



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

### **Waste, Abuse & Mismanagement: Calculating the Cost of DHS Failed Contracts**

September 17, 2008 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Management, Investigations, and Oversight Subcommittee hearing entitled “Waste, Abuse & Mismanagement: Calculating the Cost of DHS Failed Contracts”:

“Some, and I emphasize some, of the Department’s programs have been plagued with a litany of contract problems. Some of these programs were cancelled due to contract failures, while others produced some results but never came close to fulfilling their proposed original intention. These panned contracts cost substantially more than their original budgets.

DHS spent almost \$15 billion dollars, not million, billion with a “b” as in boy of taxpayer funds on these failed and panned programs.

This hearing is one of the last hearings we will have before the 110th Congress adjourns and unfortunately, I must end this Congress with the same message to DHS that I gave at the beginning of this Congress.

At the beginning of the 110th, I set forth an 8-point platform for the Committee on Homeland Security. The first plank in that platform sets forth the need to improve the functionality, governance, and accountability of the Department of Homeland Security.

The heart of functionality, governance and accountability is simple—create an administrative and management system that is transparent and accountable. Agency officials must know where and how the money is being spent and must be able to assure that a program receives internal oversight prior to its rollout and after its completion. DHS still has not created that kind of system.

Instead, DHS leadership has permitted a system of waste, abuse, mismanagement, vague contractual terms, overspending, bonuses for bad performance, contractors being hired to oversee contractors and the same missteps over and over again.

A casual look at some of the Department’s efforts leads to disturbing findings:

\$5 million dollar a mile fences; TWIC cards that can’t be read; Ships that don’t fit into ports; Formaldehyde soaked trailers that make the occupants sick, and An information sharing program that law enforcement personnel do not want to use.

Taxpayers have had enough. Americans deserve a country that is safe, secure, and ready to respond in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

And Americans expect that those given the responsibility of managing our scarce homeland security resources will do so responsibly, prudently, and with an eye toward avoiding waste.

While the fate of these contracts will be left to the next President and the next Secretary of Homeland Security, as the Chairman of the Committee of Homeland Security, my job is to hold the Department accountable, right now.

I have said many times before, and I'll say it again: every homeland security dollar that is wasted, is a dollar that could not be used to secure our borders, to make our airports and airplanes safer, and to help protect us against those who wish to do us harm.”

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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>