

Ranking Member Wu

Opening Statement

Markup of H.R. 2463, the *Border Security Technology Innovation Act of 2011*

July 13, 2011

Thank you, Chairman Quayle. And thank you for holding this subcommittee markup today on the Border Security Technology Innovation Act of 2011.

I think it's fair to say that everyone on this subcommittee – on both sides of the aisle – agrees that the border security technology research taking place at the Department of Homeland Security is important and should be continued. I certainly do. That is why I held a hearing on this issue in 2007 when I was chairman of this subcommittee and why I supported Chairman Hall's bill – which reiterates and reemphasizes the importance of this ongoing research - when it was first introduced in the 110th Congress. And it is why I am supporting it once again this Congress. I wholeheartedly agree with Chairman Hall that we should ensure support for the science and technology programs that aid our current and future border patrol efforts.

Of course, we would be remiss if we didn't recognize that many things have changed since this bill first moved through the Committee in 2007. We have a new Administration with new priorities and initiatives. We have an S & T Directorate that underwent a significant reorganization at the end of last year and is making great strides to prioritize its research and focus on the areas of highest need and greatest risk. And we have a slew of new members on this Committee, on both sides of the aisle, who were not here when we considered this bill 4 years ago.

That being the case, I think it would have been very useful to have had a hearing on this issue before fast-tracking this legislation to markup. Such a hearing would have provided the Members of this Committee, especially new Members, an opportunity to learn about specific border security activities currently underway at the S & T Directorate and to identify new areas of research that need to be or should be addressed. Such a hearing would have allowed us to exercise our oversight obligations and legislate as responsibly and effectively as I think we all want to do.

In addition, when we first considered this bill, the fiscal climate was much different. There's no denying that we've come to a critical crossroads with respect to the Federal budget. We now spend a lot of our time focused on how much programs cost and how much they can be cut.

Unfortunately, the S & T Directorate at DHS has not emerged from this cutting frenzy unscathed. In fact, after already suffering a significant cut in the FY 2011 CR, funding for research and development activities at the Directorate was cut by a staggering 77% in the Homeland Security Appropriations bill that passed the House just weeks ago. According to DHS, this proposed cut would force the Directorate to eliminate the vast majority of its ongoing research, including all border security research. Simply put, if the proposed House Homeland Security Appropriations bill is enacted into law, the S & T Directorate will not have the funds it would need to carry out the research that this bill mandates.

There's a lot of talk these days about the need to make "tough choices" in these budgetary times. Unfortunately, one of the "tough choices" the Majority made in the Homeland Security Appropriations bill was to end border security research programs at the Department of Homeland Security, including those authorized in this bill.

That being said, if we agree that the research mandated in this bill is important, we simply have to be willing to provide the funding that is needed to carry it out. This research has a price tag that cannot be

ignored.

I look forward to working with you, Chairman Quayle, and Chairman Hall on this legislation moving forward. And, I hope that we can work together to ensure that the Directorate has the resources it needs to actually carry out this valuable research.

And, Mr. Chairman, although I am pleased to be a cosponsor of the bill and strongly support its objectives, I do have one question about the bill that I hope you or the staff at the table can answer for me. Both Section 6 on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Section 8 on Anticounterfeit Technologies include directives to other agencies or entities within the federal government – in one case, the Joint Planning and Development Office and, in the other, NIST. Since the bill specifies that funding is to be made available under section 307 of the Homeland Security Act, I'm assuming that the intent is that funding for the JPDO and NIST portions of these programs will come from the Department of Homeland Security and not the budgets of those other agencies. Is that true?

Thank you. I yield back my time.