set for this technology and how successful we have been in getting these promising technologies into the hands of first responders. I am also interested in hearing how DHS assists first responders in identifying appropriate technology as they consider how to allocate grant funding.

From our first responder witnesses, I'm interested in your perspective in how the technology research and development process is working and how well your input is being integrated into that process.

I will say that I am disappointed that FEMA declined to participate in today's hearing. FEMA's National Integration Center and Grant Programs Directorate regularly work with S&T and the first responder community and provide resources for technology identification and procurement through grant funds, Responder Knowledge Base, and Project Responder. It would have been nice to have their input at today's hearing. However, the Subcommittees' oversight of this issue will continue after this hearing and that oversight will include FEMA.

With that, I welcome our distinguished panel of witnesses. We look forward to your testimony.

###