

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****The EMP Threat: Examining the Consequences***

September 12, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies subcommittee hearing entitled “The EMP Threat: Examining the Consequences”:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing on electromagnetic pulse threats. I want to welcome our colleague, Mr. Franks, who will testify about his bill, H.R. 668, the SHIELD Act, which has been referred to the Energy and Commerce Committee, and the Budget Committee. I also want to welcome all of our witnesses, but especially Dr. Chris Beck, a former staffer of this Committee.

Scientists tell us that a geomagnetic solar storm capable of affecting parts of the US electrical grid is an event with a low probability of occurrence. However, if such a thing were to occur, it could have a serious impact on our electrical transmission system.

Our witnesses today will be able to shed some light on the probability of such an event, and the likelihood and severity of the effects on the electric grid and other critical infrastructure.

But in this time of increasingly tight budgets, we must depend on risk analysis to guide us in making the tough decisions about our priorities.

We know the electric grid is vulnerable to disruption. I am very interested in the testimony today, to hear about how the Department of Homeland Security assesses the risk of geomagnetic storms and other EMP threats.

I am pleased that the North American Electric Reliability Corporation has submitted a statement for the record. They are the folks on the ground dealing with how the electric industry prepares for grid vulnerabilities, and it is important that we listen carefully to their findings.”

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