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COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

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Chairwoman Collins and Members of the Committee, good morning and thank you for asking me to testify on Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) security initiatives. I am Polly Hanson, Chief of the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD for WMATA).

By way of background, WMATA was created in 1967 as an Interstate Compact agency through enactment of legislation by the U.S. Congress, and by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The Metro System was designed to serve the constituencies of the National Capital Region, including employees of the federal government, the residents of the region, the citizens of our nation who come to Washington to do business with the federal government, and the millions of people who visit from throughout the world.

Since the mid 1960's, there has been dramatic growth and change in the National Capital Region. As population and employment in this region has skyrocketed, the demands on and expectations of WMATA have also grown exponentially. Each day we provide 1.2 million trips on our rail and bus systems. We are the second largest subway system and fifth largest bus system in the United States. Metro is widely recognized as being critical to the operation of the federal government. Over 150,000 federal employees (45 percent of the region's federal employees) participate in the Metrochek program. Nearly half of all Metrorail stations serve federal facilities, approximately 10 percent of Metro's daily ridership uses stations next to the Capitol and Pentagon.

The Metro Transit Police Department was established in 1976. MTPD is the nation's first non federal tri-state transit police force. We have authorized strength of 400 sworn transit police officers and 101 special police officers. Our purpose is to prevent crime, protect Metro's customers, employees, facilities and revenues and enforce laws, ordinances, rules and regulations.

As the largest transit provider for the National Capital Region, Metro takes its responsibility in homeland security with the seriousness it demands. WMATA's approach to transit security involves a partnership between employees, customers, the transit police and other public safety departments in the region, and the federal government. It's a strategic approach that merges the application of technology with enhanced operational awareness, and puts an emphasis on training, public outreach campaigns, and the use of security assessments that take into consideration the unique designs of transit. Working in partnership with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and other transit systems across the country, WMATA has assisted in the development and is utilizing many of the industry's best practices to implement this strategy.

Security Actions Taken Before and After September 11, 2001

WMATA has been hailed by some as a "national security asset" both for its efficient performance on that fateful day of September 11, 2001, and for its potential

future role in serving the National Capital Region during a major regional incident or emergency situation. WMATA had spent considerable time and resources on emergency preparedness even before September 11th. In the aftermath of the 1995 nerve gas attack in the Tokyo subway, we began in partnership with the Departments of Energy, Transportation, Justice, and the National Laboratories to develop a chemical sensor detection system for use in a transit environment. Metro's chemical detection system, which is now fully operational, has become a model for other transit agencies across the nation and around the world.

Also prior to 9/11, WMATA's transit police and safety departments had prepared System Safety and System Security Program Plans, established procedures and practices for activating our Emergency Operations Command Center, conducted annual counter-terrorism and explosive incident training for police and operations personnel, as well as providing a high level of interagency coordination and training programs and exercises with the many law enforcement and fire and emergency rescue agencies in the metropolitan area.

Since 9/11, WMATA has undertaken a number of additional actions to enhance our security and emergency preparedness. With \$49 million of funds made available by Congress after the attacks, WMATA undertook a number of initiatives, including:

- Advancing the chemical sensor detection system from the testing and pilot to the operational phase
- Installing intrusion detection capability and ID entry system at WMATA employee buildings, facilities, and stations
- Installing Automatic Vehicle Locators on Metrobuses
- Equipping a portion of Metrobuses with digital cameras and recording capability
- Installing bomb containment trash cans
- Purchasing Personal Protective Equipment and additional K-9 teams for transit police and
- Putting in place an alternative command center and interim backup operations control center capability
- Initiating the installation of redundant fiber optic infrastructure to ensure emergency communications.

The early warning data flowing from the chemical sensor detection system, commonly referred to as "PROTECT," is fully integrated into our Operations Control Center and critical real-time information and live images can also be accessed at safe zones for use by incident commanders responsible for responding to an event.

WMATA has also been subject to two comprehensive external security assessments since September 11, 2001. The Federal Transit Administration completed a threat vulnerability assessment in the spring of 2002, and DHS's Office for Domestic Preparedness conducted a risk-based security needs assessment in 2004. Both assessments cited the need for redundancy in key operations control and communications systems as a top security priority for WMATA.

Madrid and London Bombings: A Heightened Level of Awareness

The actions taken in response to the terrorist attacks in Madrid last year and London in July are designed to enhance both WMATA and the region's emergency preparedness.

MTPD Actions

Actions taken by the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) include:

- Purchase of additional explosive ordinance detection equipment
- Increasing the frequency of station patrols by transit police special response teams (similar to SWAT teams) who patrol with specially trained explosive detection canines and machine guns
- Altering the way in which transit police are conducting sweeps of trains and increasing the number of police officers patrolling during rush hour
- Metro Transit Police receive regular updates from the FBI and the region's chiefs of police and a member of the Metro Transit Police has been selected to represent the entire transit industry on the FBI's National Joint Terrorism Task Force
- Additional security measures that are not visible to our customers and are designed to be that way
- Purchase of additional radiological pagers for use on patrols
- Created a multi-jurisdiction partnership with other local police departments to assist with rail station and bus sweeps

Increasing Public Awareness

A critical component towards raising the nation's emergency preparedness level is to also constantly engage the public. WMATA has increased public announcements to our customers, stressing the need to be attentive to their surroundings. Our recent public outreach efforts include campaigns known as, "See it, Say it" and "Hey, Is that your bag?," which was cited by former Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Under Secretary Hutchinson as an effective tool for raising passenger awareness and involvement in the transit environment.

September is National Emergency Preparedness Month and WMATA has been sponsoring numerous outreach events to our customers. WMATA hosted an information booth and conducted K-9 unit and rail emergency evacuation demonstrations at the September 1st DHS kick off event at Union Station. Our safety office has been offering emergency preparedness seminars at the offices of large regional employers. We are also conducting "Open Houses" at major rail stations every Tuesday and Thursday during the month of September. During these events, officials from the Metro Transit Police and our safety and communications departments are on hand to answer questions from customers as well as distribute emergency preparedness brochures and expand upon emergency evacuation procedures and alternate route planning that can be found at our web site: *metroopendoors.com*. WMATA is also an active participant in the NCR's Emergency Preparedness Campaign, including assisting in the creation of handy information cards, known as "Z cards" and by providing free advertising space

throughout the system to promote greater public involvement on the emergency preparedness front.

Training our Workforce and the Region's First Responders

The recent events in London have also called for a top to bottom re-emphasis and re-energizing of our entire workforce on anti-terror and emergency response training. Since 2003, all of our bus drivers, train operators and other operations employees have been shown the National Transit Institute's *Warning Signs* video, which covers key aspects of system security for transit employees, including what to look for and what to do regarding suspicious activity, packages, devices and substances. In August, we began showing the video again to all of our 8000 operations employees. They also receive job specific security brochures covering these areas. The *Warning Signs* video is also being shown to non-operations personnel, and has been posted on our internal web site for viewing by all 2000 non-operations employees.

We are supplementing our existing training for both operations and non-operations personnel with additional terrorist activity recognition and reaction training classes. On the operations side, WMATA is working with the National Transit Institute to specialize the training to address the diverse responsibilities on the operations side that includes functions beyond bus and train operators, such as the maintenance of the escalators, track structures, buses and railcars. The training will include hands-on scenarios in recognition, decision-making, and demonstration of procedures covering situations like unattended or suspicious items and unusual behavior.

All of this training will serve to reinforce the need for our employees to respond aggressively in these situations, but it's also worth noting that our operations employees on a daily basis face the challenging task of keeping a prudent balance between implementing proper security safeguards and maintaining rapid transit service.

We also continue to enhance and extend our training partnerships with the region's first responder community and the Department of Homeland Security. Just this spring, Metro Transit Police launched a new training initiative entitled "Managing Metro Emergencies." The training was devised and developed in response to the Madrid bombings as well as a recent series of service disruptions that forced thousands of customers to evacuate the Metrorail system. The "Managing Metro Emergencies" course is providing approximately 1,500 regional law enforcement, fire and rescue, department of transportation and WMATA personnel enhanced training for mitigating, evacuating, transporting and recovering from a major service disruption in our system.

Last year, Metro Transit Police launched a Metro Citizens Corps program that provides Metro-specific training ranging from rail safety and emergency preparedness and response to identification of terrorist activity. Citizen participation initially consists of Citizen Emergency Response Teams (CERT) already organized in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia.

Metro Transit Police are also currently working on expanding a partnership with DHS that began during this year's presidential inauguration to offer advanced behavior assessment training to the region's law enforcement community. In accordance with HSPD-5: Management of Domestic Incidents, Metro Transit Police officers have been National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) trained and certified, and we have started to expand the training to key management and operations personnel.

WMATA's Emergency Response Training Facility opened in 2002, and is the only transit facility of its kind in the nation that is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week to train emergency personnel. The facility includes a mock train tunnel that allows regional emergency responders to train for disasters such as smoke/fire, collisions and potential terrorist incidents in a transit/tunnel environment. WMATA's emergency management team trains an estimated 2000 federal, state and local emergency personnel each year. The facility was awarded the American Public Transportation Association's Management Innovation Award for 2004.

Transit Needs Additional Federal Support From DHS

The Department of Homeland Security and Congress have yet to make the protection of transit infrastructure a top homeland security priority. Less than \$250 million of grant funding over three years has been allocated nationwide to transit since the creation of DHS in 2003. That amounts to an average of less than 0.3 percent of DHS's annual budget of \$30 billion, and prospects are not looking much better for the upcoming year. The catastrophic consequences of Hurricane Katrina, highlighted by the breaching of the levees in New Orleans, should serve as a stark wake up call to the dire implications of neglecting to take serious actions to protect and strengthen our nation's critical infrastructure.

Given the modest amount of federal support for transit security to date, the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) within DHS needs to simplify the grant application process in FY2006 to ensure that already identified needs based on both external and internal security assessments can be addressed in expedited manner. Due to the numerous layers of coordination, planning and approval requirements associated with the FY05 transit grant program, most of which replicates what transit systems are already doing, we are now almost a year after enactment of the FY05 DHS Appropriations bill, and two months after the London bombings, and we still have not gotten the green light from DHS to spend our FY05 grant funds.

At the very least, for FY06, DHS should be able to evaluate all the risk assessment information submitted by transit agencies in the past years and provide specific allocations to each transit system based primarily on risk, rather than allocating funds on a regional basis. We do support ODP's regional focus, as reflected in the formation of Transit Security Regional Working Groups, for the purpose of improving coordination and information sharing between transit systems. Regional allocations,

however, results in needless delays, and opens the door for criteria other than the assessment of threats and vulnerabilities to play a prominent role in the decision making process for the distribution of funds within a region. DHS should also consider providing the funds directly to transit agencies, and cut-out the various middle men that are far removed from the daily operation and protection of transit systems.

Our industry has the experience and knowledge in transit operations and security. Transit systems around the country working in partnership with the American Public Transportation Association have played a leadership role in developing security related best practices and forums for the industry in areas such as intelligence sharing, system safety and security guidelines, employee training, emergency preparedness and prioritization of transit research projects. But the energy and ingenuity exhibited by the transit sector since the tragedy of September 11, 2001 four years ago must be matched by a greater commitment of resources and risk-based planning by DHS in order to enhance the security of the more than 32 million customers who ride our subways and buses each weekday. In doing so, DHS needs to more fully engage and work with the transit industry to ensure that programs are developed and implemented in a flexible and practical manner that takes into consideration the variations in transit systems across the country, which is an entirely different process compared to securing airports. DHS must also do a better job of coordination and information sharing among internal agencies within the Department, such as ODP, TSA, IAIP and the Science and Technology Directorate, with transit security responsibilities.

The transit community also needs DHS's help in the development of standards for detection/surveillance technologies and other security items applicable for target hardening in a transit environment. Currently, there are far too many companies knocking on our doors insisting that they have the perfect solutions for enhancing our security. We don't have the time and resources to sift through all the options out there and identify the systems that will best meet our needs.

As part of the "Metro Matters" capital improvement campaign launched in the fall of 2003, WMATA identified \$150 million of high priority outstanding security needs. Yet, WMATA has received only a total of \$15 million in DHS transit security grants over a three year period. WMATA has allocated most of these funds towards beginning to address the need for redundancy and enhanced reliability of key operations control and communications functions, which was highlighted as a top priority by both the DHS and FTA security assessments. Other high priority security needs on the capital side include enhancing current WMD detection capabilities, expanding intrusion detection and surveillance systems, enhancing decontamination response and recovery capabilities, upgrading the public address system, additional anti-terror equipment for the transit police and additional video cameras on buses.

WMATA's Partnerships with the Federal Government

There have been some positive developments in terms of our relationship building with the federal government I would like to take a moment to discuss our partnerships in

emerging detection technologies and security procedures that are applicable to the transit environment.

WMATA continues to serve as a test-bed for the federal government and model for the country on new transit security initiatives. Metro's chemical detector system, commonly referred to as "PROTECT," has become a model for other transit agencies across the nation and around the world. The early warning data flowing from PROTECT is fully integrated into our Operations Control Center and the data and live images can also be accessed at safe zones for use by incident commanders in the region responsible for responding to an event. Federal partners who worked with WMATA in the development of the PROTECT system include the Departments of Justice, Energy, Transportation and Homeland Security. Working with our federal partners, WMATA continues to offer training and technical assistance on the PROTECT system to interested transit systems in the United States and around the world. WMATA is actively engaging the Department of Homeland Security in efforts to leverage the advances obtained by the PROTECT program to other emerging applications in the chemical, biological and explosive detection areas.

In January of this year, Metro Transit Police and Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration (TSA) collaborated to enhance security at Metrorail stations and on trains during the days surrounding the presidential inauguration. The first of a kind partnership with TSA, which included the use of federal screeners equipped with explosive trace detection gear and canines teams supplementing Metro's teams of officers and explosive detection canines, performed without a hitch and can be applied to other special events across the country. We are also working with DHS on expanding the application and training of personnel in the area of behavior assessment screening of passengers in a transit environment.

Early in 2004, WMATA was one of the first transit systems to subject itself to a comprehensive security risk assessment offered by ODP's Technical Assistance Program. It was a useful tool, quantitative and scenario driven in nature, for evaluating and ranking gaps in our infrastructure protection and response capabilities. While the assessment process had yet to be refined to take into consideration some aspects that are also critical to transit, such as recovery procedures and the evaluation of in-direct threats, it represents the only example of a DHS agency approaching us with a well thought out risk based process for assessing our outstanding security needs. The ODP assessment team appeared receptive to our suggestions for improving the process, and we recommend that other DHS agencies with responsibilities for assessing transit security, such as TSA and the Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Directorate, work with ODP to enhance and expand the use of this risk assessment tool.

WMATA also has a long standing productive working relationship with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on a wide range of emergency preparedness initiatives linked to training and exercises. The FTA has provided WMATA and other transit agencies technical assistance and support for continuity of operations planning (COOP), emergency drills, ongoing security forums and research coordinated through the

Volpe Center, and emergency training through the Transportation Safety Institute. In the case of training, the relationship has been a two-way street, with WMATA providing the FTA with in-kind instructional support for rail safety and emergency management courses.

WMATA's Regional Coordination Efforts Since 9/11

As the recent tragic events in the Gulf Coast illustrate, considerable coordination and planning among the region's state and local government players, as well as the private sector is necessary in order to ensure that WMATA's own emergency preparations and security upgrades will provide benefits to the National Capital Region during an emergency. Using the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) as its primary coordinating body, the region has made significant progress on the issue of regional emergency response planning and coordination. As the lead transit agency in the region, WMATA continues to work with the rest of our partners in the transportation and public safety community to refine the plans already in place by providing more specific guidance on emergency transportation protection measures, including moving evacuation plans to the operational phase and improving internal and external communications during regional incidents.

WMATA has been a regular participant in exercises and drills sponsored by DHS, COG and various local jurisdictions. We also have conducted our own table top exercises with all key regional players, including federal agencies, as part of an effort to enhance WMATA's continuity of operations plans (COOP).

WMATA also has a long standing positive working relationship with the region's other law enforcement departments and emergency management agencies. Officials from both the Metro Transit Police Department and our Emergency Management team are on call 24/7 to represent WMATA at the District of Columbia's EOC during an emergency. The collaboration is also highlighted by the assistance WMATA provides to the District during special events by making additional buses available to transport personnel and provide perimeter security, as well as the assistance the Metropolitan Police Department, the Capitol Police and other regional law enforcement agencies provide to our police force when we are at elevated alert levels.

Conclusion

It's important to stress that we are constantly re-evaluating our top security needs based on new threat information, updated external and internal security assessments and emerging technological innovations. WMATA will also continue to pursue partnerships with the Department of Homeland Security to serve as a test-bed for new national initiatives in areas such as biological and chemical detection and enhanced security procedures targeted to a transit environment. Finally, the tragic events in the Gulf Region resulting from the fury of Hurricane Katrina, serves to reinforce the importance and

WMATA's commitment to continue to work with all our regional partners to further enhance emergency preparedness in the National Capital Region.

I want to thank you Chairwoman Collins and the rest of the members of the Committee for the opportunity to present these remarks and for the support this Committee has provided to Metro over the years. I would be happy to answer any questions.