Statement for the Record

Hon. Jay M. Cohen
Under Secretary, Science and Technology Directorate

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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Science & Technology Committee
Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight

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Good Morning Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Sensenbrenner, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. It is an honor to appear before you today to update you on the Department's plans for the Environmental Measurements Laboratory (EML).

The Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate is committed to serving our customers, the components that comprise the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) — and their customers — the hardworking men and women on the front lines of homeland security, especially the first responders, who need ready access to technology and information to perform their jobs more efficiently and safely. I am honored and privileged to serve with the talented scientists, engineers and other professionals who support these dedicated Americans in our shared mission to secure our homeland and defend our freedoms. Many of those talented people work at our organic DHS laboratories, the Transportation Security Lab, Plum Island Animal Disease Center, and EML.

EML is a federally owned and operated DHS laboratory, located in lower Manhattan. It was a Department of Energy research facility with competencies in low level radiation detection and monitoring, and was transferred to DHS S&T in the Homeland Security Act of 2002. EML has currently 35 Federal employees. Twenty-five are technical with backgrounds in radiation health physics, dosimetry, atmospheric transport, radio-chemistry, and nuclear spectroscopy. There are also ten administrative support employed at EML. Since coming to DHS, EML staff has provided support to the S&T Directorate and, since its inception in April 2005, the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO).

DNDO was established pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 14 and Section 872 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-296). Section 501 of the Security and Accountability For Every (SAFE) Port Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-347) statutorily established DNDO, and amended the Homeland Security Act of 2002 removing all radiological or nuclear responsibilities and authorities from the Under Secretary for Science and Technology. Although the laboratory is managed within the S&T Directorate, EML has applied its staff's radiation detection expertise and operational testing experience primarily to support DNDO programs. Currently, nineteen EML staff members support DNDO at level of effort equivalent to about 9.5 full time employees. DNDO director Vayl Oxford and I have discussed DNDO's requirements and have agreed that this is approximately the long-term workload that EML can expect in support of DNDO programs.

EML staff has also been involved with radiation and explosives detection Test & Evaluation (T&E) involving a number of federal, state, and local end-users; and with standards development, including program management and working group activities. As the Homeland Security Act of 2002 also assigned me the responsibility of coordinating all T&E activities of the Department, together with my DHS S&T Directorate T&E Director and EML leadership, I am personally and actively working to identify an appropriate T&E role for the remainder of the EML workforce. The President's Budget Request for FY2008 reflects my expectation that DNDO will continue to require the current level of support from EML, and that we will be able to productively utilize the remainder of the workforce in a meaningful DHS T&E role.

EML currently leases ~96,000 sq. ft. in the GSA building at 201 Varick Street New York, NY. The leased space includes basement storage, a four bay garage and loading dock, and a rooftop platform. The current lease expires at the end of FY 2008 and the rent is expected to increase in

2009. I will work to "right size" both leased floor space at the current EML location and a sustainable technical and administrative workforce that will ensure EML's new role in supporting both DHS S&T and DNDO in making the Nation safer. EML will be fully integrated into my organic and DOE laboratory governance model designed to align my supporting laboratories to the current DHS S&T Directorate organization, similar to the alignment being accomplished with DHS S&T university Centers of Excellence. I greatly respect the invaluable contribution that the intellectual capital our S&T workforce of scientists, engineers and associates at EML (and all other S&T activities supporting DHS missions) make through discoveries and inventions to equip our DHS components and First Responders with cutting edge technology to protect America well into the future.

I appreciate the many demands on the taxpayers' precious dollars. You have my commitment that the S&T Directorate will be wise stewards of the public monies you have provided to serve the best interests of the nation by investing in the talent and technology that will provide America with a sustainable capability to protect against acts of terror and other high-consequence events.

Members of the Subcommittee, I thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today to discuss this important matter. I welcome your interest and oversight. I look forward to working with you and your dedicated staff throughout the 110th Congress.