



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

December 11, 2006

Under Secretary RADM Jay M. Cohen
Science and Technology Directorate
Naval Security Station
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Under Secretary Cohen,

I am writing on behalf of the undersigned organizations to request that you reconstitute the Homeland Security Science and Technology Advisory Committee (HSSTAC), which was terminated by statute on November 25, 2005. We appreciate the rapid and systematic approach you have taken to reorganize the Science and Technology Directorate since your appointment, but we also believe the external science and technology community can play a vital role by identifying research areas of potential importance to the DHS mission. The HSSTAC was originally authorized and chartered with that vision in mind, and the committee served with distinction for a year and a half following its first meeting in February 2004.

We were pleased that the HSSTAC was reauthorized as part of the SAFE Port Act (PL 109-347), which was signed into law on October 13, 2006. As you are aware, the SAFE Port Act amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to allow for the operation of the HSSTAC through December 31, 2008. The reauthorization of this advisory committee is especially timely given the increased attention DHS S & T programs are receiving from Congress. For example, the conference report accompanying the 2007 DHS appropriations bill requires the Under Secretary of S & T to produce a five-year research plan and business model outlining S & T priorities, performance measures for each portfolio, and resources needed to meet its mission. Further, while the SAFE Port Act suggests calling on the HSSTAC specifically for outside expertise in advancing cargo security technology, we would assert that a well-balanced interdisciplinary HSSTAC can once again play an invaluable role by providing external expertise relevant to the entire DHS S & T portfolio.

Given heightened Congressional interest in the S & T portfolio, as well as the recent S & T reorganization, we believe it is critically important to reconstitute the HSSTAC as soon as possible to serve as a reliable source of independent, scientific, and technical planning advice to assist you during this important transition period and beyond.

Sincerely,

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Endorsing Organizations:

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American Society of Agronomy
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Computing Research Association
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Crop Science Society of America
The Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences
American Educational Research Association
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Representative Peter T. King
Representative Bennie G. Thompson
Secretary Michael Chertoff

