

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson*****The Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate***

March 3, 2010 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology subcommittee hearing entitled “The Department of Homeland Security’s Science and Technology Directorate”:

“I had the pleasure of meeting Under Secretary O’Toole shortly after her confirmation. She has the right background and expertise to build upon the efforts of her predecessors, and I am very confident that S&T will make great strides under her leadership. As the Chair pointed out in her statement, S&T still has work to do, and this Committee is eager to help you accomplish those goals.

I anticipate that our Committee will pass a Science and Technology authorization bill at the end of the month. Staff has been working in a bipartisan fashion for months, and we are making good progress towards that goal. I concur with Ms. Clarke’s comments, and I’d like to add a few additional concerns that I think you’ll see reflected in our authorization bill.

First, I’m concerned that the Department does not have adequate training for personnel to identify capability gaps and write operational requirements. This is an area that S&T can and should help components with, and I will support all efforts by S&T to do so.

Second, it has been reported that S&T does not have a system to monitor research milestones or collect feedback from customers and end users on the effectiveness of the services delivered by S&T. As Ms. Clarke stated in her opening statement, this failure prevents us from being able to evaluate the effectiveness of S&T. I expect this to be a primary area of focus for you, and we’d like to see your plans to develop these systems.

Third, I can’t tell you how many times a company will come to me and complain about how difficult it is to work with S&T. We have to make it easier for companies to find opportunities and do business with S&T, and I hope you have some ideas that you can share with us on improving that relationship.

Finally, I believe that the University Programs division has been underutilized, in part because Department components struggle to identify and develop requirements. I think that the colleges and universities who participate in these programs can provide great benefit to this Department, but we need to do a better job harnessing these capabilities.

The authorization bill we intend on introducing in a few weeks will address each of these problems, as well as a number of other issues that Ms. Clarke and Mr. Lungren raised. I hope you will take these matters into consideration as you and your staff develop the S&T strategic plan, management directive, and other strategic documents going forward.”

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FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Dena Graziano or Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978

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