OPENING STATEMENT

The Honorable Ben Quayle (R-AZ), Chairman

Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation

An Overview of Science and Technology Research and Development Programs and Priorities at the Department of Homeland Security

March 15, 2011

Good morning. I'd like to welcome everyone to today's hearing, my first as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation. I look forward to working with you all.

We have a distinguished panel of witnesses before us who will discuss the Department of Homeland Security's research and development programs. At the outset, I wish to extend my appreciation to each of our witnesses for taking the time and effort to appear before us today. Please know that your testimony and wisdom will help the members of this Subcommittee understand the strategic direction of research and development at the Department, and determine how Congress can support efforts to ensure the security of our homeland.

I am pleased to discuss activities at the Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) and the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) at the Department of Homeland Security. The hearing will examine the recent reorganization of the Science and Technology Directorate, the strategic planning process, stakeholder involvement in setting research priorities and the role of research and development in the DHS S&T portfolio. Many of these areas reflect ongoing interest from members of the Subcommittee. There will be two panels; the first will include Administration witnesses from DHS S&T and DNDO; and the second panel will include stakeholders of the DHS enterprise. This Subcommittee has always encouraged Administration witnesses to testify on panels with non-governmental witnesses, allowing for a beneficial interaction amongst stakeholders. While it is unfortunate that the two panels couldn't have served together this morning to provide a more cohesive conversation, the Subcommittee appreciates the opportunity to hear from both industry experts and senior agency officials.

I note that the budget requests for DHS S&T and the DNDO in fiscal year 2012 cumulatively represent more than $1.3 billion. DHS S&T's budget would increase by 17 percent; however, most of this increase reflects the transfer of research and development programs from DNDO to DHS S&T. Excluding the DNDO transfer and new funding for the construction of a National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, the DHS S&T budget request represents an 11 percent decrease.

In the current budget environment, there continue to be concerns that DHS is having difficulty responding to immediate needs, while also pursuing basic research and development that can help with the long-term capabilities needed to protect the homeland in the future.

In my home state of Arizona, violence and security issues along the border are, tragically, a regular experience. In a recent study by the Government Accountability Office, the Border Patrol reported that only 44 percent of the border was under operational control - this has to be improved. I am particularly interested in learning about the research and development activities conducted by the DHS components before us today that support border security, as well as border crossing efficiency. How can we find ways to reduce the cost of maintaining our safe borders? Are technologies being developed to help support safe and secure crossings?

Thanks again to our witnesses, and I look forward to a productive discussion. With that, I now recognize the gentleman from Oregon, Mr. Wu, for his opening statement.