Testimony
of

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Regarding a Hearing
on

"Smarter Borders, Safer Nation: Expanding the Use of Non-Intrusive Inspection Technology"

Before the

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement

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Introduction

Chairman Guest, Ranking Member Correa, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) use of non-intrusive inspection technology. This critical capability strengthens our ability to continue securing our Nation's borders while facilitating the flow of lawful trade and travel.

Under President Trump and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Noem's leadership, the CBP Office of Field Operations plays a central, critical role in securing our nation's borders. With nearly 34,000 highly trained personnel, the Office of Field Operations is CBP's largest component and oversees 328 ports of entry and 15 preclearance locations domestically and abroad, performing complex customs, immigration, agriculture, and trade activities. Every day,[1] the Office of Field Operations processes more than 1 million passengers and pedestrians, facilitates the importation of nearly $10 billion in goods, and collects nearly $600 million in duties and taxes. At the same time, on average, we prevent the entry of nearly 1,200 inadmissible persons, seize more than 1,300 pounds of drugs, confiscate $165,000 in illicit currency, and intercept 3 counterfeit documents.

CBP's Office of Field Operations employs a dynamic, intelligence-driven, law enforcement strategy that integrates advanced data analysis, information sharing, and coordination with federal, state, and international partners to identify and disrupt threats. By leveraging cutting-edge technologies such as non-intrusive inspection systems, artificial intelligence, and facial biometrics, the Office of Field Operations enhances its ability to detect contraband, verify identities, and streamline inspections, all while maintaining the flow of lawful trade and travel.

Today, I will provide an overview of CBP's non-intrusive inspection technology, its role within CBP's broader security strategy, and the progress made in deploying these critical assets. I will also discuss the deployment and operational challenges we face and outline our plans to address them as we continue to enhance our border security capabilities and protect our communities from transnational threats.

Border Security Threats at U.S. Ports of Entry

As CBP reasserts control of our borders in accordance with President Trump's directives, transnational criminal organizations and foreign terrorist organizations continue their efforts to smuggle people, contraband, and other potentially harmful materials into the United States. These organizations possess immense resources and sophisticated capabilities and can adjust their concealment tactics to evade detection by law enforcement.

Most illicit drugs seized by CBP, including fentanyl, are seized during smuggling attempts at Southwest Border land ports of entry. In fact, last fiscal year, approximately 75 percent of the total weight of illicit drugs seized by CBP at the Southwest Border were seized at ports of

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[1] Average daily enforcement actions based on preliminary Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 data.

entry.[2] Drug cartels and other transnational criminal organizations conceal these drugs in passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, mail, and even on pedestrians.

To counter these threats, CBP's Office of Field Operations continues to integrate law enforcement intelligence, data analysis, and advanced detection technologies to enhance its ability to intercept contraband and other potential threats. Among these capabilities, CBP's non-intrusive inspection technology remains one of CBP's most effective tools for detecting radiological materials as well as anomalies that may indicate concealed contraband.

Non-Intrusive Inspection Technology as Part of CBP's Multi-Layered Strategy

CBP employs a diverse range of non-intrusive inspection systems tailored to the unique needs of our operational environments. Large-scale systems are used at sea and land ports of entry to scan passenger vehicles, commercial trucks, railcars, and cargo containers. Small-scale systems are used to scan baggage, mail, and parcels. Together, these technologies provide a versatile and effective detection capability across all operational environments.

Simply put, non-intrusive inspection allows CBP to "see" inside vehicles, packages, cargo containers, and other conveyances without physically opening or unloading them. Using advanced imaging technologies, such as X-ray and gamma-ray, these systems detect anomalies that may indicate the presence of illicit drugs, contraband, or other threats.

The key advantage of non-intrusive inspection technology is its ability to conduct thorough inspections quickly, efficiently, and safely. This enables CBP to detect and interdict suspected dangerous materials without causing unnecessary delays to lawful trade and travel that physical inspections would cause.

Most of CBP's large-scale non-intrusive inspection systems are deployed in secondary inspection operations at ports of entry, where they are used to examine targeted or referred vehicles or shipments. CBP leverages advance electronic shipping information, actionable law enforcement intelligence, and CBP's Automated Targeting System to identify high-risk shipments for inspection before they arrive at ports of entry. This proactive approach allows CBP to allocate resources efficiently and focus on the highest-priority threats, while facilitating the critical flow of lawful goods into the United States.

To further advance the efficiency of our operations, CBP prioritizes the implementation of drive-through operational concepts. New non-intrusive inspection systems are positioned in pre-primary inspection areas, allowing for a greater capacity of vehicles to be scanned without interrupting traffic flows. The scans are transmitted to remote command centers, where officers review the images in real time for anomalies and flag those requiring secondary inspection. This approach streamlines the vehicle inspection process and allows more vehicles to be scanned.

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[2] Of the 255,243 pounds of drugs CBP seized at the Southwest Border in FY 2025, 192,701 pounds were seized at land ports of entry. https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/drug-seizure-statistics.

The effectiveness of CBP's non-intrusive inspection systems is clear. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, CBP officers used large-scale non-intrusive inspection systems to scan over 17 million sea containers, rail cars, and vehicles, resulting in the interdiction of 110,000 pounds of narcotics, approximately $2.2 million in unreported U.S. currency, and the apprehension of 66 undeclared passengers. Just this past November, CBP officers at the Laredo–Colombia Solidarity International Bridge in Laredo, Texas intercepted nearly 2,000 pounds of methamphetamine with a street value of $16 million concealed in a commercial truck hauling decorative items.[3] These enforcement results underscore the critical role of non-intrusive inspection technology in combating the smuggling of illicit drugs.

While non-intrusive inspection technology is a powerful tool, it is just one component of CBP's broader multi-layered enforcement strategy. This strategy provides our skilled personnel with advanced technology, law enforcement intelligence, and partnerships to create a comprehensive approach to border security.

A key example of this integrated approach is the work of CBP's National Targeting Center, which integrates law enforcement intelligence and data analysis to identify potential high-risk shipments for inspection. Skilled trade specialists and CBP officers, trained to operate and interpret non-intrusive inspection systems, play a critical role in identifying suspect shipments. In addition, CBP canine teams further enhance our detection capabilities and often work alongside officers conducting inspection activities. These specially trained dogs can detect undeclared passengers, narcotics, unreported currency, prohibited agricultural items, and other contraband.

Together, these resources form a multi-layered approach that ensures that no single tool or capability is relied upon exclusively. By combining technology, intelligence, and specialized personnel, CBP adapts to emerging threats while maintaining the balance between security and the facilitation of lawful trade and travel.

Non-Intrusive Inspection Technology Investments and Deployment Plans

Congressional funding is instrumental in advancing CBP's non-intrusive inspection system program. As of December 2, 2025, CBP has deployed 405 large-scale non-intrusive inspection systems at air, sea, and land ports of entry, including 67 fixed systems added during FY 2024, FY 2025, and FY 2026 to date. By the end of FY 2026, CBP plans to deploy 38 additional systems currently under construction or in an active construction planning phase. These drive-through non-intrusive inspection system deployments are part of a multi-year effort to close the vehicle scanning capacity gap and address high-priority threats.

Looking ahead, CBP has allocated more than $1 billion from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act for the procurement and integration of new non-intrusive inspection systems, artificial intelligence, and other mission support capabilities.[4] The President's FY 2026 Budget also requests $137 million to procure more systems and to enhance non-intrusive inspection capabilities. These investments will enable CBP to expand pre-primary non-intrusive inspection operations,

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[3] https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/local-media-release/cbp-officers-seize-more-16-million-methamphetamine-colombia-solidarity
[4] Public Law 119-21

integrate systems, and implement artificial intelligence to reduce manual image analysis to further increase security and enhance the flow of legitimate trade and travel through ports of entry.

CBP's non-intrusive inspection system program represents a tremendous investment in our border security capabilities, and we are committed to maximizing the impact of these systems. CBP has ambitious plans to expand the use of non-intrusive inspection technology and increase scanning rates at our ports of entry. With current deployment plans, CBP aims to scan 40 percent of passenger vehicles and 70 percent of commercial vehicles at Southwest Border land ports of entry by the end of FY 2026.

CBP also has a recapitalization plan to replace aging non-intrusive inspection systems, ensuring the continued functionality and availability of this critical technology to support port of entry operations. Replacing this equipment with the latest cutting-edge technology is expected to increase our scanning capacity and improve our ability to detect anomalies.

Despite its benefits, non-intrusive inspection technology faces deployment challenges, including limited real estate at some ports of entry and placement constraints to avoid interference with radiation detection systems. CBP addresses these challenges by evaluating facilities and infrastructure at ports of entry and exploring innovative solutions to increase and improve scanning at these locations.

Conclusion

Non-intrusive inspection technology is an essential component of CBP's layered enforcement strategy. It enables our frontline personnel to focus on their critical border security mission, facilitate lawful trade and travel, and protect American communities by disrupting transnational criminal organizations that attempt to smuggle contraband through ports of entry.

CBP will continue to implement President Trump's policies to enforce the law, prevent criminals from entering our country, and strengthen border security.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Congress for its unwavering support of CBP's mission. Specifically, your commitment to funding advanced technologies, such as non-intrusive inspection systems, is instrumental in addressing the complex challenges we face at our Nation's ports of entry. With your support, CBP will further expand its non-intrusive inspection capabilities, enhance and modernize data systems, and address infrastructure and technology challenges. These advancements will enhance our ability to detect and interdict threats, disrupt criminal and terrorist networks, and safeguard the American people.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.