

House Committee on Veterans, Military, and Homeland Security
Hearing on January 24, 2012: NBAF Status Update
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Chairman Goico, distinguished members of the Committee, and attending guests of the Joint Committee on Kansas Security, thank you for providing me the opportunity to come before you today and present a status report regarding the engineering, design, and construction of the National Bio and Agro Defense Facility in Manhattan. As you will hear today, this facility is not only vital to the economic interests of the State of Kansas, but also integral to providing our livestock industry and food supply the protection they need against emerging 21st Century threats.

What is a 21st Century threat? As we have seen over the past decade, terrorism has gone global, warfare has gone asymmetric, and the ability to conduct total war—war not just against your opponent's military, but also against his culture and economic viability—is not just in the hands of governments, but also in those of small but organized non-state actors and terrorist groups. Individuals with harmful intentions have a global transportation infrastructure, a relatively open passport and visa regime, and hateful ideologies to justify attacks of an unprecedented scale on our nation's food supply. But intent isn't the only problem. The flow of people, goods, and services is now historically unencumbered, the possibility of the accidental transmission of a catastrophic pathogen like foot and mouth disease, or FMD, is as great as ever.

Because of this, the United States needs a modern laboratory facility to study emerging and historically problematic threats to our nation's food supply and provide the necessary countermeasures to keep our livestock industry strong. The NBAF in Manhattan, Kansas is the answer. Not a renovation at the ancient and decrepit Plum Island Animal Disease Center, not a location somewhere else in America. Manhattan was selected by DHS as the home to the NBAF in January 2009 for a reason: we have the expertise, we have the industry, and we have the will to make the NBAF the world class research facility that it should be. We won the competition on the merits.

The Kansas Legislature stepped up and allocated almost \$150 million for the NBAF's construction and research mission. Successive presidential administrations have shown their support for the NBAF by allocating over \$200 million in federal funds for the project. Now is not the time to turn back—it is the time to move forward, fund construction of the laboratory facility, and invest in the future of America's livestock industry and the people whose lives depend on the safety on the food on supermarket shelves.

So where are we now? If you were to casually walk by the site near the corner of Denison and Kimball in Manhattan, you would notice a number of things. First, there's a lot of dirt that's been moved in order to prepare for construction. Second,

Veteran/Military/Homeland Security Comm.

Date: JAN 24, 2012

Attachment #: 1

infrastructure improvements like architecturally appropriate fencing and industrial entry roads at the site have been constructed. But this only scratches the surface of what's actually going on. Thanks to the efforts of Senator Roberts, Congresswoman Jenkins, and the entire Kansas congressional delegation, Congress appropriated \$40,000,000 in FY11 and \$50,000,000 in FY12 for construction of the central utility plant (CUP) and laboratory facility, respectively. Kansas expects to match the FY11 expenditure with the already Finance Council approved \$45,400,000 in bond proceeds for complete site clearance and CUP construction and the remaining bond proceeds under the \$105,000,000 statutory cap for the lab construction match.

Federal funding can only be expended after an updated Site-Specific Risk Assessment (SSRA) has been completed. This SSRA will allow us to understand how the State and the Feds can best mitigate against any kind of adverse event occurring at the laboratory. The SSRA is expected to be completed by DHS sometime in February. Once it is finished, the National Academy of Sciences will evaluate its conclusions.

One of the things that has, quite frankly, bothered our administration with relation to this and the previous SSRA is that they focused only on the risk of operating the NBAF. But there are far greater risks that are incurred by not having a facility like the NBAF to hedge against the possibility of a naturally occurring or intentional release of a pathogen that will be researched at the laboratory. To qualify the risks associated with leaving ourselves defenseless, we contracted with SES, Inc. of Shawnee, Kansas to provide us with a report on how vulnerable we leave ourselves to threats that we know exist around the world to our food supply and livestock industry. Eric Hess with SES will testify later this morning on this report.

But Kansas isn't waiting around. The mission is too important. This administration has proposed in our budget to make \$5,000,000 available for the next seven years for transitioning certain research away from Plum Island and to the Bio Research Facility at Kansas State University, directly adjacent to the NBAF site. K-State is currently working with USDA on the scope and scale of the research mission to be transferred, but it is anticipated that we can move quickly to research rift valley fever, classical swine fever, and African swine fever at the BRI without delay. This research transition funding that was part of Kansas' NBAF offer will help build capacity and train talent for the eventual standing up of the NBAF itself.

One of the things that makes the NBAF site in Kansas unique is the support that you and the residents of our state show for it. We all understand its importance. Urban and rural folks, Democrats and Republicans, we all know that value-added jobs in our state result from making industries like animal agriculture more efficient and safer. The NBAF provides the prospect of economic improvement in our state now and in the future. After speaking with many legislators during the 2011 session, I came to understand that it is important for the administration and the Legislature to have estimates as to what that potential growth might be. To that end, we contracted with Impact DataSource out of Austin, Texas to provide for us some

conservative estimates on what we can expect regarding economic development related to the NBAF. Paul Scheuren will provide testimony shortly on their report.

We all know that the NBAF is important to Kansas and important to ensuring the food security of an increasingly urbanized and complex American society. But make no mistake, this facility has its enemies in Congress and elsewhere. They will do whatever they can to try to slow or stop construction. Some do so because they have a political agenda. Some are envious of what we're building here in the Animal Health Corridor. But Kansas has shown the resolve and bipartisan agreement that proves this project is important and worthy of continued nationwide support. In light of the upcoming budget seasons in both Topeka and Washington, I hope that we can build on that foundation of unanimity and work together to ensure that we build this facility in Manhattan for the benefit of our state, our animal agriculture industry, and the safety of the food on our families' dinner tables.

For more information on the NBAF, please visit <http://www.k-state.edu/govrelations/federal/nbaf.html>.