

**SMARTER BORDERS, SAFER NATION: EXPANDING
THE USE OF NON-INTRUSIVE INSPECTION TECH-
NOLOGY**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON
BORDER SECURITY
AND ENFORCEMENT**
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION
JANUARY 22, 2026
Serial No. 119-36

Printed for the use of the Committee on Homeland Security



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 2026
63-556 PDF

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SMARTER BORDERS, SAFER NATION: EXPANDING THE USE OF NON-INTRUSIVE INSPECTION TECHNOLOGY

Thursday, January 22, 2026

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER SECURITY AND ENFORCEMENT,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 310, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Michael Guest [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Guest, Crane, Biggs, Correa, Johnson, Walkinshaw, and Green.

Also present: Representatives Thompson and Magaziner.

Mr. GUEST. Good morning. Welcome to the Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement's hearing on U.S. Customs and Border Protection's use of non-intrusive technology, or NII, at our borders. The committee will come to order. Without objection, the Chair may declare the committee in recess at any point.

Without objection, the gentleman from Rhode Island, Mr. Magaziner, will be permitted to sit on the dais and ask questions today.

The purpose of this hearing is to examine U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Non-Intrusive Inspection Systems Program, including its crucial role in detecting and preventing the entry of contraband into the country. Additionally, we will discuss the challenges and roadblocks in the deployment of NII equipment as evidenced in the fall of 2025 Government Accountability Office report that concluded the program must be strengthened to achieve Congressional-mandated scan rates.

I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

CBP's non-intrusive inspection equipment uses technology to locate concealed items such as drugs, weapons, or people in vehicles and cargo. As cartels and other smuggling organizations develop more sophisticated means of concealing drugs and contraband, the Government must adapt to stay ahead of these evolving threats, and the expansion of the NII program will play a critical role in that effort. CBP managed the front lines in our efforts to keep threats out of our country, and NII has been an integral tool for CBP's mission. NII enables CBP to detect and interdict contraband while minimizing the impact to the flow of lawful trade and travel at our borders.

Pursuant to the Securing America's Port Act of 2021, CBP was tasked to develop a plan to reach a 100 percent high through NII

scan rate at land ports of entry by 2027. As of fiscal year 2024, CBP fell short of that goal, using NII to examine approximately only 8 percent of passenger vehicles and 27 percent of commercial vehicles. These low scan rates can be attributed partially to poor planning and mismanagement, from acquisition to installation and the deployment of the NII equipment. Reports from both the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office have raised concerns with, No. 1, program management and, No. 2, future outlook. NII program leaders have assured oversight bodies that they have made changes to their structure, staffing, management, and standards to ensure scan rates reflect the amount of taxpayer dollars that the program has received.

Ultimately, regardless of the prior shortcomings in the NII program, the capabilities NII affords to our front-line officers keeping our ports secure are invaluable. We must continue to invest responsibly in this technology as we see that this technology has a proven track record in facilitating CBP's ability to protect and prevent smuggling into our country.

Additionally, having just entered a year with record-low illegal border crossings, CBP has the opportunity to invest resources in developing and the deployment of security measures along our border. Those measures include NII, which will further strengthen our national security.

To aid in this effort, Congress provided a historic investment in the budget reconciliation bill to enhance and improve NII at our borders. With the appropriations of these additional funds, Congress must provide additional oversight to ensure this investment in the NII program is wisely and efficiently allocated. I am cautiously optimistic that prudent decisions from NII leadership within CBP, oversight from Congress, and technological advances in industry will allow CBP to achieve 100 percent scanning rates.

I would like to thank our witnesses for their participation and for briefing Ranking Member Correa and myself prior to this hearing. I look forward to working with my colleagues to enhance and prioritize CBP's Non-Intrusive Inspection Program.

[The statement of Chairman Guest follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL GUEST

JANUARY 22, 2026

Good morning! Welcome to the Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement hearing on U.S. Customs and Border Protection's use of non-intrusive inspection technology—or NII—at our borders.

CBP's non-intrusive inspection equipment uses technology to locate concealed items such as drugs, weapons, or people in vehicles and cargo. As cartels and other smuggling operations develop more sophisticated means of concealing drugs and contraband, the Government must adapt to stay ahead of these evolving threats, and the expansion of the NII program will play a crucial role in this effort.

CBP mans the front line in our efforts to keep threats out of our country, and NII has been an integral tool for CBP's mission. NII enables CBP to detect and interdict contraband while minimizing the impact to the flow of lawful trade and travel at our borders.

Pursuant to the "Securing America's Ports Act of 2021," CBP was tasked to develop a plan to reach a 100 percent high throughput NII scanning rate at land ports of entry by 2027. As of fiscal year 2024, CBP fell short of that goal, using NII to examine approximately only 8 percent of passenger vehicles and 27 percent of commercial vehicles.

These low scan rates can be partially attributed to poor planning and mismanagement, from acquisition, to installation and deployment of the NII equipment. Reports from both the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office have raised concerns with both (1) program management and (2) outlook.

NII program leaders have assured oversight bodies that they have made changes to their structure, staffing, management, and standards to ensure scan rates reflect the amount of taxpayer dollars the program has received.

Ultimately, regardless of the prior shortcomings in the NII program, the capabilities NII affords to our front-line CBP officers keeping our ports secure are invaluable. We must continue to invest responsibly in NII technology. This technology has a proven track record in facilitating CBP's ability to detect and prevent smuggling into our country.

Additionally, having just ended a year with record-low illegal border crossings, CBP has the opportunity to invest resources in developing/deploying of security measures along our borders, including NII, to further strengthen our national security.

To aid in this effort, Congress provided a historic investment in the "Budget Reconciliation Bill" to enhance and improve NII at our borders. With the appropriation of these additional funds Congress must provide additional oversight to ensure this investment in the NII program is wisely and efficiently allocated.

I am cautiously optimistic that prudent decisions from NII leadership within CBP, oversight from Congress, and technological advancements in industry, will allow CBP to achieve 100 percent scanning.

I would like to thank our witnesses for their participation today, and for briefing Ranking Member Correa and myself prior to this hearing. I look forward to working with my colleagues to enhance and prioritize CBP's non-intrusive inspection program.

Mr. GUEST. I now recognize the Ranking Member, my friend, the gentleman from California, Mr. Correa, for his opening statement.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, my good friend. Ms. Sabatino, Ms. Benedict, thank you for being here today.

As a Member of this committee, I have had the opportunity to visit all the ports of entry South border of the U.S. of New Mexico. In those visits, I have had the opportunity to begin to understand the job, the task that you have, the challenges. So I have sat there, stood there with your agents in blue uniforms and asked them about their challenges on an everyday basis.

One thing stood out clear to me, which is when you have a car, when you have a vehicle coming across the border, the challenge is you don't know who is in that car. You don't know if it is a friendly, you don't know what that individual may have in mind, which poses a lot of challenges for the individuals in blue uniform. I think it is important that we appreciate that it is not only your blue uniforms at the border, but rather it is the result of working with other agencies to make sure that you have the intel to know who is coming to the border at that moment. That is the challenge that we have today.

Ms. Sabatino, I want to talk to you about non-intrusive inspection technology. I think I can speak for both the Chairman and myself, but Democrats and Republicans support this technology implemented at our border. But I think we have to address a bigger picture issue, which is DHS, CBP, and ICE are being deployed to the interior of our country and not doing the job that they are supposed to do, which is protect our country from things that are coming across the border and from foreign terrorists, foreign elements that may pose a threat to our Nation.

We recently had Renee Nicole Good shot and killed by an ICE agent in Minnesota. I have had many stories from my district

about American citizens, some being blinded because of the behavior of some of these agents. Today, Ms. Sabatino, the administration is focused on mass deportations, in my opinion, at the expense of our national security. So much focus on deportations. I have spoken to many folks that work with you, other departments within the U.S. Government that tell me right now the focus is deportations and not what DHS was supposed to focus on.

As you know, DHS was created after 9/11. The goal was to protect Americans from future terrorist attacks. Thousands of Americans died 9/11. I remember that day. I couldn't believe it was happening in front of my eyes. DHS was created to stop one of those attacks from happening.

Back home I check with my local law enforcement. One of the individuals I check with is my local sheriff, Don Barnes, who runs a local Orange County Fusion Center. He has told me many, many times that his concern is the focus on deportations has left a lot of empty doors—a lot of open doors in our national security that could be exploited by those that want to do our Nation harm.

Not only are we leaving doors open, so to speak, in our national security picture, a lot of those agents are now terrorizing our communities, immigration agents going after not only immigrants, but American citizens now. Last night, I got another phone call from the district, another challenge. This administration has essentially redirected thousands of agents from Homeland Security, from the mission of protecting our country, to deportations. Not only Homeland, but FBI, DEA, CBP, all are now converging on deportations.

As you know, the President of the United States promised that he would be going after the worst of the worst. That is not the case today. He is going after immigrants, hardworking immigrants, nannies, construction workers, anybody they can get their hands on, people that essentially are providing valuable services and work to this great country. The administration is no longer arresting criminals. They are sadly arresting U.S. citizens. I see this on a daily basis.

I have young people in my district asking me, should we carry a passport? I think the fact that they even have to ask me that question is a sad testament to the situation in our country. Some of those that actually carry the passport makes no difference. They have been apprehended, taken in to double-, triple-check their citizenship status.

It pains me to see what is going on in my district. Every night I get phone calls. Not only undocumented, but American citizens now being arrested, held, charges, alleged charges dropped, but nonetheless, American citizens being held for a number of days in custody.

Ms. Sabatino, I support what you do at the border. I have worked with you for a number of years. I think you have a tremendously hard job keeping drugs from coming into the country, making sure that trade and commerce, good stuff, continues to flow. We support non-intrusive technology. But when I think of all the resources that should be focused on helping you do your job, and instead they are focused on American citizens, on undocumented immigrants that don't even have a traffic ticket to their name, this is bothersome. As people back home who voted for President Trump tell me this

is not what we thought we were going to get. We voted for an individual that was supposed to deport criminals, not our neighbors that have lived among us for so many years.

I am hoping that as we move forward, this committee, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, as well as we do an investigation of what is really going on. Ms. Sabatino, you have been in uniform for 30 years-plus. I trust that you have essentially put into place good practices at the border, how to manage the border, how to treat American citizens. But I am sad to report that today in the United States, American citizens are being terrorized. I look forward to hearing your testimony today, ma'am.

Ms. Benedict, I look forward to hearing from you as well. But as we focus on a certain technology, we got to pull back and look at the big picture. As General Kelly, former Homeland Security Secretary, used to say, border security does not end or begin at the border. It is a holistic approach to protecting this great country.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. With that, I yield.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you.

I now recognize the Ranking Member of the full committee from the great State of Mississippi, Congressman Thompson, to give an opening statement.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me welcome our panel of witnesses here this morning. I look forward to your testimony.

I am particularly pleased to see CBP here to answer questions. With the violent immigration enforcement activities occurring in communities, I expect Members will have plenty of questions for you, Ms. Sabatino, today. I understand you oversee some of the officers participating in these activities. In fact, we have a photo of your officers participating in a raid in Massachusetts.

The notice topic today is about non-intrusive inspection equipment. I want to be clear, I have long pushed for the full deployment of these scanners at our ports of entry to prevent dangerous drugs and other illicit goods from entering the country. There are real concerns with the acquisition and rollout of that equipment and I will continue to engage with CBP on that. We need to make sure taxpayers dollars are invested effectively.

However, right now, the American people are demanding answers about what is happening in our cities. They want to know what immigration agents are being instructed to do. We have all seen the horrific videos from Minnesota, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and other areas. The Trump administration is occupying and terrorizing American communities in the name of immigration enforcement. That is what needs to be our focus today. I do not understand how my Republican colleagues can sit here and pretend it isn't happening.

It has been 1 year since President Trump was sworn into office. It is clear that he, along with his corrupt crew, don't care about public safety or national security. President Trump and his administration have not made us safer or stronger as a Nation. In fact, he has done the opposite. Just look at Minneapolis. I can't believe anyone could claim those violent actions are making the city safe. Most citizens there will probably tell you they have never felt more unsafe.

Masked Federal agents are roaming the streets asking people of color for their papers to prove their citizenship, including young children in Minneapolis who are walking home alone just yesterday. If they don't have them or don't respond quickly, they are violently arrested and whisked away to unknown locations.

That same thing is happening to those who dare to film them, even though that is a protected activity. This is an assault on everyone's civil rights and civil liberties. I still can't quite believe that my Republican colleagues, who were appalled about wearing a mask during COVID, are just fine being told that their constituents must carry their passports on them at all times. Because if an immigration officer can detain a citizen in Minneapolis who doesn't have their passport on them, they can just as easily detain any one of us in this room or any one of the people we are here representing. This is not OK. None of us should think of it as acceptable.

Citizens and non-citizens alike are being harmed by this administration. We saw an ICE agent shoot and kill a mother of 3 in broad daylight. An immigration agent, including CBP, have shot at least 11 other people since the start of this Trump administration.

In addition to the shootings, we have seen aggressive and violent tactics by ICE and CBP depicted in over-the-top action movies. A military-style raid in Chicago targeted residents in an apartment building in the middle of the night. Beyond the flashbang grenades and agents rappelling from helicopters, witnesses saw children in their underwear zip-tied together in vans. Other residents, including U.S. citizens and military veterans, were also zip-tied for hours. This is not what our country stands for. The American people are taking notice. They see the Trump administration and DHS is more focused on an anti-immigrant agenda than improving the lives of our citizens.

I heard the Ranking Member, Mr. Correa, and his passionate comments. You know, as a person of color, I had to go through some things in Mississippi as a young Black boy and I thought those kinds of activities were past. But what I see occurring with people of color, Black, Brown, whatever, is not who we are as a country.

I want law enforcement to follow the law. I now find out that you can just break into somebody's house now without a warrant. We are a better country than this. I was brought up to respect law enforcement and I want law enforcement to do their job, but respect civil rights and civil liberties of anyone in this country.

So I think we are at a juncture in this country that is concerning to a lot of us. I hope as we pursue some remedy for this endeavor, we can all get back on the same page.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

[The statement of Ranking Member Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER BENNIE G. THOMPSON

JANUARY 22, 2026

I'm particularly pleased to see CBP here to answer questions. With the violent immigration enforcement activities regularly occurring in communities, I expect Members will have plenty of questions for you, Ms. Sabatino, today. I understand you oversee some of the officers participating in these activities.

The noticed topic today is about non-intrusive inspection equipment. I want to be clear—I have long pushed for the full deployment of these scanners at our ports of entry to prevent dangerous drugs and other illicit goods from entering the country. There are real concerns with the acquisition and rollout of that equipment. And I will continue to engage with CBP on that—we need to make sure taxpayer dollars are invested effectively. However, right now the American people are demanding answers about what is happening in our cities. They want to know what immigration agents are being instructed to do.

We've all seen the horrific videos from Minnesota, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and other cities. The Trump administration is occupying and terrorizing American communities in the name of immigration enforcement. That is what needs to be our focus today. I do not understand how my Republican colleagues can sit here and pretend it isn't happening.

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Just look at Minneapolis. I can't believe anyone could claim those violent actions are making the city safe. Most citizens there will probably tell you they've never felt more unsafe. Masked Federal agents are roaming the streets asking people of color for their papers to prove their citizenship. And if they don't have them or don't respond quickly, they are violently arrested and whisked away to unknown locations.

The same thing is happening to those who dare to film them. Even though that is a protected activity. This is an assault on everyone's civil rights and civil liberties. And I still can't quite believe that my Republican colleagues who were appalled about wearing a mask are just fine being told that their constituents must now carry their passports on them at all times.

Because if an immigration officer can detain a citizen in Minneapolis who doesn't have their passport on them, they can just as easily detain any one of us in this room. Or any one of the people we are here representing. This is not ok. None of us should think it is acceptable.

Citizens and non-citizens alike are being harmed by this administration. We saw an ICE agent shoot and kill a mother of 3 in broad daylight. And immigration agents—including CBP—have shot at least 11 other people since the start of this Trump administration. In addition to the shootings, we've seen aggressive and violent tactics by ICE and CBP usually depicted in over-the-top action movies.

A military-style raid in Chicago targeted residents in an apartment building in the middle of the night. Beyond the flashbang grenades and agents rappelling from helicopters, witnesses saw children in their underwear zip-tied together in vans. Other residents, including U.S. citizens and military veterans, were also zip-tied for hours.

This is not what our country stands for. The American people are taking notice. They see the Trump administration and DHS is more focused on an anti-immigrant agenda than improving the lives of our citizens.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you, Ranking Member Thompson.

Other Members of the committee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

I am pleased to have a distinguished panel of witnesses before us today on this important topic. Pursuant to committee rule VIII(C), I would ask that our witnesses please rise and raise their right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. GUEST. Thank you. Let the record reflect that the witnesses have answered in the affirmative. Please be seated.

I would now like to take a moment to formally introduce our witnesses. First, Ms. Diane Sabatino serves as the acting executive assistant commissioner within the Field Office operations at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. We also have with us Ms. Hilary Benedict, who serves as the director of the science technology assessments and analytics director within the Government Accountability Office. I would like to thank each of our witnesses for being here today.

Ms. Sabatino, I recognize you for 5 minutes to make an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF DIANE J. SABATINO, ACTING EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, OFFICE OF FIELD OPERATIONS, U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

Ms. SABATINO. Chairman Guest, Ranking Member Correa, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss how U.S. Customs and Border Protection uses non-intrusive inspection technology, or NII, to secure our Nation's ports of entry while enforcing lawful trade and travel. I'm honored to represent the more than 35,000 men and women of CBP's Office of Field Operations stationed at 328 ports of entry across the Nation, with more than 800 men and women serving in 48 countries overseas.

Our front-line personnel work tirelessly to protect the homeland. On a typical day they process more than 1 million travelers and enable \$10 billion in imported goods. At the same time, they prevent the entry of inadmissible individuals, seize illicit drugs, intercept contraband, illuminate and deliver consequences to bad actors in the supply chain, prevent biological threats from harming our communities and natural resources, all while ensuring the efficient flow of lawful trade and travel.

The Office of Field Operations plays a critical role in national security. Our Nation's ports of entry are not only gateways for lawful commerce and travel, they are also prime targets for transnational criminal organizations and other bad actors seeking to exploit the immense volume of cross-border activity. In fiscal year 2025, for example, 75 percent of illicit drugs seized by Customs and Border Protection at the Southwest Border were intercepted at ports of entry.

NII is one of many tools that we use to secure our borders. It's complementary to intelligence, K-9 teams, and targeting systems, among many others in support of our most valuable resource, which is our front-line personnel. All of these tools relieve administrative burdens from our personnel, enabling them to do what they do best, which is to determine intent and increase situational awareness.

In fiscal year 2025 alone, CBP officers used NII systems to scan more than 17 million sea containers, rail cars, and vehicles. These inspections led to the interdiction of 110,000 pounds of narcotics, the seizure of 2.2 million in unreported U.S. currency, and the apprehension of 66 undeclared passengers.

While NII technology is a proven and powerful tool, deploying these systems is not without challenges. Constraints related to port infrastructure, real estate availability, and the need to avoid interference with other detection systems can be limiting as to where and how the systems are placed. To address these challenges, we're continually reevaluating port facilities, exploring opportunities for alternative placement of the systems, and prioritizing deployments in areas with the greatest operational impact.

From the beginning of our NII deployments, we have deliberately gathered lessons learned and incorporated them into a long-term comprehensive resource strategy. This strategy strengthens acqui-

sition planning, improves contract support, and ensures systems are deployed where they will deliver the greatest benefit to border security and trade enforcement.

With the support of Congress, we've made significant progress in deploying our and enhancing our NII capabilities. As of December 2, we had deployed 405 large-scale NII systems at air, sea, and land ports of entry, including 67 new systems added over the past 2 fiscal years. We're also enhancing our NII operations through the integration of artificial intelligence, which helps automate the analysis of the scanned images, reduces the time needed for manual image review, and allows us to focus our resources on the greatest risks.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to expanding our NII capabilities and with funding provided by Congress, we plan to deploy 38 additional systems by the end of this fiscal year. These drive-through systems will allow United States to scan 40 percent of privately-owned vehicles and up to 70 percent of commercial vehicles at Southwest Border land ports of entry, significantly enhancing our ability to detect and interdict threats.

As I mentioned earlier, NII is one of the critical components of CBP's broader multilayered border security strategy. With investments authorized through the Big Beautiful Bill Act, we will enhance scanning capabilities and recapitalize many of the existing mobile and fixed technologies in the field today.

Our continued approach prioritizes the indispensable expertise of our front-line personnel, including officers, skilled trade specialists, and agriculture specialists, and integrates all of the specialized tools and capabilities available to us. Through the combined use of advanced technology, canine teams, skilled personnel, as well as strong partnerships with Federal, State, and international stakeholders, CBP maintains a comprehensive and agile security posture. This integrated approach not only enhances our ability to address evolving and emerging security threats, but also supports the efficient movement of lawful trade and travel across our borders.

Thank you for your continued support of CBP's mission and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sabatino follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DIANE J. SABATINO

JANUARY 22, 2026

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

¹ Average daily enforcement actions based on preliminary fiscal year (FY) 2025 data.

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 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, rail cars, 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 ve-

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

hicles 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.

The effectiveness of CBP's non-intrusive inspection systems is clear. In fiscal year 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 fiscal year 2024, fiscal year 2025, and fiscal year 2026 to date. By the end of fiscal year 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 fiscal year 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, 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 fiscal year 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 con-

³ <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/local-media-release/cbp-officers-seize-more-16-million-methamphetamine-colombia-solidarity>.

⁴ Public Law 119–21.

straints 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 front-line 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.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you, Ms. Sabatino.

I now recognize Ms. Benedict for 5 minutes to summarize her opening statement.

STATEMENT OF HILARY M. BENEDICT, DIRECTOR, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENTS, AND ANALYTICS, U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Ms. BENEDICT. Thank you. Chairman Guest, Ranking Member Correa, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to talk about CBP's non-intrusive inspection systems. My statement is based on GAO's report on the topic issued in September 2025.

CBP has received more than \$2 billion to deploy non-intrusive inspection systems at land ports of entry. These systems generally use X-rays to scan vehicles. Officers review the images from these scans to identify anomalies and indicate the presence of contraband. In 2021, the Securing America's Ports Act directed CBP to develop a plan to scan 100 percent of commercial and passenger vehicles and rail containers by 2027 using these systems.

CBP has made progress in deploying systems in pre-primary inspection areas. For example, CBP determined it needed a total of 434 systems and procured 153 systems for these areas; 52 were operational at the time of our review.

CBP's deployment of these systems has increased its rate of scanning passenger and commercial vehicles at the Southwest Border. Specifically, scanning rates for passenger vehicles have increased from 2 percent in 2020 to 8 percent in 2024 for passenger vehicles. For commercial vehicles, scanning increased from 16 percent to 27 percent during this time.

However, 3 issues have prevented CBP from meeting the requirement to scan 100 percent of commercial and passenger vehicles and rail containers by 2027. The first issue is planning. CBP's scanning plan does not include all land ports of entry. Specifically, the plan does not include 9 Southwest Border crossings. These 9 crossings together account for 40 percent of passenger vehicle crossings at the Southwest Border and include 3 of the biggest border crossings: San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and Nogales. CBP officials said these sites

are not included in the current plans because they are still determining how to overcome space issues at these sites.

In our September 2025 report, we recommended that CBP determine how to include systems at all border crossings in its deployment plans. CBP agreed with our recommendation and plans to implement it by the end of fiscal year 2028.

The second issue that has prevented CBP from meeting the scanning requirement is cost. CBP developed cost estimates for deploying systems, but costs have exceeded those estimates. These cost increases are due to a variety of factors such as not accounting for all deployment costs in the original estimates and unique construction challenges at each site. CBP officials said they have received the funding they needed to deploy the systems they have procured to date. However, CBP will need additional funding to meet the 100 percent scanning requirement because CBP needs to procure additional systems to achieve its current plans and the estimate does not include systems at the 9 border crossings that are not included in CBP's plans.

The third issue that has prevented CBP from meeting the scanning requirement is the schedule. Deployment of non-intrusive inspection systems has taken longer than expected. At the time of our review, CBP planned to complete deployment of the systems it had procured for passenger and commercial vehicles by the end of 2026 and for rail containers by the end of 2029. However, it will take longer to achieve the 100 percent scanning requirement because the schedule does not include the system CBP has not yet procured or the systems needed for the 9 biggest crossings that are not included in CBP's plan.

CBP officials told us that various factors have caused schedule delays. For example, major upgrades were needed at some sites, vendors have been slow to resolve deployment issues, and site conditions such as interference with scanning systems have required additional time to resolve. During our review, CBP officials told us they were aware of these issues and were working to resolve them. It will be important for CBP to continue to address these issues as it deploys and operates additional systems.

Moving forward, GAO will monitor CBP's implementation of the recommendations we made in our September 2025 report. We believe that addressing our recommendations would strengthen CBP's management of its non-intrusive inspection systems and its interdiction efforts to help achieve its mission.

This concludes my statement. I'm happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Benedict follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HILARY M. BENEDICT

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2026

BORDER SECURITY.—IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED TO INCREASE VEHICLE SCANNING AT
LAND PORTS OF ENTRY

GAO-26-108767

Chairman Guest, Ranking Member Correa, and Members of the Subcommittee: I am pleased to be here today to discuss our work on U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) non-intrusive inspection (NII) systems. Within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), CBP is the lead Federal agency charged with a dual mis-

sion of facilitating the flow of legitimate travel and trade at U.S. borders while also keeping terrorists and their weapons, criminals and their contraband, and inadmissible people out of the country. As part of its responsibilities, CBP coordinates the inspection and processing of pedestrians, passengers, and cargo at land, air, and sea ports of entry (POE).¹

Land POEs are a key drug smuggling route for transnational criminal organizations. According to CBP, most illicit drugs, including fentanyl, enter the United States through Southwest Border POEs hidden in passenger vehicles or belongings, concealed in commercial vehicles, and carried by pedestrians.² To help detect illegal drugs and other contraband, CBP uses large- and small-scale NII systems, like X-ray machines, at land POEs to enable officers to inspect travelers and their belongings, and vehicles and their contents, without the need for unloading or disassembly.³

Since 2019, CBP's NII program has received over \$2 billion for NII systems, which it has used to enhance inspections of commercial and passenger vehicles and trains, and to increase the number of vehicles that are scanned using large-scale NII systems as they enter the United States. In 2021, the Securing America's Ports Act required CBP to develop a plan to achieve 100 percent scanning of commercial and passenger vehicles and freight rail entering the United States at land POEs by 2027 using large-scale NII systems.⁴

My statement today discusses: (1) how CBP assesses large-scale NII system performance, (2) the status of large-scale NII system deployment, and (3) CBP's plans for future large-scale NII system deployments. This statement is based primarily on a report we published in September 2025 in response to a request to review the implementation and effectiveness of CBP's NII program.⁵

To inform that report, GAO analyzed NII program documentation, including inspection procedures, performance data, and deployment plans, and interviewed program officials. GAO also interviewed and observed CBP officers conducting inspections at land POEs where large-scale NII systems had been deployed in preprimary inspection areas. More detailed information on the objectives, scope, and methodology for that work can be found in the report. Our work was performed in accordance with generally accepted Government auditing standards.

BACKGROUND

CBP began using large-scale NII systems to scan vehicles in 1996 and has generally deployed them in secondary inspection areas at land POEs. When deployed in secondary inspection areas, they are only used to scan vehicles that were referred by CBP officers in primary inspection. In 2020, CBP began deploying new large-scale NII systems in preprimary inspection areas—before a traveler is interviewed by a CBP officer, where vehicles are scanned before they reach the primary inspection booth (see fig. 1). Previously, NII systems were generally used only when an officer determined that further inspection was required after the interview. Placing NII systems in preprimary inspection areas significantly increases the number of vehicles scanned because all vehicles approaching a primary inspection booth that do not choose to go through an opt-out lane are scanned, rather than only those referred for secondary inspection.⁶

¹POEs are facilities that provide for the controlled entry into or departure from the United States. Specifically, a POE is any officially-designated location (seaport, airport, or land border location) where CBP officers or employees are assigned to clear passengers, merchandise, and other items, collect duties, and enforce customs laws; and where CBP officers inspect persons seeking to enter or depart, or apply for admission into the United States, pursuant to U.S. immigration and travel controls. A single land POE may be composed of one or more crossings.

²James Mandryck, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Office of Intelligence, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Protecting the U.S. Homeland: Fighting the Flow of Fentanyl from the Southwest Border*, testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement (Washington, DC: July 12, 2023).

³CBP officers use large-scale NII systems to scan entire vehicles. The process produces an image that CBP officers review to identify anomalies that may be an indication of contraband or hidden people. CBP officers use small-scale NII systems to localize those anomalies, among other things.

⁴*Securing America's Ports Act*, Pub. L. 116–299, 134 Stat. 4906 (2021), codified at 6 U.S.C. § 211 note.

⁵GAO, *Land Port Inspections: CBP Should Improve Performance Data and Deployment Plans for Scanning Systems*, GAO–25–107379 (Washington, DC: Sep. 15, 2025).

⁶According to CBP officials, travelers may opt out of undergoing a scan by an NII system in preprimary inspection by using an opt-out lane to drive to the primary inspection booth, and officials at the POEs have discretion as to how vehicle inspections are handled when drivers choose to opt out.

Figure 1: Non-Intrusive Inspection Systems in Passenger and Commercial Preprimary Inspection Areas at Land Ports of Entry in Mission, Texas (left) and Laredo, Texas (right)



Source: GAO (photos). | GAO-26-108787

As part of its overall inspection process, CBP uses large-scale NII systems to scan vehicles. These scans produce images that are reviewed by officers to identify any anomalies that might be contraband or hidden people. If officers identify any anomalies, the vehicles undergo further inspection, which can include the use of detection canines; small-scale NII systems such as videoscopes to look into hard-to-reach areas of vehicles or baggage scanners to scan vehicle contents to localize the anomalies; and manual inspection procedures.

CBP ASSESSES LARGE-SCALE NII PERFORMANCE, BUT HAS NOT CLEARLY DEFINED ALL KEY PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS

CBP collects and uses performance data to help ensure that its large-scale NII systems are operational and available for use to scan vehicles. For example, these data include a daily list of system outages, and operational availability, which is the percentage of time systems are available for use.

CBP uses performance data to inform actions it takes to improve NII system performance. For example, CBP's fiscal year 2024 target for system performance was for individual large-scale NII systems, and for the average across all large-scale NII systems, to have an operational availability of 95 percent or greater. However, in fiscal year 2024 just over half of individual large-scale systems met this target, while the average across all large-scale NII systems was 90 percent. CBP officials told us that CBP included penalty clauses in its new maintenance contracts in September 2024, which are intended to improve contractors' accountability for maintaining the targeted level of operational availability.

In 2015, CBP established 3 key performance parameters for NII systems. These include (1) meeting an average NII imaging system operational availability of 95 percent, (2) inspecting 100 percent of all designated high-risk commercial vehicles and containerized cargo, and (3) maintaining 100 percent inspection of targeted containers, cargo, and international mail. According to DHS guidance, key performance parameters reflect the most important and non-negotiable requirements that NII systems must meet to fulfill their purpose.

CBP collects data for operational availability and reports the results in its annual operational analysis reports. However, as we found in our September 2025 report, CBP has not clearly defined its other two key performance parameters or reported their results in operational analysis reports. Specifically, CBP has not clearly defined what "high-risk" means for the inspection rate key performance parameter or what maintaining 100 percent inspection of targeted containers, cargo, and international mail means for the examination key performance parameter. CBP officials said that because they are unclear how CBP intended to define or measure these key performance parameters, they have not reported data related to them.

Clearly defining its key performance parameters and using them for reporting would enable CBP to determine whether large-scale NII systems are working as intended. Doing so would also help CBP identify any system deficiencies or possible cost savings, achieve its objectives more efficiently and effectively, and help inform future procurement decisions. In our September 2025 report, we recommended that CBP should clearly define all NII key performance parameters and report perform-

ance using them. The agency concurred with the recommendation and said that its NII program will capture and clearly define system-level key performance indicators and reporting requirements for NII systems within new contract statements of work.

CBP HAS MADE PROGRESS DEPLOYING LARGE-SCALE NII SYSTEMS, BUT HAS ENCOUNTERED INCREASED COSTS AND SCHEDULE DELAYS

As part of its efforts to increase vehicle scanning at land POEs, CBP is deploying additional large-scale NII systems in preprimary inspection areas. Specifically, CBP is deploying low-energy portals (LEP) in passenger vehicle preprimary inspection areas and multi-energy portals (MEP) in commercial vehicle preprimary inspection areas. These systems will allow CBP to scan vehicles prior to primary inspection to identify potential anomalies and assist in determining whether to refer vehicles for secondary inspection, rather than only scanning vehicles referred for secondary inspection.

Beginning in fiscal year 2020, CBP awarded contracts to procure and deploy 153 large-scale NII systems to land POEs. As of February 2025, 52 of these 153 systems CBP planned to deploy were fully operational, nearly all located at preprimary inspection areas. An additional 101 systems were in preplanning, design, or construction phases (see table 1). These systems include 12 high-energy NII rail systems that CBP plans to deploy to replace existing gamma-ray systems that they are retiring.

Table 1: Deployment Status of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Large-Scale Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) Systems at Land Ports of Entry, as of February 2025

Type of system	Pre-planning	Design	Construction	Fully operational	Total ^a
Low-energy portal (LEP)	4	34	23	35	96
Multi-energy portal (MEP)	6	7	15	17	45
High-energy NII rail	0	11	1	0	12
Total	10	52	39	52	153

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection information. | GAO-25-102677

^aTotal does not include three LEPs deployed to Donna, Texas, for the DHS Science and Technology demonstration that are no longer operational.

As a result of the deployment and use of LEPs and MEPs, CBP has increased its scanning of passenger vehicles from 2 percent in fiscal year 2020 to 8 percent in fiscal year 2024, and scanning of commercial vehicles from 16 percent to 27 percent during this same time frame. Some factors have limited the use of the systems, such as limited staff and system outages. For example, when these systems are deployed in preprimary inspection areas at land POEs, they require additional staff to operate them and to review the images from the vehicle scans. CBP officials we met with at all 4 field offices with land POEs where large-scale NII systems had been deployed in preprimary inspection areas told us they did not always have sufficient staff to fully use the systems. CBP headquarters officials said they are discussing ways to mitigate staffing challenges, such as reviewing images at regional command centers rather than at the POEs, which could improve efficiency. Additionally, CBP officials at these POEs said that system outages, which were sometimes frequent or lengthy, have affected their operations.

In our September 2025 report we found that, although CBP has made progress deploying large-scale NII systems, it has encountered significant challenges that have led to deployments costing more and taking longer than expected.

CBP has developed and updated cost estimates for deploying MEP, LEP, and high-energy NII rail systems, but costs have exceeded those estimates. One reason for higher costs than anticipated are substantial increases in the costs for civil works and construction. For example, the estimated costs to install each MEP increased from \$1.3 million in fiscal year 2020 to \$4.1 million in fiscal year 2023. Further, in October 2024 CBP estimated the cost to complete installation of each remaining planned MEP system would range from \$4.2 million to \$9.7 million.

As a result, CBP has requested and received additional funding to deploy its large-scale NII systems and to meet its initial goals to increase vehicle scanning rates. According to CBP officials, in fiscal years 2019 through 2024, CBP received over \$2.1 billion for the NII program (see table 2).⁷ Most of these funds were in-

⁷In July 2025, Congress passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which included an appropriation of funds available to CBP for, among other things, NII. See Pub. L. 119-21 Title IV, Subtitle A, § 90004, 139 Stat. 72, 359.

tended for the deployment of large-scale NII systems in preprimary inspection areas. In October 2024, CBP reported that it had sufficient funds to finish deploying most of the large-scale NII systems but needed an additional approximately \$173 million to complete deployment for 31 of the systems.

Table 2: U.S. Customs and Border Protection Reported Funding for Non-Intrusive Inspection Program Fiscal Years 2019 Through 2024 (dollars in millions)

Type of funding	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Procurement, Construction, & Improvements	\$570	\$66	\$0	\$87	\$95	\$381	\$1,199
Operations and Support	\$116	\$127	\$152	\$167	\$177	\$177	\$917
Total	\$686	\$193	\$152	\$254	\$273	\$558	\$2,117

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection data. | GAO-25-108707

Large-scale NII system deployments have also taken longer than originally planned. The Securing America's Ports Act required CBP to develop a plan to achieve 100 percent scanning of commercial and passenger vehicles and freight rail entering the United States at land POEs by 2027 using large-scale NII systems. As of February 2025, CBP did not expect to complete all of its planned large-scale NII deployments until December 2029. CBP's original time lines to complete system deployments ranged from 12 to 24 months. However, some installations have taken longer than expected.

CBP officials identified various factors that have contributed to system deployments taking longer than expected. For example, some POEs require major site upgrades to enable NII systems to be installed in preprimary inspection, including the construction of command centers or installation of power and data connections to the new systems. In other instances, vendors have taken longer than expected to resolve issues encountered during system deployment, such as during site acceptance testing. CBP said they are aware of these issues and are taking actions to address them, such as considering future NII system installation needs when making infrastructure improvements at POEs along the Northern Border.

CBP'S DEPLOYMENT PLANS DO NOT INCLUDE ALL PORTS OF ENTRY ALONG THE SOUTHWEST BORDER, INCLUDING THREE OF ITS HIGHEST-TRAFFIC LOCATIONS

In response to the Securing America's Ports Act, in January 2022 CBP submitted its plan to Congress to increase vehicle scanning with these large-scale NII systems at land POEs.⁸ In its January 2022 scanning plan, CBP estimated that it would need 434 large-scale NII systems to achieve 100 percent scanning of vehicles and rail containers along the Southwest and Northern Borders (see table 3). While the plan described how CBP intended to deploy large-scale NII systems to both the Southwest and Northern Borders, CBP has focused its initial efforts on the Southwest Border because most CBP contraband seizures have occurred there.

⁸Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, *Large Scale Non-Intrusive Inspection Scanning Plan Fiscal Year 2021 Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: January 18, 2022).

Table 3 : Numbers of Additional Large-Scale Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) Systems Needed for 100 Percent Scanning, Based on U.S. Customs and Border Protection Fiscal Year 2021 Scanning Plan

	Low-energy portal (LEP)	Multi-energy portal (MEP)	High-energy NII rail	Total
Planned NII systems, total	337 ^a	65	32	434
Current procurements, total	96	45	12	153
Southwest border	90	39	6	135
Northern border	6	6	6	18
Future procurements, total	241	20	20	281
Southwest border	56	5	1	62
Northern border	185	15	19	219

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection information. | GAO-26-108767

Note: The total number of systems acquired and needing future procurement reflects CBP's estimate of the number of multi-energy and low-energy portals and high-energy NII rail systems it would need to scan 100 percent of passenger and commercial vehicles and rail containers at the southwest and northern border land ports of entry. CBP made these estimates in its Large Scale Non-Intrusive Inspection Scanning Plan, Fiscal Year 2021 Report to Congress. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Large Scale Non-Intrusive Inspection Scanning Plan, Fiscal Year 2021 Report to Congress (January 18, 2022).

^aLEP totals include additional systems CBP plans to deploy in secondary inspection areas.

CBP submitted its fiscal year 2022 update in March 2023 including the steps it had taken to increase scanning.⁹ Specifically, in its March 2023 scanning plan update, CBP reported procuring 129 large-scale NII systems for scanning passenger and commercial vehicles to be deployed at POEs along the Southwest Border, which, once fully deployed, would give CBP the capacity to scan up to 40 percent of passenger vehicles and 70 percent of commercial vehicles.

As we stated in our September 2025 report, however, the CBP scanning plan does not include NII system deployments needed to scan passenger vehicles at 9 POEs along the Southwest Border. This includes 3 of its highest-traffic locations that together accounted for almost 24 percent of passenger vehicle crossings at all land border POEs in fiscal year 2024 (see table 4). Combined, these 9 POEs comprised about 30 percent of total passenger vehicle traffic entering the United States and almost 40 percent of passenger vehicle traffic entering the United States at the Southwest Border in fiscal year 2024.

Table 4: Southwest Border Passenger Vehicle Crossings Not Included in U.S. Customs and Border Protection Deployment Plans, as of March 2023

Land border crossing	Fiscal year 2024 passenger vehicle arrivals			
	Volume rank	Vehicle count	Percent of total, southwest border	Percent of total, all land borders
San Ysidro, CA	1	15,112,930	19.8%	15.4%
Otay Mesa, CA	2	6,244,660	8.2%	6.3%
Nogales-DeConcini Crossing, AZ	11	2,200,556	2.9%	2.2%
Gateway to the Americas Bridge, TX	17	1,553,481	2.0%	1.6%
Brownsville and Matamoros International Bridge, TX	20	1,397,149	1.8%	1.4%
Gateway International Bridge, TX	21	1,135,410	1.5%	1.2%
Andrade, CA	29	605,876	0.8%	0.6%
Lukeville, AZ	36	389,566	0.5%	0.4%
Naco, AZ	37	336,582	0.4%	0.3%
Total		28,976,210	38.0%	29.4%

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection information. | GAO-26-108767

⁹Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, *Large Scale Non-Intrusive Inspection Scanning Plan—Annual Update Fiscal Year 2022 Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: March 31, 2023). In November 2025, CBP issued its fiscal year 2024 update to its scanning plan.

CBP officials told us they have not included the 3 high-traffic crossings because there is not enough space to install the large-scale NII systems in preprimary inspection areas (see fig. 2). While CBP has not determined how it will overcome the lack of space at these POEs, they are considering some possible solutions, including working with the DHS Science and Technology Directorate to develop LEPs that could be installed where space constraints and interference with radiation detectors make deployment of large-scale NII systems difficult. Other solutions they are considering include deploying the systems after the primary inspection booth, which they have done at other POEs; redeveloping the border crossings so there is enough space in preprimary; or installing the equipment across the international border, as they have done on the Northern Border, although this may not be possible on the Southwest Border.

Figure 2: Limited Space in the Preprimary Inspection Area at the DeConcini Passenger Vehicle Crossing, Nogales, Arizona



Source: GAO (photo). | GAO-26-108767

Note: The U.S.-Mexico international border is indicated by a line of red and white bumps, centered between the yellow bumps.

While CBP's scanning plan states its intent to scan 100 percent of passenger and commercial vehicles and rail containers entering the United States at land POEs, the plan does not include the deployment of large-scale NII systems to some of CBP's highest passenger traffic POEs along the Southwest Border. Without these crossings in its plan, CBP risks entry of many unscanned passenger vehicles, hampering its ability to prevent illegal drugs and other contraband from entering the United States.

In our September 2025 report, we recommended that CBP determine how to include deployment of large-scale NII systems to all Southwest Border land POEs in updates to its deployment plans. CBP concurred with GAO's recommendation and said it is collaborating with the DHS Science and Technology Directorate to address the radiation interference between the large-scale NII systems and the radiation detection equipment, which could allow for placement of NII large-scale systems within limited real estate constraints.

We will continue to monitor CBP's efforts to address our recommendations. Addressing our recommendations would strengthen CBP's management of the NII program and its interdiction efforts to help it achieve its mission.

Chairman Guest, Ranking Member Correa, and Members of the subcommittee, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have at this time.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you.

I would now recognize myself for 5 minutes to ask questions. Questions will be asked by order of seniority. As I mentioned ear-

lier to each of our witnesses, we will have to break shortly as votes have been called, but I do believe that we have an opportunity.

Would you like to go ahead and break now, Mr. Ranking Member?

Mr. CORREA. Let's keep it going, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GUEST. All right. We are going to get through maybe the first questions by myself and the Ranking Member and then we will break for us to vote and return quickly. So I will begin.

Ms. Sabatino, I know we had a chance to meet and visit, and you do a great job of setting forth in your written testimony the importance of what we are here for today. You talk about 55 tons of narcotics being seized, that 75 percent of all narcotics that are seized are seized at ports of entry. So you make a very compelling case for the importance of this technology.

I will tell you that as a former prosecutor, I have seen first-hand the impact that this type of technology has on us being able to stop the flow of illegal drugs. I know that this makes our borders more secure and our agents more effective.

We have heard statistics put out by GAO talking about where we are on scan rates. We know that in 2021, the Securing America's Ports Act said that by next year, by 2027, that we wanted to have 100 percent scan rates of all passenger, commercial, and rail. We started off in 2020 with 2 percent passenger, 16 percent commercial. By 2024, that rate had increased to 8 percent passenger, 27 percent commercial. Ms. Sabatino, I think you say the goal for fiscal year 2026 is 40 percent passenger, 70 percent commercial.

Then we heard just in the opening statement of Ms. Benedict that there are 9 Southwest Border crossings that have not been included in the planning phase. So clearly it does not appear to me that we are going to be able to meet that 2027 deadline. We are getting closer and we are getting better and we are moving in the right direction, but we are not getting there quick enough. We are not getting there fast enough. Americans are dying because fentanyl and methamphetamine and cocaine and other drugs continue to float into our country, because we are not doing an adequate job of screening that.

So I understand, Ms. Sabatino, when we have met, that there are, at certain border crossings, there are infrastructure issues that we are having to deal with. There are interference issues where we have got different types of scanners looking for different things and sometimes those scanners interfere with one another. But I also know that there is different types of non-intrusive inspection technology. There is the fixed permanent sites, which do have to have infrastructure. There is mobile scanning technology, there is handheld scanning technology. So I want to make sure that we are including, when we talk about this inspection technology, that we are not just focused on the fixed technology, which is great and which we want to have in every port, but we know that some of the ports weren't designed for this type of equipment. I do believe that the mobile and handheld will at least provide us some sort of scanning capabilities as we are working toward that 100 percent scan rate that Congress instructed DHS to get to.

So my question to both of you, and I have got about a minute and a half, is how do we get there and how quickly can we get there? What do you need from Congress other than money?

We have funded this technology. I think we will continue to fund this technology. This is a bipartisan issue. We can argue about other things in the DHS arena. But I don't think there is anybody that is going to question either of you here today that are going to say that we don't need to continue to make this investment. So what do you need from us to make sure that we can get to the 100 percent scan rate as quickly as possible?

Ms. Sabatino, I will start with you and if there is any time left, Ms. Benedict, I will let you have the remainder of that time.

Ms. SABATINO. Thank you for the question, Congressman. I certainly would say that continued accountability and holding us accountable for meeting those goals is critical for us to get there with the deployments; I think continuing to support our work with the vendors to identify additional or enhanced or emerging technology. We have—we're very optimistic about some tests that are going on now, working with the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Office, to address the radiation portal monitor interference at a place like San Ysidro. That would significantly increase the scan rates, being the largest border crossing for vehicles on the Southwest Border. Certainly continuing to engage with us, you know, with our needs with respect to addressing the civil works and funding and very much appreciate the funding that was available to us in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

Mr. GUEST. Ms. Benedict, I know I am almost over time, but I want to give you a real brief opportunity to answer as well. Then I will turn the questioning over to Mr. Correa.

Ms. BENEDICT. Absolutely. I think a first good step—a good first step will be CBP including those 9 border crossings that are not currently in the plans, in their plans and how they plan to address the non-intrusive inspection systems of those sites. Ms. Sabatino and I have talked and it sounds like that's in progress and we look forward to seeing their progress on that as we follow up on our recommendations. I look forward to working with you and your committee staff on the updates to our recommendations.

Mr. GUEST. Again, thank you all both for being here. Thank you for what you do. We want you to be successful.

At this time I recognize the Ranking Member for his 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me follow up the witnesses on the Chairman's line of thought, questioning. The thought that San Ysidro, 1 of the 9 ports is not even being looked at in the plan, biggest probably border crossing in the world, massive. We have got fentanyl coming into this country. Lives being lost. You can't get this technology out there.

Ms. Benedict, you talked about cost. The Big Beautiful Bill has \$170 billion, massive investment in this part of our Government. Want to work with you to make sure that these non-intrusive technology, these marvels of technology are put into place as quickly as possible.

Ms. Sabatino, I am concerned because the technology is still not implemented, yet it is my understanding that currently you have

essentially reassigned or been asked to reassign some of your personnel from the border for ICE deportation enforcement in the interior of the United States. Is that correct?

Ms. SABATINO. We have assigned personnel to surge operations. That's not new or unique for us.

Mr. CORREA. Yet we continue to have this issue at the border. OK. It is not unique to you, but I believe every agency at the Federal level is reassigning the personnel for deportations away from their stated purpose. Is this correct?

Ms. SABATINO. I can say I'm familiar with the personnel that we have deployed. I don't know that I could speak for the other Federal agencies.

Mr. CORREA. OK. Fair enough. If I can, your officers that you essentially deploy to immigration enforcement, is this job different from stopping or apprehending people at ports of entry?

Ms. SABATINO. Again, when it comes to surging law enforcement support to our Federal, State, or local partners, that is something that we plan for for periods of time.

Mr. CORREA. It was reported that Border Patrol recently sent out a legal refresher on the use of force. Have you sent out something similar to your officers?

Ms. SABATINO. We do quarterly training with respect to use of force. We have done refresher training in First Amendment and Fourth Amendment rights. Again, that is not unique to any single deployment. That is—

Mr. CORREA. I might have 2 minutes. But, you know, just hours after Jonathan Ross, ICE officer, shot Renee Nicole Good, Secretary of Homeland Security Ms. Noem stood at a podium and said the officer did exactly what he was taught to do. So let me ask you, if I can and if you have the answers, do you instruct officers to approach a vehicle from the front to prevent them from fleeing?

Ms. SABATINO. While I am familiar with the incident itself, I'm not familiar with exactly what happened and didn't really assess videos of that.

Mr. CORREA. But in general, would you instruct your officers to approach a vehicle from the front to prevent it from fleeing?

Ms. SABATINO. The direction that officers are trained in is to approach in as safe a manner as possible.

Mr. CORREA. Do you authorize officers to use—to shoot at fleeing vehicles if they are not immediately in harm's way?

Ms. SABATINO. In our use-of-force training, it is related to the threat that the individual themselves face or to the public.

Mr. CORREA. Ms. Sabatino, within the refresher, it states that passive resistance alone is not conduct under 18 U.S.C. Section 111 to constitute Federal crime as long as there is no assault, resisting arrest, or impeding Federal officers from doing the job. The Border Patrol in the refresher course stated that it is not a violation of Section 18–111, noncompliance, refusal to cooperate with an officer's commands, disobeying commands without fighting back, and taking photographs or videotapes of an officer operating in public, again, does not constitute a crime. Have you sent out a similar refresher instructions to your officers?

Ms. SABATINO. Again, with respect to the use of force, it is something we do recurring training on.

Mr. CORREA. But would you agree then that taking a photo, videotaping, a person standing on the sidelines as situations are developing is not a violation of the law?

Ms. SABATINO. Again, our officers are trained to identify threats and take in the totality of circumstances, you know, when it comes to threats to themselves or the public.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you, Ms. Sabatino. I am out of time, but I will ask you these questions again in writing and I hope we can get clearer answers.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. GUEST. The gentleman yields back.

At this time, pursuant to committee rules, the Chair will call a recess. We will reconvene as soon as votes occur. So the committee stands in recess at this time.

[Recess.]

Mr. GUEST. The hearing is reconvened.

At this time I call on the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Crane, for 5 minutes for his questioning.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the panelists for showing up today to give us your thoughts on non-intrusive inspection technology at the border.

For those Americans that might be watching this hearing, would it make sense to compare this type of technology to, you know, the machine at the airport that scans our bags to look inside in using X-ray technology, Ms. Sabatino?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes, it identifies anomalies in the images.

Mr. CRANE. We recently went down to the border as a part of this committee and I got to see some of the technology in action. It is pretty amazing that this technology is being deployed. Obviously, it is not going nearly as quick as we want it to. I believe you said you had over 400 units deployed around the country, is that correct?

Ms. SABATINO. Four hundred and five units deployed, both mobile and fixed.

Mr. CRANE. Ms. Benedict from GAO said that a part of your plan, there were 9 major ports of entry that this technology is not in your plans to deploy this technology to, is that correct?

Ms. SABATINO. The technology that's been procured. But we are actively working on plans to identify technology with vendors for beating kind-of the physical constraints and the RPM interference in locations where we don't currently have technology deployed.

Mr. CRANE. One thing that I found a little disturbing when looking through the committee prep for this hearing today was that the DHS IG put out a report saying that a lot of the equipment, I think \$96 million worth of equipment, was sitting in storage containers. Can you unpack that for us, Ms. Sabatino, and what the issue there is?

Ms. SABATINO. Well, as of today, we currently have 89 systems that are operational of the technology that was procured. We have 24 systems under construction and 44 in active planning. With respect to the systems that are in storage, 11 of them are high-energy rail systems. We currently have NII technology at the sites. Currently these would be replacing with new technology.

For the 29 other pieces of technology, there are MEPs and LEPs, 2 sites specifically make up 15 of those that are in storage. They've been in storage about a year. In March and May of this year, it's 9, I believe, to Calexico and 6 to San Luis. Following the construction, they'll be deployed, which will shrink the number that's currently in storage.

Mr. CRANE. So it is not that those units that were delivered aren't working. You are just working at implementing the deployment of them, is that correct?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes.

Mr. CRANE. For these sites that don't have the capacity at this time to accommodate these units, are you guys using portable and handheld technology at those entry points?

Ms. SABATINO. We do have some type of NII system available at all our land ports of entry, and that ranges from mobile technology to handheld technology.

Mr. CRANE. How many vendors are you working with to accomplish the goal of 100 percent of all vehicles coming through ports of entry being scanned?

Ms. SABATINO. We deal with different vendors all the time. I would say there's between 4 and 5 that we're regularly in communication with for the specific types of technology that we're looking at.

Mr. CRANE. Have you found any of the vendors to be superior in the product they deliver?

Ms. SABATINO. I think all have benefits, the types of technology, and it really is unique to the type of deployment that we're doing and the distinctions between mobile or fixed or the handheld.

Mr. CRANE. Which systems are more susceptible to have malfunction and breakdown?

Ms. SABATINO. A number of reasons for outages, but the primary one is the age of the equipment and the availability of parts. That's where the funding for the recapitalization from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act is going to be prioritized.

Mr. CRANE. We have obviously talked today in this hearing about, you know, what the percentage is that we are currently hitting on pedestrian and commercial vehicles that are actually being scanned at the port of entry. Do you believe you will be able to hit the goals that you guys have laid out?

Ms. SABATINO. So we have increased the scan rates already to 13 percent for passenger vehicles and 37 percent for commercial vehicles. The goal in 2026 is to have it at 40 percent for POVs and 70 percent for commercial vehicles. But we are very, you know, welcome to continue keeping you updated as these deployments roll out and certainly let you know of any road blocks or challenges that we hit that would prevent us from achieving that goal.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. GUEST. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Green, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Ranking Member as well. Thank the witnesses for appearing today.

Ms. Sabatino, I would like to ask you a few questions, if I may, please. You are currently hiring persons who are working in the interior of the country, is that correct, ma'am?

Ms. SABATINO. Well, we do have people stationed at ports of entry, airports, land border ports, maritime. But we do have people surged to support Immigration and Customs Enforcement and other partners, yes.

Mr. GREEN. Would that include—other partners include ICE?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. So you have persons who are actually in the field and they are with ICE when they are raiding. Well, let's not use that term, excuse me, when they are making arrests?

Ms. SABATINO. We support in a number of ways, we do—

Mr. GREEN. Excuse me. Is making arrests one of the ways?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. OK, thank you. These persons who are doing this, have they been trained to the same extent that the ICE officers have been trained?

Ms. SABATINO. I'm not personally familiar with the ICE training. I imagine it's comparable, but we do recurring use of force training for all of our armed law enforcement officers.

Mr. GREEN. If I told you that someone associated with antifa is working with these ICE officers who happens to be someone associated with your area, would that concern you?

Ms. SABATINO. If I had more context. Like "working with," like employed by?

Mr. GREEN. Well, let's take the example of a prosecutor in Dallas, Texas, who has some affiliation with persons who are known to be dastards. This person was a prosecutor and seems to have a white supremacist account, makes or posts statements about Adolf Hitler, indicated we should make America white again, that sort of thing does that. That sort of thing would offend you, wouldn't it, if you knew that some of your officers were doing something like that?

Ms. SABATINO. Well, we would certainly investigate any allegations.

Mr. GREEN. Good. The best way to deal with this kind of circumstance is to prevent it from ever happening. You wouldn't want a person who is doing these kinds of things within your ranks, right? If the person is actually doing it.

Ms. SABATINO. It's important to ensure—

Mr. GREEN. I believe your answer would be yes or no. Anything less than a yes, I would assume is no. So you would not want a person in your ranks, right?

Ms. SABATINO. No.

Mr. GREEN. OK, good. So if you want to avoid it, the best way to prevent it from happening is to avoid it by good vetting from the outset. So what are you doing to vet people who are new to this work with ICE or new to you? What are you doing to vet them? How do you vet?

Ms. SABATINO. Speaking specifically to Customs and Border Protection, we do background investigations. They're subject to polygraph examinations and interviews.

Mr. GREEN. What does it take to trigger a Professional Responsibilities investigation?

Ms. SABATINO. I would have to defer you to our Office of Professional Responsibilities on how they triage allegations that are made, but investigations could be conducted by the Inspector General, by OPR, or by local management. But again, the nature of the allegation would determine that.

Mr. GREEN. But you do agree that you would not want someone who is affiliated with some sort of white supremacist movement to be associated with your officers or in your core of officers, would you?

Ms. SABATINO. I would agree in theory.

Mr. GREEN. In theory? Well, that is fair enough. I am going to just ask you if you would do this. Please give some additional thought to how persons are being vetted, and I may have more to say about it at a later time. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you.

I would now like to recognize Mrs. Biggs from South Carolina for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Trump administration has made great strides to secure our borders and to stem the tide of illegal immigrants. Encounters at the Southwest Border are down from a high of over 300,000 under President—I am sorry. Encounters at the Southwest Border are down from a high of over 300,000 under President Biden to under 8,000 in July 2025. This is a historic achievement, but now is not the time to let our guard down or to rest on our laurels.

We ensure that our ports of entry are equipped with the proper technology and personnel needed to ensure the accomplishment of their mission. Smugglers often go through ports of entry. Commercial containers and personal vehicles alike are modified to have spaces to hide illicit cargo such as cocaine and fentanyl. Contraband cargo is often in locations that are not immediately obvious to the naked eye or even older detection technology. This is where modern NII technology is important. Vehicles and containers can be thoroughly examined without having to be torn apart. Full implementation of the newest and best non-intrusive inspection technology across all ports of entry will save time and lives by catching more illicit drugs and staying one step ahead of criminal elements.

So my question is to Ms. Sabatino. What new and novel technologies is the CBP innovation team investigating and fielding at ports of entry through initial research and pilot programs? How will these new technologies complement the existing fleet of NII machines?

Ms. SABATINO. Thank you for the question. There's a number of emerging technologies that we are looking at. I think certainly in complement to the image scans, the artificial intelligence, machine learning, that's going to help identify anomalies. We have a number of algorithms deployed along the Southwest Border today that are in training that we hope will be able to actually peel back resources as the NII—the algorithms will help officers streamline identifying those anomalies.

I think in terms of other technology, in our mail and express consignment facilities, leveraging CT scanners complemented by artificial intelligence machine learning to help our officers, again, increase the efficiency in the work that they do. Looking at millimeter and ThruWave technology and working with vendors to help kind-of build their repository because, frankly, we have the types of substances to help them identify and build the information kind of database.

Mrs. BIGGS. OK, great. Thank you. How can current and future implementations of NII technology be improved and streamlined to ensure that our borders remain secure in an evolving threat environment?

Ms. SABATINO. Certainly with the deployment of the pre-primary technology, which is the technology that has experienced delays and challenges in moving out because of the interference, we have a number of lessons learned, including contracting and engineering firm to assist with those initial site surveys that, frankly, when they were first done were not substantive enough and didn't address some really critical engineering issues, including like ground penetration with radar. But happy to provide, you know, a more fulsome briefing on all of the different lessons learned, how we've incorporated them into our resource strategy moving forward, and what the outcomes of those lessons learned in implementing have been.

Mrs. BIGGS. OK, great. Thank you so much.

I yield back.

Mr. GUEST. The gentlelady yields back.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman for Virginia for his 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and Ranking Member Correa for convening today's hearing and our witnesses for joining us.

Last week, I and 27 other Members of the House visited Minnesota and we saw first-hand the negative impacts of the mass deportation, the mass destruction machine that the Trump administration has assembled. American citizens and our law-abiding immigrant neighbors are terrified. Businesses and schools in Minnesota are closed. American citizens again are staying home because they don't want to be the next person pulled through the streets, put in a chokehold, or, God forbid, fatally shot by a Federal agent, maybe ICE, maybe CBP, dressed and armed as if they are in a war zone.

Reported this week that local law enforcement leaders in Saint Paul and Minnesota have shared that their officers, off-duty officers, have been stopped and detained and harassed by ICE. The masked and, in many cases, minimally-trained officers have dragged pregnant mothers, pepper-sprayed children, placed their knees on the necks of American citizens, and recently they detained a 5-year-old, a 5-year-old, and then used that 5-year-old, you might not be able to see it, this is him, this is Liam Ramos, 5 years old, detained him, used him as bait to lure his family members out of their home. Then they shipped him to a detention facility a thousand miles away, 5 years old.

In city after city, CBP Commander Greg Bovino has strutted around spreading terror: L.A., Chicago, Charlotte, New Orleans, Minneapolis. This Congress must take immediate action to rein in the outrageous abuses we are seeing by ICE and CBP officers. We need to end the masking, end the secret police, require use of force standards and enforce them, and withdraw the thousands of Federal agents from Minnesota. Secretary Noem and the leadership of these agencies must be held accountable for the egregious abuses that we have seen.

Ms. Sabatino, I have a 5-year-old. I dropped him off at preschool this morning. I won't ask you if you have children. It is not my business, not the committee's business. You have had an honorable career in law enforcement. You are highly trained. You have been a leader in your field. I just want to ask you a simple question. Were you ever trained to use a 5-year-old in a law enforcement operation in the way that Liam Ramos was used? Were you ever trained to use a 5-year-old as bait to get his family members to open the door? Were you trained to do that? Would you countenance one of your officers doing that?

Ms. SABATINO. I'm not familiar with that case.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. I am not asking you about this situation. I am saying were you trained and would you allow a child to be used in a law enforcement operation? Would you allow your officers to do it?

Ms. SABATINO. I'm not familiar with that case. It's not part of our training.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. What would you do if one of your officers at a port of entry perhaps did that, used a 5-year-old to get their parents or a family member to open their car door? What would you do to one of those officers if they used a child in a law enforcement operation like that?

Ms. SABATINO. Any allegation of unprofessional behavior or use of force would be investigated by the appropriate third party.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. OK. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GUEST. The gentleman yields back.

At this point, we would like to do a second round of questioning, but after consulting with Mr. Correa, we would like to do a lightning round, so not 5 minutes of questioning, but 3. So we would like for all Members to have an additional 3 minutes to ask questions. If there are other Members who have not come in, they will also be included in the queue, but would like to explore this just a little bit further. So if we could set the clock at 3 minutes.

So, Ms. Sabatino, my question will just be, you know, we have heard testimony that there will be, at least at certain ports of entry, there will be some period of time before we are able to get fixed permanent scanners there at those locations. We know that there is infrastructure issues, there is interference issues. We have talked about some of the challenges that CBP faces. So I guess my question is, in the interim, what is the plan? What is the possibility, again, to use mobile scanners, handheld scanners, so that we will have coverage at those ports of entry?

Again, the coverage may not be to the same level. We may not be able to screen as many vehicles as we would like. But is there a plan within CBP to use those handheld scanners, those mobile

scanners, to supplement some of the deficiencies that we may see, particularly at the 9 ports of entry that Ms. Benedict has made us aware of?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes, we're going to continue to use all of the technology that's available to us, as well as additional technology that we'll be procuring with funding from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. That's in complement to also our canine assets, our targeting models, and the intelligence available to us.

Mr. GUEST. I do want to say, look, you have got some incredible men and women who work at the ports of entry. They do a great job of identifying individuals for secondary screening. You all do an amazing job of stopping a large number of narcotics that come across. But we want to make sure through the use of artificial intelligence, through the use of technology, that we are making those agents more efficient, more effective, and that we are doing everything that we can on behalf of the American public to stop the flow of drugs coming into the country. So please, when you return, please tell the men and women that you serve with, that we have great respect for the work that they do and we thank them for their commitment and dedication to serving this great Nation.

With that, I would yield 3 minutes to the Ranking Member, Mr. Correa.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you again, Ms. Sabatino and Ms. Benedict. Thank you for being here today.

Let me say that I know San Ysidro quite well. I have traveled that place. I have been with you with your officers. Sixty to 70 percent, 60 to 70 percent, of all the fentanyl coming into the United States goes through San Ysidro. Yet we are not scheduled to put any of these high-tech scanners there, not scheduled to even begin to plan to put them there. So it becomes extra critical to have the personnel there.

Ms. Sabatino, I kind-of asked you, are you fully staffed? I will ask it again. Are you fully staffed?

Ms. SABATINO. I can provide you what our target on-board number is as a follow-up specifically for San Ysidro, but we're actively hiring 5,000 officers.

Mr. CORREA. We have been trying to hire thousands of officers for years. As you know, the background checks are very tough. Polygraph tests are almost impossible to pass. They are tougher than for the folks applying for the FBI. It is very hard to hire people. This is my concern. When you have officers at the border stopping fentanyl deployed into the interior of the country, it concerns me we are not doing the job of protecting Americans from fentanyl. These officers are now deployed into my district.

Southern California is the manufacturing capital of the United States, do a lot of economic activity. A lot of these immigrants are the workers there. So I look at this as a lose-lose policy. We are not doing the best we can to stop the fentanyl and we are missing out on common-sense economic activity, economic growth that we have in Southern California that is done by these immigrants.

I am not going to belabor this issue. But what I would like to do, I am going to submit some questions to you in writing. But essentially I want to know how many folks are you down, how many open slots do you have? Is this something that just happened?

You use the words to describe that this is something that you do on a regular basis, which is redeploy officers off the border to the interior of the country. I would like to have the data from the last 5 years. Have you really deployed them, how many numbers over the last 5 years? Because I believe my citizens, American citizens, want to make sure that fentanyl is not getting into this country.

Again, I have been to San Ysidro. I have spoken to your folks over there. Wonderful individuals that have these skills. I don't know how they do it, sixth sense. But they can figure out where this fentanyl is at. When you transfer them to somewhere in the United States, they are not doing their job that we hired them to do.

Thank you very much. I look forward to getting your data from you. Thank you.

Mr. GUEST. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously my colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to attack Homeland Security ICE agents. Their newest attack is ICE just detained a 5-year-old child. Right? We keep hearing that on the panel today. It is all over social media. That would be atrocious if true, but it is not.

This is exactly what Homeland Security put out officially: ICE did not target a child. The child was abandoned. On January 20, ICE conducted a targeted operation to arrest Adrian Alexander Conejo Arias, an illegal alien from Ecuador, who was released into the United States by the Biden administration. As agents approached the driver, Adrian Alexander Conejo Arias fled on foot, abandoning his child. For the child's safety, one of our ICE officers remained with the child while the other officers apprehended Conejo Arias.

Parents are asked if they want to be removed with their children or ICE will place them—place the children with a safe person that the parent designates. This is consistent with past administrations' immigration enforcement. Parents can take control of their departure and receive a free flight and \$2,600 with the CBP Home app. By using the CBP Home app, illegal aliens reserve the chance to come back the right and legal way. I just wanted to clarify that with all the outrage on the left and, you know, trying to generate, you know, hysteria in these chambers right now. That is not the truth of what happened. I am glad that officials at ICE made sure that the real story was made public—

Mr. GUEST. The gentleman yields?

Mr. CRANE [continuing]. To the American people.

Thank you and I yield back.

Mr. GUEST. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. I yield back, Mr. Chairman. I am OK. Actually, I will yield to the Ranking Member.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you very much. To my colleague from Arizona, you make an interesting point, which is what are exactly the facts? Because it is not only one 5-year-old. I have heard a number of stories about young individuals being left when their parents are apprehended, some with orders of deportation, others essentially picked up randomly off the streets and children left to their own.

I would welcome the opportunity with my colleague to do an investigation to study what exactly is the truth.

As you have said, sir, this has been an issue for a number of administrations, not just one. I say to do a study because we want to have the truth. Somewhere the truth is there. It is probably in the middle somewhere. But we all have an interest in making sure children are taken care of. So I would like to look under the hood, so to speak, and look at the facts and see what the policy is when a child's parents are apprehended, because that child is an American citizen most likely. So I think we do need to look at this issue a lot closer.

Thank you very much.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Reclaiming my time. I appreciate the gentleman's comments. What he didn't address and what the DHS statement didn't address is a question I posed to Ms. Sabatino, and that is the use of a 5-year-old child in a law enforcement, immigration enforcement operation. That doesn't seem to be in dispute whether the agents on the ground used that child to ring the doorbell to lure his family members who were inside the home out.

There should be an impartial investigation of that and the hundreds of other allegations of abuses, violations of policy from ICE, and, as Ms. Sabatino is here today, CBP officers. The American people don't trust that this administration and this Secretary of Homeland Security will conduct that kind of fair and impartial investigation in the case of Liam Ramos or others.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GUEST. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas for 3 minutes.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank you and the Ranking Member and the witnesses.

Ms. Sabatino, you and I were talking earlier about unacceptable character information being reported. I think we concluded that it can be reported to your Office of Professional Responsibility. Is that correct?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. Can anyone report to this office, Ms. Sabatino?

Ms. SABATINO. I believe there's a publicly-available number and email.

Mr. GREEN. Does anyone include you, ma'am?

Ms. SABATINO. If I could report allegations?

Mr. GREEN. Does anyone include you when I say anyone?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. OK. Now let's talk about criminal activity. Is a similar circumstance available for persons who are aware of something that may be criminal in nature?

Ms. SABATINO. If we had allegations of criminal behavior, yes, that would be called in.

Mr. GREEN. Do you recall that Ms. Renee Nicole Good was shot by an officer?

Ms. SABATINO. I did see the media attention to it, yes.

Mr. GREEN. Has that been reported to the Office of Professional Responsibility?

Ms. SABATINO. I think, because the agent that was involved would be—was with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, I'm

not aware of any specific call into either our or ICE's Office of Professional Responsibility.

Mr. GREEN. But there is an Office of Professional Responsibility for these kinds of things. It is sort-of internal affairs, is that correct?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. You have the ability to report these things, do you not?

Ms. SABATINO. Everyone in the public can report.

Mr. GREEN. Does everyone include you?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. So you have the ability to report, do you not?

Ms. SABATINO. If I believe that there was criminal activity or misconduct.

Mr. GREEN. Did you—you said you saw the video. There was statements made that—by the wife of Ms. Good that we had whistles, they had guns. You saw what happened. You can report this as something that should be investigated by the Office of Professional Responsibility, can't you?

Ms. SABATINO. I don't think it would be appropriate for me as I was not there and I saw clips of videos on the news.

Mr. GREEN. Excuse me. Excuse me. The question is, if you wanted to, you could, couldn't you?

Ms. SABATINO. Anyone who believes that there's criminal—

Mr. GREEN. Are you a part of the anyone?

Ms. SABATINO. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. So you can report it. How can you, ma'am, see what happened on that video and not report it to the Office of Professional Responsibility, just ask them to look into it? This woman lost her life and no investigation is said to be taking place and you won't report it to the Office of Professional Responsibility.

Mr. GUEST. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. GREEN. I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. GUEST. I would like to thank the witnesses for being here today. I would like to thank the Members for their participation in this hearing. Members of the subcommittee may have additional questions for the witnesses and we would ask the witnesses to respond in writing. Pursuant to committee Rule VII(E), this hearing and the record for the hearing will—the record for this hearing will be held open for 10 days.

Without objection, the subcommittee stands adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:10 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN MICHAEL GUEST FOR DIANE J. SABATINO

Question 1. Ms. Sabatino, historically, CBP has submitted project funding requests that are considerably lower than the actual costs of project installation. For example, when DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) assembled their 2025 OIG–25–27 report, 3 high-energy rail units were in storage because CBP underestimated installation costs by about \$43 million.

How is CBP working to create accurate cost estimations across their installation plans?

Answer. Cost estimations across installations are difficult particularly regarding the scope of required site preparation and civil works, largely due to the unique characteristics of each port including geography and infrastructure variations and the range of environmental impacts along the Southwest and Northern Borders. To assist U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) with mitigating these challenges, CBP has secured the services of an engineering firm to perform a reasonableness check on vendor construction cost estimates and installation plans before and during the contract modification process. CBP solicits quarterly vendor Estimate to Complete (ETC) numbers for active installation projects. ETC are used to identify cost variances early during the construction process. CBP obtains justifications of potential cost increases early in the planning and construction cycle of each project. CBP regularly performs an analysis of cost at contract award, funding required for the completion of projects, and ultimately the final cost upon system acceptance. This data, in addition to collaboration with the CBP Office of Acquisition's Cost and Schedule Management Branch, has led to significant improvements in the program's cost estimations.

Question 2a. Ms. Sabatino, given the issues where large-scale NII systems are interfering with existing Radiation Portal Monitors when placed near each other, what innovative solutions have CBP explored to mitigate this issue?

Question 2b. Have any contracts been awarded to mitigate interference?

Answer. CBP has been actively pursuing solutions to the radiation interference issues to effectively deploy the fixed pre-primary scanners funded by Congress in 2020. In calendar year 2023, CBP convened a working group comprised of its operations and scientific subject-matter experts along with subject-matter experts from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD) to develop potential solutions to the interference issue. As a result of the working group, some solutions were approved that mitigated a portion of the radiation interference issue. Additionally, the working group convened a session later in calendar year 2023 with the contracted vendors and allowed them to present potential solutions to the radiation interference issue. One of the solutions was accepted for development by the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T). S&T has been working collaboratively with CBP and with the vendor to develop the solution, with a successful factory test completed in December 2025. S&T and CBP will conduct an operational test at the Port of San Ysidro in mid-calendar year 2026 for further evaluation and assessment.

Question 3. Ms. Sabatino, the 2025 OIG–25–27 report, states that several years of staffing challenges led to decisions within the NII program being made on “immediate needs rather than developing a structured, long-term plan.”

What steps besides offering hiring and retention bonuses have been taken to hire and retain qualified and committed individuals?

Answer. Through assistance from CBP's National Recruitment Division, the Office of Field Operations (OFO) has expanded targeted recruitment campaigns, leveraged partnerships, expanded engagement with military transition programs, utilized social media and digital platforms, and participated in career fairs and webinars nationwide to increase visibility and engagement. Additionally, OFO utilizes targeted recruiting efforts to attract candidates for specific hard-to-fill locations as well as

individuals that are involved in specific clubs or organizations that have a nexus to areas and activities that correlate with law enforcement or physical fitness. For retention, OFO invests in employee engagement and formal recognition through awards and programs for employee achievements. In addition, OFO focuses on mentoring and leadership development opportunities while also providing career-enhancing trainings that include resume and interview training to provide employees opportunities for career advancement and career mapping. Furthermore, for the non-intrusive inspection (NII) program in particular, CBP has strategically aligned personnel resources with the specialized skills needed to improve CBP's ability to assess operations, identify the right technology, equip the ports of entry, and quickly deploy NII equipment. In concert with OFO's recruitment and retention efforts, this alignment of resources has supported the growth of the NII program team from approximately 15 full-time employees to 39 full-time employees.

QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER BENNIE G. THOMPSON FOR DIANE J. SABATINO

Question 1a. Ms. Sabatino, on January 14, CBP sent out a directive requiring all CBP officers to complete Mandatory Mobile Field Force Certification. According to the directive, MFF-trained teams will provide CBP with a flexible and scalable response for incidents such as civil disturbances, protests, natural disasters, or any event requiring an enhanced law enforcement presence. These CBP officer teams can be deployed quickly at both the local and national levels to assist field offices, ports of entry, or to support other law enforcement agencies as needed.

As you know, CBP officers' mission is to facilitate lawful trade and travel while protecting the national security at the ports of entry. The Nation's ports are already facing severe staffing shortages, stretching officers thin at the ports. Reassigning CBP Office of Field Operations personnel for non-port missions exacerbates these shortages and undermines the security and efficiency of our Nation's ports.

It is critical that the Homeland Security Committee ensure CBP officers are not used in ways that Congress never intended and that place both officers and the public at unnecessary risk.

How specifically does CBP intend to use mandatory MFF-trained CBP officers?

Answer. CBP intends to use Mobile Field Force (MFF)-trained CBP officers as a standardized, rapidly-deployable capability to manage large groups, protect CBP personnel and facilities, and support partner agencies when directed, consistent with existing law and CBP policy. Officers who receive MFF training continue to perform their primary duties at ports of entry and are assigned to MFF operations only as needed.

More specifically, CBP intends to use MFF-trained officers to:

- Manage crowds and civil disturbances at CBP locations.
- Deploy to respond to large groups, demonstrations, or disturbances at ports of entry and other CBP-controlled facilities, to maintain safety and security and preserve the orderly flow of lawful travel and trade.
- Provide rapid, organized responses to emergent incidents. Serve as a quickly-mobilized, organized force package that can be deployed on short notice to address incidents that exceed the capabilities of routine staffing, such as unrest or other public-order situations at or near CBP facilities.
- Augment CBP during contingency or surge operations. Support CBP operations during periods of unusually high operational demands such as mass migration events or other significant surges—where additional, specially-trained personnel are needed to manage large groups safely and effectively.
- Protect CBP facilities and personnel. Reinforce security at CBP facilities and related infrastructure during elevated threat conditions or active incidents, to help ensure continuity of operations and the safety of officers, other Federal personnel, and the public.
- Support the Federal Protective Service (FPS). Support FPS under established authorities, provide force protection and crowd-management support to FPS for the protection of designated Federal buildings, personnel, and property.
- Participate in interagency operations, when authorized and directed. Operate alongside other Federal, State, or local law enforcement agencies during joint operations or nationally significant events, when such support is formally requested and approved through DHS and CBP operational channels.

These uses are intended to ensure that CBP maintains a disciplined, properly-trained capability for public-order and facility-protection missions, rather than relying on ad hoc responses by untrained personnel.

Question 1b. What legal authority is CBP using to deploy CBP Officers outside of the port of entry environment?

Answer. CBP's deployment of officers outside ports of entry is legally supported by Federal statutes granting enforcement authority within the border region and customs territory, as well as broader DHS and Executive authorities for national security and emergency response. These authorities allow CBP to conduct enforcement, respond to emergencies, and assist other agencies as required to keep the American people safe. CBP's legal authority to deploy CBP officers outside of the port of entry environment is primarily derived from several statutes and regulations, most notably:

- Title 6 U.S.C. § 211 establishes CBP and outlines its mission, including border security and enforcement of customs and immigration laws.
- Title 8 U.S.C. § 1103 grants authority to direct employees to perform or exercise any of the power, privileges, or duties conferred or imposed, or regulations issued upon any other employee of the service.
- Title 8 U.S.C. § 1357 grants immigration officers (including CBP officers) authority to interrogate, arrest, and enforce immigration laws from any external boundary of the United States.
- Title 19 U.S.C. § 1401(i) and authorizes CBP officers to perform their duties not only at ports of entry but also within the "customs territory" and in areas where customs laws are enforced.
- Title 19 U.S.C. § 1589a authorizes CBP officers to make an arrest without a warrant for any offense against the United States committed in the officer's presence or for a felony.
- Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296) provides broad authority for DHS components, including CBP, to protect the Nation's borders and respond to threats.
- Title 31 U.S.C. § 1535 authorizes agencies to enter into agreements to obtain supplies or services from another agency.

Additionally, CBP officers may be deployed outside ports of entry to assist other Federal, State, or local agencies to provide assistance where there is legal authority to do so.

CBP may act under Executive Orders or DHS directives that outline operational scope for national security, emergency response, or public safety.

Question 1c. What legal authority is CBP using to deploy CBP officers more than 100 miles from the border?

Answer. As outlined above, CBP's deployment of officers outside ports of entry is legally supported by Federal statutes granting enforcement authority within the border region and customs territory, as well as broader DHS and Executive authorities for national security and emergency response. CBP has facilities that they work at, and inherently protect, which are more than 100 miles from the border. CBP officers have the authority to deploy to conduct interior enforcement operations to enforce immigration law pursuant to the authority accorded to the CBP Commissioner under Title 6 U.S.C § 211(c)(8).

QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER J. LUIS CORREA FOR DIANE J. SABATINO

Question 1a. Ms. Sabatino, under the Trump administration, DHS shifted thousands of officers and agents away from their regular duties to focus on immigration enforcement operations in the interior of the United States. My understanding is that you currently have personnel detailed to or supporting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Federal Protective Service (FPS) in our cities.

How many personnel from CBP's Office of Field Operations (OFO) have been detailed to support immigration enforcement actions in the interior of the United States since January 20, 2025? Please further break this out by the agency they are supporting, the city to which officers are deployed, the ports of entry they are deployed from, and the lengths of their deployments.

Answer. Since January 20, 2025, OFO has supported interior immigration enforcement actions across the United States alongside Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). OFO personnel have been deployed to a range of locations to assist in these operations. As of January 22, 2026, a total of 610 CBP officers (CBPOs) from 15 Field Offices have been assigned to support efforts in 61 ICE offices located throughout the United States, for an average period between 60 to 180 days.

The following OFO locations provided support: Anchorage; Ashtabula; Atlanta; Baltimore; Baltimore Field Office; Birmingham; Blaine; Brownsville; Buffalo; Calexico; CBP Headquarters; Charleston; Charlotte; Chicago; Cincinnati; Cleveland; Columbus; Dallas; Del Rio; Denver; Detroit; Detroit Airport; Dulles International Airport; Durham; Eagle Pass; El Paso; Erie; Ft. Lauderdale; Gramercy Park; Gulfport; Hidalgo; Honolulu; Houston Airport; Houston Seaport; San Luis; San Ysidro; Santa Teresa; Savannah; SeaTac Airport; Seattle Seaport; St. Croix; St. Louis; St.

Thomas; Sweetgrass; Tampa; Toledo; West Palm Beach; Huntsville; Indianapolis; Jacksonville; John F. Kennedy Airport; Los Angeles/Long Beach Seaport; Laredo; Los Angeles International Airport; Logan Airport; Louisville; Memphis; Miami Field Office; Miami International Airport; Miami Seaport; Milwaukee; Minneapolis; Mobile; Morgan City; Nashville; National Targeting Center; New Orleans; New York Field Office; New York/Newark; Nogales; Norfolk; Oakland; Oakland Seaport; Orlando; Otay Mesa; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; Port Canaveral; Portland; Raleigh; San Diego; and San Francisco Airport.

OFO support was provided to the following ICE locations: Alamosa, CO; Louisville, KY; Indianapolis, IN; Atlanta, GA; Charlotte, NC; Charleston, SC; Roanoke, VA; Harrisonburg, VA; Baltimore, MD; Birmingham, AL; Honolulu, HI; Bakersfield, CA; Milwaukee, WI; Houston, TX; Buffalo, NY; Nashville, TN; Memphis, TN; Cary, NC; Chicago, IL; Columbus, OH; Cincinnati, OH; Dallas, TX; Fresno, CA; Richmond, VA; Centennial, CO; Glenwood Springs, CO; Craig, CO; Casper, WY; Grand Junction, CO; Cheyenne, WY; Sacramento, CA; Detroit, MI; Pittsburgh, PA; Miami Broward, FL; Salt Lake City, UT; New Orleans, LA; Yuma, AZ; St. Paul, MN; Norfolk, VA; Savannah, GA; Seattle, WA; St. Louis, MO; St. Thomas, USVI; Tampa, FL; Stuart, FL; Jacksonville, FL; Stockton, CA; Central Islip, NY; New York City, NY; Santa Ana, CA; San Bernardino, CA; Burlington, MA; Newark, NJ; Tucson, AZ; Morgan Hill, CA; Orlando, FL; Philadelphia, PA; Mount Laurel, NJ; Portland, OR; San Diego, CA; and San Francisco, CA.

During this period, OFO has periodically provided limited temporary duty and detail support to interior operations led by other DHS components, primarily ICE, based on operational need and subject to resource availability at ports of entry. Furthermore, OFO also periodically provided support to U.S. Border Patrol (USBP), Federal Protective Service (FPS), and to fellow OFO field offices.

Question 1b. For each of the last 5 years, how many of your officers have supported surge immigration enforcement operations in the interior of the United States? How many of these details or support have been to ICE?

Answer. The number of OFO officers who supported these operations in each of the last 5 calendar years, and how many of those assignments were to ICE is as follows:

CY	Total OFO officers supporting interior surge immigration enforcement operations	Total OFO officers detailed/supporting ICE
2021	3,582	2
2022	3,410	2
2023	4,232	2
2024	1,190	2
2025	4,573	2,905

Question 2a. Ms. Sabatino, there are countless instances of Federal officers using aggressive tactics against people peacefully refusing to cooperate with unlawful commands or are simply videotaping officers' interactions.

Are CBP officers trained to tackle and restrain individuals who videotape them?
Answer. No.

Question 2b. Does every use of force instance get investigated?

Answer. The Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) Investigative Operations Directorate (IOD) personnel respond to, investigate, coordinate, report, review, and resolve use of force (UoF) incidents. As part of the process, a Use of Force Review Board (UFRB) shall review all use of force incidents to determine compliance with policy and best law enforcement practices for training, tactics, and equipment.

Use of force incident reviews are an administrative inquiry, conducted by IOD personnel under standard investigative protocols, to gather facts and prepare an investigative package for the appropriate UFRB. The UFRBs, comprised of CBP, DHS and other representatives, independently reviews CBP UoF incidents to determine whether the UoF was reasonable and in accordance with the DHS Use of Deadly Force Policy, CBP Use of Force Policy, Guidelines and Procedures Handbook, and the relevant legal authorities. The UFRBs also serve to provide information to the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division to assist in their determination as to whether the pursuit of criminal prosecution is warranted in relation to the UoF. Finally, the UFRB process is designed to inform the affected CBP component senior management, and other appropriate CBP personnel of any findings or rec-

ommendations from an operational, administrative, tactical, and training perspective. Please reference below links.

Links:

Use of Force Policy and Administrative Guidelines and Procedures Handbook / U.S. Customs and Border Protection

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Update on the CBP National Use of Force Review Board / U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Question 2c. Have you received any direction or guidance indicating that officers can engage in use of force without fear?

Answer. No.

Question 2d. Are all CBP OFO officers up-to-date with use-of-force training? If not, when will they be?

Answer. OFO officers are required to complete use of force training on a quarterly basis in accordance with CBP policy and Federal standards. CBP actively monitors compliance and works to ensure any outstanding training requirements are addressed promptly.

Question 3a. Ms. Sabatino, in Massachusetts, CBP officers and ICE agents used an undocumented mother's child and grandchild as bait to get her to come outside—where they promptly arrested the mother in front of her kids. The CBP officers at the scene were filmed wearing OFO jackets.

Who in the Trump administration authorized using children as bait? How was this communicated to CBP?

Answer. Under this administration DHS has never used children as “bait” when conducting immigration enforcement operations. ICE is committed to conducting immigration enforcement operations in a manner that prioritizes the safety and well-being of all individuals, including aliens, officers, and agents. ICE personnel follow strict guidelines, receive on-going training, and adhere to established policies and procedures to minimize risk and prevent harm during operations. ICE regularly reviews its practices to ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards. To frame this case in any other way is a fabrication of the truth.

Question 3b. Do you support this tactic of using children and babies to lure immigrants out of their homes?

Answer. Please see response above.

Question 4a. Ms. Sabatino, over the past year, CBP officers have been detailed to or otherwise supported ICE, Border Patrol, and FPS during interior enforcement operations.

What training, if any, do your officers receive before these deployments. Does it include use of force training specific to interacting with individuals engaged in protected First Amendment activities?

Answer. All OFO officers receive use of force training each quarter along with receiving refresher training on 1st and 4th Amendment Rights.

NON-INTRUSIVE INSPECTION (NII) PROGRAM

Question 5a. Ms. Sabatino, CBP has received billions of dollars for its Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) program, going back to 2019. It has been reported that NII equipment is still sitting in warehouses despite receiving this money. CBP must better manage taxpayer dollars to secure our Nation.

What steps are you taking to improve the management of this program?

Answer. CBP has taken tangible steps to strengthen the NII program and ensure that it delivers results as evidenced by increasing scan rates along the Southwest Border (SWB). Changes to equipment requirements including the strengthening of software and interoperability features were made as a result of critical analysis. Initial pre-primary projects were tested in locations where infrastructure costs were determined prior to an overall assessment of what was needed to upgrade infrastructure. Each location has unique geography, infrastructure, traffic demographics (both passenger and cargo), and threats that impact how the technology will be most useful at individual crossings. Most CBP ports were not designed to handle the current traffic flows or for this cutting-edge technology.

CBP has refined vendor requirements to include more detailed construction designs including the planning for land agreements, shoring requirements, and environmental impacts. The implementation of tailored site design reviews also further mitigates challenges and delays.

In addition, CBP has strategically aligned personnel resources with the specialized skills needed to support the program, improve CBP's ability to assess operations, identify the right technology, equip the ports of entry, and quickly deploy. For example, the NII program team has grown from approximately 15 full-time employees to 39 full-time employees. CBP has also worked to ensure that the new

scanning equipment is integrated into our CBP holdings to best leverage the tools that are currently in place. As a result of the changes that CBP has made, as of February 13, 2026, 94 NII deployed systems were operational at 30 sites, including 66 Low-Energy Portals (LEPs), 27 Multi-Energy Portals (MEPs), and 1 High-Energy (HE) Rail.

- In fiscal year 2024, 29 systems at 11 locations became operational.
- In fiscal year 2025, 36 systems at 15 locations became operational.
- As of February 13, 2026, construction is under way for 19 systems at 9 locations (9 LEPs, 7 MEPs, and 3 HE Rail).

Additionally, scan rates have improved, and as of March 30, 2026, the SWB scan rates for commercial vehicles is 38 percent and passenger vehicles is 14 percent.

Type	FY 2022 Scan Rate	FY 2023 Scan Rate	FY 2024 Scan Rate	FY 2025 Scan Rate	FY 2026 (as of 3/30/ 26) Scan Rate
SWB Passenger Vehicles	3%	3%	8%	13%	14%
SWB Commercial Vehicles	15%	19%	21%	35%	38

Through all of these actions, CBP has advanced the NII program to improve management and ensure that operations are more successful.

Question 5b. When can we expect to see all of that equipment moved out of warehouses?

Answer. CBP has successfully deployed 94 fixed, large-scale systems as of February 11, 2026. There are an additional 19 systems currently under construction. Past delays in deployments were primarily due to shortfalls in civil works funding. Projects were moved as far as feasible pending appropriation of civil works funding; however, final design and construction kick-off required application of civil works funds. Funding needs to finalize deployments were assessed in fiscal year 2023. A portion was received in fiscal year 2024 (April 2024), with final funding received in fiscal year 2025 (September 2025).

Long-term storage of equipment primarily impacted the HE Rail projects, where initial contracting required equipment manufacturing and sites and civil works costs were assessed after the fact. This was done because funding was expiring and needed to be applied quickly to the procurement of equipment. With MEP and LEP systems, equipment manufacturing is generally concurrent with site preparation and construction. Individual vendors can request that funding be applied to manufacturing, in some cases, to ensure that systems are ready for delivery when construction is completed. Delays in the deployment of some systems were also impacted by radiation interference testing and the need to build shield walls as well as unanticipated facility issues.

CBP projects deployments of all LEPs and MEPs by the end of fiscal year 2026. Additionally, due to significant challenges and complexities in the rail environment, CBP is estimating the full deployment of the HE Rail systems by the end of calendar year 2028.

Question 6. Ms. Sabatino, some of the issues with deploying NII systems are longstanding, such as interference with secondary screening systems and space concerns. How is CBP planning to address these issues? Why were they not resolved before?

Answer. To mitigate the challenges that CBP encounters when deploying NII scanning capabilities at ports of entry due to limited physical real estate, CBP deploys fixed scanning systems in post-primary areas where there is sometimes more operationally available space or deploys NII mobile systems. In the pre-primary environment at some ports of entry, CBP will encounter radiation interference when deploying NII scanning systems near Radiation Portal Monitors because of the lack of proper distancing between the two systems. This is primarily due to the real estate footprint in that area not allowing for enough necessary space to properly deploy these two systems together. CBP has been actively pursuing solutions to the radiation interference issues to effectively deploy the fixed pre-primary scanners. In calendar year 2023, CBP convened a working group comprised of its operations and scientific subject-matter experts along with subject-matter experts from the CWMD to develop potential solutions to the interference issue. As a result of the working group, some solutions were approved that allowed for a portion of the radiation interference issue to be mitigated. Additionally, the working group convened a session later in calendar year 2023 with the contracted vendors and allowed them to present potential solutions to the radiation interference issue. One of the solutions

was accepted for development by S&T. S&T has been working collaboratively with CBP and with the vendor to develop the solution, with a successful factory test completed in December 2025. S&T and CBP will conduct an operational test at the Port of San Ysidro, California, in mid-calendar year 2026 for further evaluation and assessment.

Question 7. Ms. Sabatino, based on the data in the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) report, GAO-25-107379, CBP has procured about one-third of the systems it needs. What is CBP's schedule for procuring and deploying these remaining systems?

Answer. As of February 11, 2026, CBP deployed 94 NII systems, 19 are under construction, and 44 NII systems are in the planning phase. CBP has made steady progress on developing a solution to mitigate radiation interference which will offer CBP the opportunity to deploy scanning equipment at some locations, most significantly the San Ysidro Port of Entry which accounts for a significant percentage of traffic. Once implemented, this solution will allow for placement of equipment within a certain distance from the radiation portal monitors and will allow plans for pre-primary deployment to be developed. Some sites—for example, most ports of entry in Arizona—do not have the requisite footprint, distance, etc. to allow placement of pre-primary systems. For remaining sites, where pre-primary is not an option, an evaluation will be conducted to determine post-primary placement and types of systems that will increase scan rates and deployment schedules will be updated accordingly.

Question 8a. In September 2025, GAO reported that CBP has not included some of the largest ports of entry in its scanning plans, including San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and Nogales.

Why were these ports of entry excluded?

Answer. While the ports of San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and Nogales do have fixed scanning technology in the post-primary environment that allows for the scanning of passenger vehicles that have been referred by primary officers for further inspection, CBP recognizes that the ports of San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and Nogales represent a significant portion of passenger vehicle traffic volume along the SWB. The primary reason for the lack of the deployment of fixed pre-primary scanners at this time has been due to the lack of real estate in the pre-primary areas at these ports of entry that would allow for the scanning of the passenger vehicles and to passively scan for radiation simultaneously creating a radiation interference issue.

Question 8b. How effective is CBP's program if it excludes about one-third of the traffic at Southwest Border crossings?

Answer. NII is valuable tool used by front-line personnel to screen cargo, baggage, and conveyances for potential threats. NII is part of CBP's layered enforcement strategy which also includes advanced vetting through trusted traveler and trader programs that offer prioritized processing for trusted entities, intelligence-driven targeting to identify high-risk shipments and crossing behaviors, enforcement and canine teams observing for suspicious indicators throughout operations, and our front-line personnel using their knowledge, skills, and experience to conduct primary and secondary inspections. Where fixed systems are not available, front-line personnel have mobile and handheld NII technology to support them in primary and secondary inspections.

CBP will obligate \$1.038 billion from the Working Families Tax Cut Act (WFTC) to replace outdated technology, procure new technology for locations where technology does not exist, integrate data from vendor systems into CBP holdings, and develop algorithms. CBP actively works with industry and S&T to evaluate new technologies to determine the best technology for CBP operations. The legacy systems are being replaced with newer technology that can scan at higher capacity and with increased image quality. While CBP has evaluated new technologies that would provide scanning of specific signatures and allow for a better capability, this technology is not currently able to scale to the size, speed, and footprint of CBP operations. WFTC funding is being applied to the best equipment to meet operational needs.

While fixed, large-scale scanning systems are an important part of the CBP enforcement strategy, CBP relies on a layered approach to security that includes advanced targeting and intelligence; canine assets; trade partner initiatives, such as Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism and Free and Secure Trade programs; officer primary and secondary inspections; and utilization of secondary scanning systems and hand-held technology. CBP's vast targeting and law enforcement intelligence holdings provide the front line with indications of high-risk individuals and/or shipments as they interact with them. The screening provided through NII is another layer of information that is provided and while useful, only our front-line

personnel can determine whether a shipment, conveyance, or individual can be allowed to proceed into the United States.

Additional considerations include the following:

- Due to existing requirements in U.S. law and radiation standards, the public must be given the opportunity to “opt-out” of NII scanning which requires CBP to have at least one primary lane without equipment. With natural traffic flow, a percentage of vehicles will always go through that lane, even if they are not concerned about the radiation.
- Fixed NII systems have set dimensions. For both passenger and commercial vehicles, oversized cargo vehicles and vehicles that are pulling a trailer are too large to pass through the scanners and must instead be inspected in the “opt-out” lanes.
- Not all ports of entry have enough real estate to accommodate a fixed system in pre-primary areas. Where there is not enough space, scanning takes place in secondary areas.

Question 9. How could advanced 3D X-ray and computed tomography systems improve CBP’s ability to discriminate between legitimate cargo and concealed threats—especially when dealing with complex or cluttered freight?

Answer. A computed tomography (CT) scan produces a series of X-ray images taken at different angles, processed into a 3-D image. The images can be rotated as 3-D images, sliced and layers removed, each process theoretically providing an opportunity for the operator to view and identify an anomalous concealed threat. CT scanners can also aid in the quantification of object densities, through measurements of the attenuation of X-rays as they pass through the material. A 3-D image eliminates the overlap between the layers, which is one of the issues that obscures contraband with the traditional two-dimensional X-ray image.

CBP has begun to deploy CT scanners in the mail/express consignment vectors and has collected data with vendors utilizing real interdicted threats to support the development of automated threat detection algorithms for fentanyl and other dangerous materials.

Question 10. What progress has CBP made developing anomaly detection algorithms to improve the detection of contraband? How would the use of such technology shift CBP’s resource needs, such as staffing levels and officer training?

Answer. CBP is actively developing, training, and implementing anomaly detection algorithms as a tool for CBP officer use to enhance the identification of contraband. These advancements leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning to analyze non-intrusive inspection images.

The agency is developing specific algorithms to detect anomalies within commercial vehicles and passenger vehicles, alongside comparison models designed to reduce human workload.

The three use cases that CBP is focused on are described below:

- *Empty Truck Low-Risk Historical Comparison.*—This algorithm validates an empty truck by comparing its current X-ray image with previously cleared X-ray images from prior entries.
- *Passenger Vehicle Model.*—This model assists CBP officers in detecting anomalies within the structure of passenger vehicles.
- *Commercial Vehicle Model.*—This model helps CBP officers detect anomalies in the cab and parts of the trailer structure.

To date the “Empty Truck Low-Risk Historical Comparison” model developed is the only model that has been successfully tested at a high enough level of confidence to expand beyond the initial deployment location.

Following successful model development, field deployment of each use case is dependent on appropriate technical infrastructure, including appropriate X-ray machine technology, unified file format conversion by the vendors, and a common integrated platform deployment. Technical infrastructure projects are currently under way at 12 different CBP facilities and are scheduled for completion by end of fiscal year 2026.

The integration of anomaly detection technology may one day allow CBP to shift its resource needs, particularly for staffing and officer training.

- *Staffing Levels.*—While these technologies assist officers, their full implementation could lead to personnel reallocation. The goal is to increase throughput and efficiency, potentially allowing officers to focus on higher-risk situations rather than routine inspections.
- *Officer Training.*—The widespread introduction of AI-powered anomaly detection tools would necessitate updated training for CBP officers. Officers would need training to interpret algorithm outputs, understand limitations, and make informed decisions based on AI recommendations.

STAFFING

Question 11a. Ms. Sabatino, regarding staffing at the San Ysidro Port of Entry: How many OFO staff are needed to fully staff the San Ysidro port of entry per the Workforce Staffing Model?

Answer. The Workload Staffing Model (WSM) is a decision support tool and is the initial, data-driven, step in the process of quantifying workload at ports of entry (POEs). The WSM considers all business processes required of CBPOs, the workload associated with those business processes, and the true level of effort required to carry out daily missions effectively. The fiscal year 2025 WSM, which uses fiscal year 2024 data and projects staffing needs through fiscal year 2026, shows the need for a total of 2,961 CBPOs in the San Diego Field Office.

Question 11b. How will the money given to CBP from reconciliation address the staffing needs at San Ysidro?

Answer. OFO has identified 500 positions from the reconciliation funding that will be allocated to the San Diego Field Office. Of those, around 100 were identified by the Field Office to be utilized in San Ysidro.

Question 11c. How many open vacancies are there right now at the San Ysidro Port of Entry?

Answer. As of pay period 01 ending January 24, 2026, San Ysidro had 105 vacant CBPO positions (approximately 10 percent of allocated).

Question 11d. How many individuals have you hired for the San Ysidro Port of Entry in the last year?

Answer. One hundred thirty-nine (77 in fiscal year 2026) individuals have been hired for the San Ysidro Port of Entry in the last year with an additional 47 pending their enter on duty date within the next month.

Question 11e. What is the average length of time it takes to hire an individual for the San Ysidro Port of Entry?

Answer. The average time to hire a CBPO across all POEs is approximately 399 days; however, OFO has continued to maintain a healthy pipeline and “ready to hire” list. San Ysidro is considered a hard-to-fill location and candidates are offered incentives for San Ysidro and several other “hard-to-fill” locations.

Question 12a. Ms. Sabatino, regarding CBP OFO staffing overall: How many additional officers does OFO require per its Workforce Staffing Model? How will the money given to CBP from reconciliation address these staffing needs?

Answer. The WSM is a decision support tool and is the initial, data-driven, step in the process of quantifying workload at POEs. The WSM considers all business processes required of CBPOs, the workload associated with those business processes, and the true level of effort required to carry out daily missions effectively. The fiscal year 2025 WSM, which uses fiscal year 2024 data and projects staffing needs through fiscal year 2026, shows the need for an additional 6,193 CBPOs across the POEs nationwide. OFO was provided 5,000 new CBPO billets in WFTC, for distribution throughout its ports of entry based on operational demands and facility expansions.

Question 12b. A significant portion of OFO’s workforce plans to retire over the next few years. What are your plans to address this wave of retirements?

Answer. OFO has implemented a hiring strategy based on operational needs, anticipated attrition, and mission-critical priorities to ensure sustainable staffing alignment. This strategy includes:

- Staffing for increased operational demands, projected traffic surges, and planned facility expansions to maximize efficiency and readiness.
- An aggressive recruitment strategy that resulted in a 35.5 percent increase in applicant volume when comparing fiscal year 2025 to fiscal year 2024.
- Leveraging technology to automate pre-employment processing to reduce time to hire and meet hiring targets.
- Fiscal year 2026–2029 hiring goals include annual attrition hiring and additional appropriated CBP officer positions through the WFTC.
- OFO was provided 5,000 new CBPO billets in the 2025 WFTC for distribution throughout its ports of entry based on operational demands and facility expansions.
- Increased training seats at the Field Operations Academy to meet future hiring demands (fiscal year 2026–fiscal year 2029).
- Remaining flexible with filling additional allocations based on a strong CBPO pipeline and ability to pulse and surge quickly.
- Utilization of recruitment and retention incentives for locations that are typically hard to fill and/or hard to retain based on the remote nature of the facility or a high cost of living in the location.

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN MICHAEL GUEST FOR HILARY M. BENEDICT

Question 1. Ms. Benedict, based on the observations your team has made in reviewing this program, is CBP assigning appropriate resources to addressing the issue of “sufficient space” at San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and all other ports of entry along the Southwest Border that are not in their plan?

Answer. Based on information obtained during our review, CBP is investigating solutions for deploying large-scale non-intrusive inspection (NII) systems to the ports of entry along the Southwest Border with limited space, including working with the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate to develop and deploy low-energy portals that could be installed where space constraints and interference with radiation detectors make deployment of these systems difficult. According to CBP, factory testing of this technical solution will be completed by June 30, 2026, followed by conducting operational testing, selecting a solution, and beginning deployment in fiscal year 2028. We will continue to monitor CBP’s progress toward deploying NII systems to all ports of entry along the Southwest Border and expect CBP to provide an update of its progress in March 2026.

Question 2a. Ms. Benedict, in the GAO–25–107379 report on the NII program, your team suggested that CBP: Should clearly (1) define all NII key performance parameters and report performance using them and (2) determine how to include deployment of large-scale NII systems to all Southwest Border land ports of entry in updates to its deployment plans.

Can you elaborate on the recommendations and how GAO identified them as the most pressing issues with CBP’s NII program?

Question 2b. Were there any other areas of concern that GAO identified, which did not rise to the level of a recommendation that Congress should be aware of?

Question 2c. Have you had any meetings with CBP post release of the report? If so, have you seen progress within CBP to execute on the recommendations?

Answer. CBP collects and uses performance data to help ensure that its large-scale non-intrusive inspection (NII) systems are available for use to scan vehicles and inform actions it takes to improve NII system performance. We made our first recommendation because we determined that clearly defining the performance parameters used to collect and report on NII system performance would help CBP identify deficiencies and potential cost savings, achieve its objectives more efficiently and effectively, and inform future procurement decisions. To address our recommendation, CBP planned to define system-level key performance parameters for NII systems in the statement of work for its new contract statements of work, to include maintenance and availability requirements and reporting.

Additionally, in our review, we found that CBP did not have plans to deploy large-scale NII systems at 9 ports of entry, which accounted for 30 percent of passenger vehicle crossings at all land ports of entry in fiscal year 2024. We made our second recommendation because only vehicles selected for secondary inspection are scanned at these ports of entry so CBP risks entry of many unscanned vehicles entering the United States, hampering its ability to prevent entry of illegal drugs and other contraband.

In our review, we identified and discussed in our report several challenges CBP’s NII program is facing. Some of these challenges have limited CBP’s ability to use the systems, such as staff shortages and system outages. Some challenges have led to deployments costing more due to factors such as substantial increases in costs for civil works and construction. Other challenges have led to system deployments taking longer such as the need for major site upgrades to enable system installation and vendors taking longer than expected to resolve issues encountered during deployment.

We have not formally met with CBP to discuss its progress on our recommendations since the release of our report in September 2025. However, we expect CBP to provide an update on its progress in March 2026.