



## **Air Cargo: Freight forwarders find fault with aviation cargo security**

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By Patrick Burnson

SAN FRANCISCO—While major U.S. freight forwarders and shippers support the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) "Certified Cargo Screening Program," key industry leaders are telling law makers to reevaluate its enforcement.

"We estimate that outlays will require between \$150,000 to \$500,000 or more per facility," said Cindy Allen, task force on security chair for the [National Customs Broker and Forwarders Association of America Inc.](#) (NCBFAA). "It is unrealistic to assume that a typical 'independent air carrier' can afford this equipment for use in his own company, just as we understand it may be difficult for some of the larger participating companies to do so."

In testimony earlier this week before the House Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, Allen explained how "independent air carriers" (or IACs) are at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to compliance.

TSA's policy of providing capital funding for the cargo screening pilot program's participants by subsidizing and underwriting a major portion of those mostly large and established companies' overhead, leaves other non-pilot firms at a competitive financial disadvantage.

"There appears to be no funding within TSA for like treatment for the small and medium sized businesses that will follow these large corporations into the program," she said.

She called on Congress to authorize and appropriate funding in the FY2010 budget to offset the cost for these small and medium firms to participate in CCSP. In her comments, she suggested establishing one or several centralized locations in a specific geographic area where the community's IACs can take their cargo for screening.

"In all events, however, the cost must be low enough to enable small and medium sized companies to compete against those who have a built-in advantage by virtue of the TSA pilot," she said.

"We support Congress' mandate and we support the Transportation Security Administration's Certified Cargo Screening Program," Allen said in conclusion.

“Adjustments however need to be made to ensure that goods flow freely yet securely through the airports and aboard passenger aircraft, while permitting those within our industry to compete for business.”

NCBFAA spokesman, Tom Mathers, told *LM* that the association is also working closely with shippers overseas in another effort to establish free market security protocols.