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[H.R. 3493, Securing the Cities Act of 2015](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, October 20, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 3493](#), *the Securing the Cities Act of 2015*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 3493 was introduced on September 11, 2015 by Rep. Dan Donovan (R-NY) and was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security, which ordered it reported by voice vote on September 30, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 3493 establishes the Securing the Cities program within the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to enhance the ability of federal, state, and local governments to detect and prevent nuclear and radiological attacks in high-risk urban areas.

Specifically, the bill requires the Department's Director for Domestic Nuclear Detection to:

- Assist State, local, tribal, and territorial governments in designing and implementing, or enhancing existing, architectures for coordinated and integrated detection and interdiction of nuclear or other radiological materials that are out of regulatory control;
- Support the development of a region-wide operating capability to detect and report on nuclear and other radioactive materials out of operational control;
- Provide resources to enhance detection, analysis, communication, and coordination to better integrate State, local, tribal, and territorial assets into federal operations;
- Facilitate alarm adjudication and provide subject matter expertise and technical assistance on concepts of operations, training, exercises, and alarm response protocols;
- Communicate with, and promote sharing of information about the presence or detection of nuclear or other radiological materials among appropriate federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, in a manner that ensures transparency with the jurisdictions served by such program; and,
- Provide any other assistance the Director determines appropriate.

The bill also requires the Director to designate jurisdictions among high-risk urban areas to participate in the program and notify Congress about such designations. The bill also requires the Government

Accountability Office (GAO), not later than one year after enactment, to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the Securing the Cities program. The bill requires DHS to carry out the program using existing funds.

BACKGROUND

The DNDO within DHS “is the primary entity in the U.S. government for implementing domestic nuclear detection efforts for a managed and coordinated response to radiological and nuclear threats, as well as integration of federal nuclear forensics programs.”¹ The DNDO is also charged with the development of the global nuclear detection and reporting architecture, with partners from federal, state, local, and international governments and the private sector.²

The Securing the Cities program, which is operated within DNDO, is designed to enhance the ability of the United States to detect and prevent terrorist attacks and other high consequence events utilizing nuclear or other radiological materials that pose a high risk to homeland security in high-risk urban areas, such as New York City. DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson has said that “this program is a key part of the department’s efforts to enhance the capability of all our partners to detect and interdict dangerous radiological and nuclear weapons or materials in major metropolitan areas.”³ H.R. 3493 codifies the existing program and enhances congressional oversight to improve its transparency and accountability.

The Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee’s Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies has said that “the training and equipment provided to State and local law enforcement [through the Securing the Cities program] enables them to more effectively intercept radiological or nuclear material out of regulatory control.”⁴

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that implementing H.R. 3493 would not significantly affect spending by DHS. Based on the cost of similar reports, CBO estimates that it would cost GAO less than \$500,000 to prepare the report required by the bill; any costs would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Because enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [Jerry White](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 5-0190.

¹ <http://www.dhs.gov/domestic-nuclear-detection-office>

² Id.

³ See Homeland Security Today article—“[DNDO Securing the Cities Program Expanded to National Capital Region](#),” September 5, 2014.

⁴ See Press Release—“[Statement of Subcommittee Chairman John Ratcliffe](#),” September 17, 2015.