

TESTIMONY OF

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

BEFORE

**HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER AND MARITIME SECURITY**

ON

**“USING TECHNOLOGY TO FACILITATE TRADE AND ENHANCE
SECURITY AT OUR PORTS OF ENTRY”**

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Laredo, Texas

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Cuellar, Members of the Subcommittee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today to discuss the work of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), particularly the tremendous dedication of our men and women in the field, both at and between our ports of entry.

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to Congress for its continued support of the mission and people of CBP. It is clear that Congress is committed to providing CBP with the resources we need to increase and maintain the security of our borders. We greatly appreciate your efforts and assistance, and I look forward to continuing to work with you on these issues in the future.

The creation of CBP, which established a single, unified border agency for the United States, is a profound achievement, and our responsibilities are immense and challenging. CBP is responsible for protecting more than 3,900 miles of border with Canada and 1,900 miles of border with Mexico, and 2,600 miles of shoreline. In fiscal year 2011, CBP officers at 331 ports of entry inspected 340 million travelers and more than 105.9 million cars, trucks, buses, trains, vessels and aircraft. Each day, CBP officers process over 932,000 travelers entering the United States at our air, land and sea ports of entry and inspect more than 64,000 truck, rail and sea containers.

In fiscal year 2011, CBP seized 5 million pounds of narcotics, including nearly 370,000 pounds seized at the ports of entry. These numbers demonstrate the effectiveness of our layered approach to security. Violent crime in border communities has remained flat or fallen in the past decade, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Report, and some of the safest communities in America are at the border. In fact, violent crimes in Southwest border counties overall have dropped by more than 40 percent and are currently among the lowest in the Nation per capita, even as drug-related violence has significantly increased in Mexico.

On an average day, CBP Officers within the Laredo Field Office, which incorporates ports of entry spanning from the outer edge of Big Bend National Park to Brownsville, process

nearly 130,000 passengers and 60,300 conveyances and seize 431 pounds of drugs. During fiscal year 2011, the Laredo Field Office processed almost 50,000,000 travelers and 22,000,000 cars, trucks, buses, trains, ferries, vessels and aircraft, seized 5,465 lbs of cocaine, 635 lbs of heroin, 150,000 lbs of marijuana, and over \$13,300,000 in currency, and intercepted 110,000 quarantined plant material and 13,600 actionable/reportable pests.

Working with our partners, our strategy is to secure our Nation's borders by employing and enhancing our layers of defense throughout the entire supply chain (for goods) and transit sequence (for people) – starting from their points of origin, movement to the United States, arrival and entry at our borders, routes of egress, and ultimately to final destinations in the United States. This strategy relies upon increased intelligence and risk-management strategies regarding the movement and flow of both travelers and trade. We accomplish our mission of expediting legal trade and travel by separating the “knowns” from the “unknowns.” This risk segmentation allows us to enhance security by focusing more attention on stopping illegitimate trade and those who seek to do us harm, while at the same time facilitating legitimate travel and commerce. Security and prosperity are mutually reinforcing, and the United States and Mexico are closely linked by a common interest in robust security and growing economies. DHS is committed to continuing to work with the Government of Mexico to foster a safe and secure border zone, while facilitating the legal trade and travel that helps our shared border region prosper.

Infrastructure

CBP has long recognized the need to maintain facilities and infrastructure that effectively support our mission requirements. Modern facilities must address our constantly evolving border functions, increasing traffic volumes and staffing levels, and new and updated technologies and equipment. To that end, CBP has implemented a facility investment planning process, and capital improvement plan for land border ports of entry. This process combined with the Regional Master Plan concept, which brings all stakeholders together from both sides of the border, ensures that facility and real property funding is allocated in a systematic and objective manner, and is prioritized by mission critical needs that meet the demands from a regional perspective.

In Laredo, CBP has undertaken a number of improvement projects to assist in expediting the flow of legitimate trade and travel. Several projects have been completed, or are nearing completion, with the focus of improvements on pedestrian traffic, vehicle traffic, bus inspection and lane flow throughout the Laredo Bridges and CBP's ports of entry (POE). At Laredo Bridge 1, (Gateway to the Americas Bridge), improvements to address pedestrian processing flow have been completed. These efforts included rerouting pedestrian traffic from the current pedestrian walkway to the Secondary Inspection area where five new mobile pedestrian processing stations were installed. The new stations became operational on September 19, 2011 and process at least 8,000 travelers per day.

Additional projects to improve the facilities and inspectional technologies at the Port of Laredo include upgrades to the ports' pedestrian secondary processing area at Laredo Bridge 3 (Colombia Solidarity Bridge), which was completed in November 2011; and opening seven new primary inspection booths and one new exit lane at the World Trade Bridge port of entry, an accomplishment commemorated by officials from the City of Laredo with a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 6, 2011.

At Lincoln-Juarez Bridge (Laredo Bridge 2), three additional non-commercial lanes at the Lincoln-Juarez POE are largely complete and expected to open in the summer of 2012. This expansion has been a collaborative effort between CBP, GSA, TX DOT and the City of Laredo and will significantly expand vehicle processing capacity, helping to alleviate vehicle congestion at this very important crossing.

CBP is also working closely with GSA regarding the feasibility and design of a new bus processing facility. This project will result in a 10,000 square foot to 15,000 square foot bus and passenger processing area with individual bus stalls (primary and secondary), pedestrian inspection lanes, and a separate inspection area within a CBP secured facility.

Funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act have allowed for additional port improvements. This includes two new port facilities; at Amistad Dam and at Los

Ebanos Ferry, respectively. CBP also oversaw significant modifications, including an outbound facility, at Falcon Dam. However, due to the current fiscal environment, CBP's construction budget is not projected to have funds that will allow the agency to initiate major new construction contracts. CBP's fiscal year 2012 appropriation for Construction and Facilities Management is limited to sustainment activities, basic building services, and operations of CBP's existing facilities portfolio and real property inventory. The fiscal year 2013 budget request similarly defers new construction projects.

Trade Facilitation

As Secretary Napolitano has stated, our homeland security and our economic policies are complementary – and to the extent possible, security measures should be designed to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while securing our critical infrastructure. Our economy depends in part on our ability to secure and facilitate the flow of people and goods to and from our borders. Border security policies must do both: protect against threats while allowing the movement of legitimate trade and travel across our borders, which drives trade and tourism revenue that supports hundreds of thousands of jobs.

The ability to secure the flows of goods, conveyances, and people to and through the U.S. is crucial to CBP's success in protecting our Nation. The 331 ports incorporate highly technical equipment to prevent items from illegally entering the United States by utilizing Non-Intrusive Inspection units to detect illicit goods and contraband and Radiation Portal Monitors which screen for nuclear and radiological threats. Last year we deepened and broadened our coordination with Canada to speed inspection of goods such as car parts so that factories on both sides of the border can operate more efficiently. We have continued to work closely with our Mexican counterparts to protect shared critical infrastructure and expand trusted traveler and shipper programs. These efforts not only facilitate legitimate trade, but they are also critical in stopping illegal goods from entering the country – goods that can undermine domestic businesses that play by the rules.

Thanks to the continued support of Congress, CBP now has 301 large-scale Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) systems deployed to our ports of entry. NII are imaging systems that

serve as a force multiplier enabling CBP officers to detect possible anomalies between the contents of a container and the manifest. Of the 301 NII systems deployed, 55 are deployed on the northern border and 110 are deployed on the Southwest border ports of entry, with the remainder at the Nation's airports and seaports and Border Patrol checkpoints. Additionally, CBP has deployed 61 backscatter X-ray vans to Southwest border land ports of entry, which provide our officers with a mobile, maneuverable detection system that can scan a number of vehicles efficiently and simultaneously. To date, CBP has used the deployed systems to conduct over 56.5 million NII examinations resulting in over 10,500 narcotic seizures with a total weight of 3.3 million pounds of narcotics, and the seizure of over \$47.5 million in undeclared currency. Used in combination with our layered enforcement strategy, these tools provide CBP with a significant capability to detect contraband, including illicit nuclear or radiological materials. The deployment of NII technologies has also enabled our staff to efficiently process a significant volume of passengers and trade.

NII technologies are the only available and effective means of screening the large volume of rail traffic entering the United States from Mexico. CBP currently has rail imaging systems deployed to all eight Southwest border commercial rail crossings. CBP is currently installing a new, state of the art imaging system, which should be completed this summer, at Laredo. These systems currently provide CBP with the capability to image and scan 100 percent of all commercial rail traffic arriving in the United States from Mexico. The rail NII imaging technology is bi-directional, which provides CBP with the added capability to image southbound trains. In March 2009, CBP began conducting 100 percent outbound screening of rail traffic departing the United States for Mexico for the presence of contraband, such as explosives, weapons and currency. Since that time, there have been 215 seizures along the Southwest border as a result of screening of outbound rail cars, which totals approximately 43,000 pounds of marijuana.

Through partnerships with the trade community, CBP has had a positive impact on commercial trade. The primary focus of CBP's efforts with its U.S. Government partner agencies is to advance the adoption of DHS's risk-based approach to reduce barriers to efficient and safe commercial activity and to support U.S. job development. As the Executive Agent at the

border for 46 Federal agencies, we are currently pursuing two significant initiatives with our U.S. government partners: increased information sharing, leveraging existing inspection and regulatory expertise, to facilitate admissibility determinations; and developing trust-based partnerships across the Federal government.

CBP works with the trade community through the Customs and Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT), a voluntary public-private partnership program wherein members of the trade community agree to adopt tighter security measures throughout their international supply chain and in return are afforded benefits such as reduced exams, front of line examination privileges to the extent possible and practical, and an assigned Supply Chain Security Specialist who helps them maintain compliance. C-TPAT has enabled CBP to leverage private sector resources to enhance supply chain security and integrity. This initiative in conjunction with previous mentioned opening of seven new commercial primary lanes at World Trade Bridge will increase the facilitation of legitimate trade through the Port of Laredo.

CBP conducts records checks on C-TPAT applicants in its law enforcement and trade databases and ensures that the applicants meet the security criteria for their particular business sector. Applicants who pass extensive vetting are certified into the program. Using a risk-based approach, CBP Supply Chain Security Specialists conduct on-site visits of foreign and domestic facilities to confirm that the security practices are in place and operational.

C-TPAT has been a success – membership in this program has grown from 7 companies at its implementation in 2001 to more than 10,000 as of April 5, 2012. Additionally, CBP is working with foreign partners to establish bi-national recognition and enforcement of C-TPAT. CBP currently has signed mutual recognition arrangements with New Zealand, Canada, Jordan, Japan and Korea and is continuing to work towards similar recognition with the European Union, Singapore, Taiwan and other countries.

Travel Facilitation

To facilitate pre-approved, low-risk travelers into the United States, CBP offers four trusted traveler programs. The Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection

(SENTRI) offers eligible travelers expedited entry into the United States through designated lanes at the U.S.-Mexico land border ports. Membership in SENTRI is valid for five years and costs \$122.25 to apply for the program. Beginning in December 2010, all U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents currently enrolled in SENTRI were extended Global Entry benefits, our trusted traveler program in the air port of entry environment, at no additional fee. There are currently over 44,000 SENTRI participants who cross at ports of entry within the Laredo Field Office and eight lanes specifically dedicated for SENTRI participants to facilitate travel into the United States.

At land ports of entry, we have also implemented Ready Lanes to assist in the facilitation of travelers. A Ready Lane is a vehicle primary lane that only accepts travelers using radio frequency identification (RFID)-enabled travel documents. In June 2010, CBP launched a Ready Lane pilot at the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit. In October 2010, the first Ready Lane along the southern border opened in Del Rio, Texas, and in December 2010 a Ready Lane opened in El Paso, Texas. In July 2011, Ready Lanes were opened in Laredo, Texas. Currently, the Laredo Field Office has Ready Lanes at seven bridges and the Lincoln Juarez Bridge at the Port of Laredo can open an additional two Ready Lanes during peak hours if required, for a total of nine Ready Lanes throughout the Field Office. The results to date suggest that this program successfully expedites the flow of legitimate travel. Vehicle throughput has increased as much as 25 percent in these lanes, and wait times for travelers with RFID-enabled documents have been reduced by an average of 12 seconds per vehicle. Along the Southern border more than 25,000 vehicles and 44,000 travelers (more than 34 percent of all vehicle traffic) use Ready Lanes each day. For example, at the Lincoln-Juarez Bridge, approximately 50 percent of traffic now crosses in either the Ready Lane or SENTRI lane. Additionally, CBP actively manages lanes to ensure that travelers utilizing Ready Lanes experience wait times of no more than 30 minutes. CBP plans to deploy Ready Lanes to additional high volume land crossings in the near future.

The Laredo Field Office has implemented an aggressive, multi-pronged strategy to mitigate wait times. This includes recognizing peak processing periods that have historically occurred, such as holidays like Christmas and Holy Week in addition to seasonal peaks such as

Spring Break and the summer travel period, and making operational adjustments well before peaks occur. The Laredo Field Office also works with CBP's stakeholders to identify additional facilitation measures. For example, the Field Office coordinates with our Mexico counterparts on the arrivals of commercial bus traffic during peak times to avoid traffic jams on the bridge, and works to move private school buses at the Port of Del Rio to a dedicated lane in the morning to reduce wait times for vehicular traffic and to process the buses more efficiently.

Staffing and Training

We have no greater asset than our human resources and we are committed to continuing to recruit, hire, develop and sustain a premier officer corps. To achieve this goal, we are currently refining the recruitment and hiring processes, improving our retention capabilities, and enhancing our deployment and staffing processes.

We have developed a Workload Staffing Model (WSM) to better align resource needs and requests against levels of threat, vulnerabilities, and workload. By using the model we can adjust optimal staffing levels to changes in workload, processing times, new technologies and processes, mandated requirements, and threats. Once the WSM is finalized, CBP would be happy to brief the committee on this model. The staffing model alone does not determine how our officers are allocated; it is merely a tool to assist us in determining the optimum allocation of officers at each of our land, sea and air ports.

CBP has also implemented numerous programs, initiatives, and training to build our officer corps and enable officers to more effectively respond to threats of terrorism, better utilize intelligence information, and continue to develop skills, streamline processes, and enhance inspection operations.

We have developed and implemented a comprehensive training curriculum for CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists. This training curriculum includes basic academy training, as well as comprehensive, advanced, on-the-job and cross-training courses. CBP continually strives to provide our frontline officers with recurrent and additional training to help them better perform their jobs. For example, CBP has extensive training in place for fraudulent

document identification to help CBP officers detect fraudulent documents and identify travelers who are using stolen travel documents – both in the CBP officer academy and embedded in 40 additional courses.

Recognizing the complexity of our mission and the broad border authorities of our agency, we have established specialty functions and teams that receive additional focused advanced training. For example, counterterrorism response teams were created for deployment within secondary inspection areas. These teams are provided with a new and intense training curriculum that teaches our officers how to detect deception and elicit information. We have also established targeting and analysis units, roving teams, and prosecution units. Our enforcement officers receive additional advanced training to develop expertise in the questioning of individuals suspected of being involved with organized smuggling of aliens or drugs, terrorism, and document fraud.

To make the best use of our training time and resources, we train our officers when they need to be trained, and for the functions they are performing. This means that not every officer completes every cross-training module, but rather each officer receives the training needed to do the job he or she is currently performing. CBP has identified Field Training Officers to assess the training needs of the CBP officers to ensure that these CBP Officers are receiving the training they need to do their jobs, and that internal measures are in place to monitor and assess training needs and accomplishments nationwide. CBP is constantly reviewing and revising its training, in accordance with the ever-changing border enforcement environment.

Conclusion

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Cuellar, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for this opportunity to testify about the work of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. CBP is committed to continuing to secure our Nation's borders and safeguard our way of life. Your continued support of CBP helps ensure the security of our borders, and the safety of our Nation. I will be glad to answer any questions you may have.