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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Loretta Sanchez

Committee on Homeland Security

Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Counter Terrorism

Hearing on "The SAFE Port Act: Status of Implementation One Year Later"

October 30, 2007

Opening Statement

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEES:
CHAIRWOMAN, BORDER, MARITIME AND
GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS, PREPAREDNESS
AND RESPONSE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
MILITARY PERSONNEL
READINESS

Good Afternoon.

Thank you to our witnesses for joining us today, particularly since this hearing was postponed from earlier in the month. We appreciate your flexibility.

Today we will be discussing the status of implementing the SAFE Port Act, over one year after it became law.

This Subcommittee held a similar hearing six months ago and I know my colleagues and I are eager for an update on the Government's progress.

I believe that the SAFE Port Act was one of the Homeland Security Committee's most significant actions of the 109th Congress.

This legislation was the culmination of years of work by numerous Members of Congress, and it made long overdue improvements to the security of our nation's ports.

As a Member whose district is close to the Los Angeles and Long Beach Ports, I am very aware of the direct impact port security has on the lives and livelihoods of all Americans.

I intend to make sure that the 110th Congress conducts appropriate oversight to ensure that the SAFE Port Act is fully implemented.

As we all know, the SAFE Port Act covered a wide range of programs and initiatives at the Department of Homeland Security.

I hope that today's hearing will provide us with an update on these many initiatives.

There are several issues that I am particularly interested in.

These include:

- An explanation of aspects of the C-TPAT 3rd party validator pilot program and an update on its progress;
- The status of the empty container security pilot program required by the law;
- The Coast Guard's long range vessel tracking capability and their ability to view that data in a useable format;

- AND, of course the delayed progress on the Transportation Worker Identification Credential, or TWIC.

I hope our witnesses will address these items among many other critical issues in the SAFE Port Act.

I am pleased to hear that the agencies within the Department are making progress on some of the provisions in the SAFE Port Act, but we must ensure that the law is fully implemented so our ports are as secure as possible.

Some of my concerns include:

- The establishment of container security standards and improvements to CBP's risk targeting;
- The lack of a fully operational vessel tracking system to tell us what vessels are coming to American ports;
- AND the efficient roll out of a TWIC program that ensures the security of our ports without compromising American jobs, or adding excessive costs.

I'd like to thank my Ranking Member, Mr. Souder for his interest in this important issue.

Thank you.