



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

“Securing LNG Tankers to Protect the Homeland”

March 21, 2007 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee hearing entitled “Securing LNG Tankers to Protect the Homeland”:

“Natural gas accounts for about one-fourth of all energy consumed in the United States. The Department of Energy predicts that the United States will have to increase imports by 600% in the next 25 years to fulfill demands. To meet this demand, energy companies have submitted 32 applications to build new terminals for importing liquid natural gas in 10 states and 5 offshore areas.

Today, there are only 5 import terminals. The dramatic increase in terminals will assist in meeting the demand, but it will also increase the number of potential terrorist targets. We must ensure these new facilities and tankers are adequately secure.

Many agencies within the Administration have a role to play in this endeavor. I look forward to hearing from our government witnesses today of the steps each has taken to improve the security of LNG transportation.

Additionally, the men and women who crew these tankers are the crucial eyes and ears of the system. I applaud the Maritime Administrator’s initiative in increasing the number of U.S. mariners on LNG tankers. I look forward to hearing more about how we can increase U.S. presence on these tankers.

I am also interested in hearing from the Coast Guard about the impact the increased amount of LNG traffic will have on the agency.

Coast Guard assets are aging by the day, and I am concerned about whether or not the Coast Guard has the assets to meet this growing mission. I recognize that Admiral Allen has set a course to fix the Coast Guard’s Deepwater Program, but I want to know if this course correction will occur before the additional LNG facilities come on line.

Finally, I am very interested in learning from the Government Accountability Office about its recommendations to fix the conflicting assessments of the specific consequences of an LNG spill. Mr. Wells’ written testimony is correct - access to accurate information will play a crucial role in developing risk assessments for LNG placement decisions. The continued absence of this information is troubling and must be rectified.”

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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