



House Select Committee on Homeland Security **Democrats**

JIM TURNER, Ranking Member

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Representative Jim Turner, Ranking Member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, and Representative Edward Markey and Delegate Eleanor Holmes-Norton, Democratic Members of the Select Committee, released a letter this morning to Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge expressing their concerns about the Administration's handling of rail security for the District of Columbia.

In their letter, they note that a Democratic staff investigation has revealed that the Department of Homeland Security's plan to protect the rail corridor in the National Capitol Region did not even consider the re-routing of extremely hazardous materials as a possible option, even though CSX, the local railroad owner, has been successfully re-routing for over 7 months.

Congressman Turner noted that: "Re-routing may not always be the right option to protect a city such as Washington, D.C., but we will never know because the Administration appears to have taken it off the table even though CSX has voluntarily rerouted dangerous cargoes for the last seven months. This is wrong. All options must be considered to protect our Nation's citizens."

"It may be Halloween," said Congressman Markey, "but that is no excuse for neglecting one of the most straightforward methods of removing the most catastrophic consequences of a terrorist attack on shipments of highly toxic materials. Even the railroad itself has evidently concluded these shipments are too dangerous to send through our nation's capitol."

Delegate Norton added: "It seems there is a real solution to the deadly toxic chemicals that pose unexpected and catastrophic risks to the national capital region in operation. I earlier called for pilot or test rerouting of these CSX trains around D.C. Now we learn that CSX has been voluntarily rerouting for seven months. The Department of Homeland Security must continue this effort, document its effects and report to Congress, so that we can learn about the feasibility of rerouting here and elsewhere."

An electronic version of this letter can be found at www.house.gov/hsc/democrats/

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