

## Dingell, Stupak Request Information, Urge Agencies to Address Weaknesses with Radiation Detection Equipment

Reps. John D. Dingell, Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Bart Stupak, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, wrote to the Department of Homeland Security today regarding a decision to postpone certification and production of Advanced Spectroscopic Portals (ASP).

### NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Reps. John D. Dingell, Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Bart Stupak, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, wrote to the Department of Homeland Security today regarding a decision to postpone certification and production of Advanced Spectroscopic Portals (ASP). Postponement would be for at least a year due to the “functionality” problems identified by the Customs and Border Protection, the federal agency charged with deploying this next generation of radiation detection equipment at ports and borders across the country.

The Subcommittee held hearings on September 18, 2007, at which the Government Accountability Office (GAO) testified that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had used biased test methods. In tests that were run at the Nevada

Test Site in February and March 2007, DHS allowed ASP vendors to adjust their machines before the tests which, according to GAO, may have provided a false impression about the capability of the ASPs under real world conditions where the types of materials being smuggled would be unknown in advance. The Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) rejected the criticisms raised at the hearing and failed to respond to the Committee's request that DNDO run genuinely blind tests to provide accurate information on the precision and detection limits of the ASPs before deciding to expend \$1.2 billion to purchase them.

"It appears that DHS now agrees that the ASPs had inherent weaknesses that warrant major modifications to the equipment before it can be certified and deployed," said Dingell. "To protect taxpayer interests and ensure that the new technology does not have additional inherent flaws, it is imperative that DHS properly test these machines again under real world circumstances, and jettison the use of biased test results."

"DNDO's rush to deploy these ASPs is fundamentally unwarranted because U.S. Customs and Border Protection has technology which, although labor intensive, can detect radioactive materials that a terrorist might try to smuggle through our ports and borders," said Stupak.

[Read the Letter](#)

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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