

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson**

### **Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Act of 2008**

February 26, 2008 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee hearing on “Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Act of 2008”

“When I assumed the Chairmanship of this Committee last January, I highlighted the need to shield the Nation’s critical infrastructure from foreign and domestic terrorism as one of my 8 goals in charting the course towards freedom from fear.

That is why this Committee has dedicated considerable resources toward drafting legislation to extend DHS’ authority over chemical plants beyond October 2009, when it is slated to expire.

Today, we are meeting to discuss a draft bill that this Committee has been working on for the past several months, the “Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Act of 2008.”

It is important to me that we have worked in an open and bipartisan manner to develop this legislation.

I would especially like to acknowledge the fine work of the Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, Ms. Jackson-Lee of Texas, for her efforts to move this process forward.

I’d also like to thank the Ranking Member of that Subcommittee, Mr. Lungren of California, for his cooperation and leadership. In this Congress, the Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee has held two hearings on the topic of chemical facility security – in July and December.

At those hearings, the Committee heard from Assistant Secretary Stephan, whose Infrastructure Protection Division is responsible for implementing the current Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards, or CFATS.

Those hearings also allowed us to hear from a wide range of witnesses representing all sides of this issue.

We talked to large chemical manufacturers who are regulated under CFATS; a representative from the State of New Jersey which is also regulating security at chemical facilities; representatives from labor unions that represent chemical facility workers; and also academic and other experts.

Today’s hearing will continue in that spirit.

We will receive an update from Assistant Secretary Stephan and testimony from Dr. David Pulham from Siegfried, a smaller chemical manufacturer, as well as Mr. Kevin Wattier, from the Long Beach Water Department.

Dr. Pulham is here to help us understand the impact of the chemical security legislation on smaller facilities, as well as tell us how his facility is complying with the State of New Jersey's chemical security requirements.

And Mr. Wattier is here to give us the feedback from a water facility about the legislation—especially given that it would subject water facilities to the same chemical security framework as is in place for all other chemical facilities.

It is worth noting that DHS considers water facilities to be at risk and therefore justifiably regulated along with other facilities that hold large volumes of toxic chemicals.

In addition official testimony, the Committee has maintained an open dialogue with the Department, environmental groups, labor representatives, large and small chemical manufacturers, fertilizer manufacturers, petroleum and propane manufacturers and distributors, as well as water facilities.

I decided to use the vehicle of a Committee Print rather than an introduced bill because of the flexibility it offers us. This way, every time we hear a good idea on how to make the legislation better, we can incorporate it.

I want to thank Ranking Member King and his staff for working in such a cooperative manner through the many iterations of the bill and I am confident that we will have a legislative product that we can all support.

Securing our chemical facilities against an attack advances my commitment to making sure that our government can provide the American people security, accountability, and most importantly, freedom from fear.”

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