It's been two and a half years since Congress granted the Department of Homeland Security's Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards (CFATS) program long-term authorization. The CFATS program requires facilities that have chemicals at DHS's thresholds to report them. If DHS determines a facility could present a high security risk, the facility must put a security plan in place that meets DHS standards and helps mitigate the threat of a terrorist using those chemicals in an attack. DHS then routinely inspects the facility to verify the security plan is being implemented.

Since last fall, the CFATS program's focus has been on implementing improvements to how DHS determines a facility is high-risk. The **"**CFATS Enhanced Tiering Methodology" is a scientifically-driven risk-assessment that was developed with input from industry, academia, and government experts — including experts from the refining and petrochemical industries. All facilities that previously reported to DHS are resubmitting this information to be run through the new assessment.

The process for submitting information has been vastly streamlined — some of you may remember spending multiple days submitting information on your chemical holdings. With the new reporting system, known as CSAT 2.0, the facility average is less than a day, and some facilities are taking as little as 15 minutes to report. While the tool itself has changed, the list of chemicals that need to be reported has not, and facilities should still use Appendix A as a reference. If you have any issues with the online tool or questions about what you need to submit, DHS is available to assist — the Help Desk is available at 866-323-2957 or csat@hq.dhs.gov.

What Next?

The threat of a terrorist attack using chemicals is as relevant today as it was when CFATS was first created. Terrorists continue to seek out and use CFATS chemicals of interest — events in Belgium, Syria, France, and the UK all indicate that we must remain vigilant in our daily lives and business.

We all recognize that chemical security is important. The Department of Homeland Security has a history of working with industry stakeholders — including AFPM and its members — to identify vulnerabilities in the sector and work to prevent terrorists from exploiting them. The *Protecting and Securing Chemical Facilities from Terrorist Attack Act of 2014* enjoyed strong stakeholder support and granted four-year authorization to the program. However, if Congress fails to act to extend the program, this authorization will expire in January of 2019.

Since the CFATS Act was passed, the Department of Homeland Security has dramatically improved the pace of inspections and security plan approvals, eliminating what was projected to be a 7 to 9 year backlog in less than 2 years. Nearly all high-risk facilities now have tailored security plans in place.

The stability that long-term authorization provided to CFATS allowed businesses to better incorporate security into their capital planning cycles. Industry and DHS have continued to work together to ensure that CFATS remains a smart regulation that responds to changing business considerations without sacrificing security.

Chemical security is very much a pressing need, and continued authorization for the CFATS program is a major step toward meeting it. The Department looks forward to working with Congress to chart a path forward that streamlines and enhances the program while preserving strong security standards and promoting a culture of security.

The United States is currently leading the world in chemical security, in large part thanks to the private-public partnership model that has allowed us to foster a culture of chemical security. We must work together as a team, because the stakes could not be higher.

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