

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****Preparedness: What has \$29 billion in homeland security grants bought and how do we know?**

October 27, 2009 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Emergency Communication, Preparedness, and Response Subcommittee hearing entitled “Preparedness: What has \$29 billion in homeland security grants bought and how do we know?”:

“We are tackling a complicated topic this morning. Congress has mandated that FEMA develop a comprehensive way of measuring the nation’s preparedness. And as part of that comprehensive system, we want to know what capabilities we have built with the billions of dollars in homeland security grants awarded since 9/11.

It is a very tall order. And it is one that I do not think the previous administration approached in a holistic manner.

Instead, Mr. Manning, you have inherited a lot of different preparedness metrics and projects that are stove-piped and poorly coordinated with each other.

I am afraid that the Cost-2-Capability (C2C) project is one such example. The feedback the Committee has heard about C-2-C is nearly uniform. While a good effort, C-2-C simply does not do what it is supposed to do, which is help States and urban areas objectively capture how homeland security grants are improving their preparedness capabilities.

It is also unclear how C-2-C fits into other FEMA projects, such as the Target Capabilities List and the State Preparedness Report. Despite C-2-C’s numerous flaws, FEMA is telling stakeholders that C-2-C will be a requirement for the homeland security grant program next year.

In fact, that’s the message Mississippi received last month when they were in Washington, D.C. for the kick-off of the second C2C pilot. Mr. Manning, I have no doubt that your background as a State Homeland Security Advisor makes you well aware of the problems with C-2-C.

But what we need you and Administrator Fugate to do sooner—rather than later—is make a decision on it. If it can be saved and turned into something useful, let us do it. But if C-2-C cannot be salvaged, let us not continue spending millions of dollars on a tool that simply does not make sense.

Beyond C-2-C, this Committee wants to work with you to better integrate the National Preparedness System with FEMA’s grant programs.

This morning’s hearing is a good start. I am sure the witnesses joining you will have plenty of ideas on whether C-2-C can be fixed, and how FEMA can coordinate its multiple preparedness efforts.

In addition, the preparedness task force that the Fiscal Year 2010 DHS appropriations bill creates will be a good opportunity for FEMA to engage all of the stakeholders about National Preparedness. I look forward to working with you on that task force.

Before I yield back, let me echo Chairman Cuellar’s remarks about FEMA’s new policy on maintenance costs. I think this policy is wrong for our homeland security and I daresay that FEMA does too. It is unfortunate that bean-counters at OMB decided to ram this policy through.

I am glad that Representative Kilroy has taken the lead in overturning this policy. We hope to take-

up her legislation as soon as possible. In the meantime, I hope that Ms. Crandall and Mr. Maxwell will spend a minute highlighting the impact this policy will have on their respective organizations.

#

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

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
H2-176, Ford House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: (202) 226-2616 | Fax: (202) 226-4499
<http://homeland.house.gov>