

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 2, 2004

The Honorable Thomas Ridge, Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Ridge:

I am writing to express my deeply held concern with the recent decision by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to remove Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) from the list of DHS-preferred laboratories. I believe that by limiting BNL's established relationships with various private and public homeland security entities, and by possibly halting the ongoing development of cutting-edge technologies designed to defend against a variety of sophisticated terrorist threats, this decision will have a significantly detrimental impact on efforts to ensure the security of the United States against terrorist attacks.

The New York Region has been and continues to be a front line target of terrorism. BNL's location within this region, together with its scientific and technical expertise and experience, make it the ideal location for the implementation of technologies needed to aid in our efforts to combat terror. BNL has built close working relationships with counter-terrorism experts and first responders at every level of government in this region and has continued to support those agencies on a variety of Homeland Security issues.

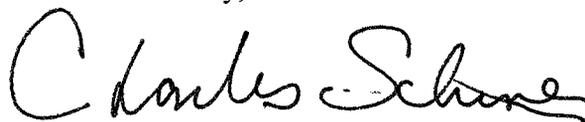
As you may be aware, has been a leader in imaging technology for a half century and has recently been developing detectors that will allow DHS officials to scan shipping containers for a variety of weapons of mass destruction. These research efforts were supported in part by the inclusion of \$10 million in the Homeland Security Act for the further development of these sensors. The decision to remove BNL from the list of DHS-preferred laboratories will create a set back in the development of these detectors and jeopardize port security.

Researchers at BNL have also developed an extensive portfolio of homeland security technologies in areas that include safeguarding nuclear materials, developing sensors for detection of dirty bombs, nuclear weapons, toxic chemicals and other weapons of mass destruction. These initiatives also could be disrupted by the change in BNL's status.

It is my belief that hampering the lab's efforts by excluding it from the list of preferred facilities is counterproductive to our nation's efforts to defend against terrorist attacks. Accordingly, I urge you to reconsider this decision.

I thank you for your attention to this issue, and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate