

*Opening Statement of Ranking Member Kathleen Rice*

*Subcommittee on Transportation Security*

**Joint Hearing: “Safeguarding our Nation’s Surface Transportation Systems  
Against Evolving Terrorist Threats”**

**September 17, 2015**

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Since the beginning of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, this Subcommittee has mainly focused its attention on aviation security.

But with all modes of surface transportation carrying well over ten billion passengers each year, and more than 2.5 million miles of pipeline carrying hazardous liquids and natural gases, I’m confident we can all agree that surface transportation security is equally as important.

So I’m pleased to have the opportunity today to address the security challenges facing the surface transportation sector as we assess the evolving threats of terrorism.

Last month, four individuals, including three brave Americans, thwarted a potential mass shooting when a man carrying a machine gun and a knife boarded a high-speed train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris.

That should serve as a vivid reminder to us all that the threat of terrorism is just as real on our trains as it is on our planes – and we must be prepared to confront and neutralize that threat wherever we may find it.

We must work together to rigorously assess our surface transportation systems and ensure that we have adequate procedures in place to respond to a terrorist attack on an American pipeline or mass transit system.

We must have reliable, comprehensive security plans in place for a wide range of scenarios. We must have seamless communication between government entities and transit agencies. And we must continue to encourage the public to be vigilant at all times – because as we saw last month in France, that can be the difference between life and death.

I am very eager to hear what both the Transportation Security Administration and the private sector are doing to guarantee the safety of our citizens – not only those who travel on our mass transit systems, but also those who live near pipelines and freight railroads, as well as those who travel every day on our highways.

I’m also eager to hear what frontline security training is currently provided to our transit system workers, given that TSA has not yet fulfilled the statutory mandate that they develop and implement security training requirements for public transportation, rail and bus workers.

In July, Ranking Member Thompson and I asked the Government Accountability Office to review TSA’s surface inspection program.

Specifically, we asked about the roles and responsibilities of those inspecting surface transportation, how the structure of the inspection program aligns with TSA’s mission, and what steps are being taken to measure its effectiveness.

I look forward to seeing the results of that review upon its completion, and I would welcome any additional information about those questions that our witnesses could provide today.