Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX)
Homeland Security Committee

"Examining Physical Security and Cybersecurity at Our Nation's Ports"

October 30, 2017

Remarks as Prepared

Today, Members of our Committee have gathered here to examine the physical security and cybersecurity of our nation's ports.

Before we begin however, I would like to thank everyone who has traveled a great distance to be here and to CBP and the Coast Guard for the tour of the Port of Los Angeles and the Port of Long Beach.

I would also like to thank each of the witnesses and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we can work together to strengthen the security of America's ports.

America's port system is an industrial engine that drives much of our economic success. Currently, U.S. seaports support 23 million American jobs and $4.6 trillion in economic activity, or 26% of our economy.

This year alone, the Port of Los Angeles has processed over 6 million containers. These ports will only continue to remain busy, as our trade volume is expected to quadruple by 2030.

A safe and unrestricted flow of goods and services through our marine transportation system has allowed the United States to become a global, economic super power.

Keeping our ports and our cargo containers safe, is absolutely vital to our homeland security as well as our national financial health. We must make sure they are not susceptible to attacks from our enemies.

Unfortunately, America's adversaries are constantly looking for ways to strike our country with cyber-attacks.

As our port systems increasingly benefit from new technology and advanced computer systems, they also find themselves in the crosshairs of international hackers and rogue nation states.

In June, this very port was briefly shut down because of a cyber-attack that cost nearly $300 million in economic damage. That is not acceptable.

We must do more to strengthen cybersecurity of these essential maritime hubs.

Fortunately, the Committee on Homeland Security in the House has been taking action. And I am proud to say that we have a great track record of working across party lines to pass common sense legislation.

Just last Monday, the House passed a reauthorization of the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) program, an important public-private sector partnership that strengthens cargo security and international supply chains. The very next day, we passed legislation that requires the Secretary of DHS to implement a risk assessment model which focuses on cybersecurity vulnerabilities and risks at America's ports.

In July, Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the first ever, comprehensive reauthorization of DHS with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. This reauthorization improves the preparedness and readiness capabilities of the Coast Guard and TSA, while creating a mechanism for port operators to share cyber threat information and best practices.

Chairs of the 9/11 Commission, Tom Kean and Lee Hamilton, have recently called on the Senate to pass this DHS reauthorization. It needs to get to the President's desk and signed into law.

Finally, I'd like to express the Committee's appreciation to the leadership and staff of the Port of Los Angeles Harbor Administration for making this event possible.

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