

MEDIA INFORMATION

Congresswoman

Sheila Jackson Lee

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CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE CHAIRS HEARING TO EXAMINE CHEMICAL SECURITY REGULATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Jackson Lee raises concerns about the nation's chemical security regulations.

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Chairwoman of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, released the following statement today:

"There has been, however, a great deal of curiosity—even skepticism—about how effectively DHS could implement the chemical security regulations, as it has not had to do so in the past with regard to other sectors. I believe that because this is the Department's first attempt in a regulatory role, oversight is vital. The Committee must explore the chemical security regulations implemented by the Department under the Homeland Security Appropriations bill of FY07.

Specifically, the Committee is interested in the Top Screen process, which, as you all know, is the initial phase of the regulatory requirements. We are concerned about the breadth of entities that will be required to fill out a Top Screen application and would like some clarifying answers on the Department's preparation for this process.

There are many elements of this issue and we welcome the panel's insight.

- First, we must know how the department decided upon which chemicals to include and their amounts.
- Second, was the Department prepared for entities, such as universities and small businesses, to be subject to the Top Screen process?
- The Committee needs to confirm that the Department has the necessary resources to perform these tasks and to thoughtfully and thoroughly review the questionnaires and assessments.

If the Department is lacking resources or having problems, the Committee must know because chemical security is vital to our national security.

Even large companies, via the Chemical Sector Coordinating Council, have expressed concerns about the regulatory regime's approach. The Committee should discern how the Department is defining risk, the methodologies it is using, and why it is requiring facilities in the top three tiers to

We also want to know how useful the Chemical Sector Coordinating Council and Chemical Sector Specific Plan (under the NIPP) were in creating and implementing the regulations. These regulations seem to provide a perfect opportunity to see a real-world example of how effective these plans and councils are. As you can see we have a lot to discuss.

I, along with other Members of this subcommittee, am seriously committed to protecting critical infrastructure and understanding how the private sector is protecting our vital assets.

Again, today we want to explore what steps the private sector has taken to protect its infrastructure and the Department's role in this process. I look forward to the witnesses' testimony and learning about how these different entities protect themselves from threats and what role Congress can play to fortify and protect the United States' from a chemical attack."

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