

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****“Private Sector Information Sharing: What Is It, Who Does It, and What’s Working at DHS?”**

July 26, 2007 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment Subcommittee hearing entitled “Private Sector Information Sharing: What Is It, Who Does It, and What’s Working at DHS?”:

“I have stated many times that information sharing between the Federal government and its State, local and tribal partners is critical to making America safer.

But there’s another partner who is too often overlooked: the private sector. Over 85% of our nation’s infrastructure is owned or operated by the private businesses. Obviously, they should be major players when it comes to information sharing and should be kept informed when relevant threat information comes in.

That’s why I’m disappointed that the Department lacks a comprehensive strategy for information sharing that includes the private sector as an equal partner. Without one, we are at risk. I agree with Ms. Harman that the Department must do better to find out the private sector’s information needs and to create products that meets those needs.

Until it takes those steps, the private sector will continue to be underserved by a system that has scattered responsibility for private sector information sharing. Moreover, even if the Department had good intelligence products to share – and I’m not convinced it does – those products would be worthless if there’s no way to get them to the right people in the private sector at the right time.

Based on our hearing this spring, if the HSIN is the system through which private sector information sharing is supposed to happen, I’m not very hopeful. The real deal is this: when the Department says that the private sector is an essential partner in making America safer, it should mean it. So far, I’ve heard a lot of talking but not much action in terms of getting it right.”

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