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Intellectual Property Rights
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Homeland Security officials launch new Detroit task force to protect national security, thwart counterfeits

\$1 million in counterfeits seized at task force launch



DETROIT – In an effort to mitigate vulnerabilities within the commerce stream that threaten the nation’s consumers and to protect national security, Homeland Security officials recently launched its Global Trade Task Force (GTTF), a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)-led multi-agency effort that leverages robust import and export controls and investigative authorities to combat illicit commercial activities. Authorities announced results from a recent task force effort Monday at Detroit’s Fort Street Cargo Facility.

HSI Detroit Special Agent in Charge Steve Francis called the task force a vital next step in the battle against threats to the commerce stream and national security. He said the HSI Detroit task force could serve as a national model for related investigations across the agency and beyond.

“With the launch of the GTTF, we are combining a wide array of capabilities that enable us to combat this global problem in a more streamlined manner,” said Francis. “I look forward to seeing the significant results the task force will no doubt achieve, and hope it will serve as a model for how the agency approaches counterfeit and counterproliferation investigations going forward.”

“This joint collaborative task force is a force multiplier for U.S. Customs and Border Protection to mitigate illicit attempts by smugglers to use inbound and outbound commercial shipments for their nefarious operations,” said Christopher Perry, Director of Field Operations. “Exploiting the commercial cargo environment will not be tolerated and this task force will no doubt aide our border security mission.”

The new task force combines the investigative, interdiction, regulatory, and licensing capabilities from a variety of agencies, including HSI, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security, and the FDA's Office of Criminal Investigations.

The GTTF's primary mission is to counter the following types of illicit commercial activities:

- **Health & Safety:** Trafficking of counterfeit, substandard, or tainted merchandise, with an emphasis on goods that pose a threat to public health or safety including pharmaceuticals and cosmeceuticals, automotive, aerospace, rail, and heavy industry products; and environmental crimes.
- **Trade Crime:** Financially-motivated fraud schemes that deprive revenue from the United States government or which harm businesses, rights holders, or undermine financial institutions.
- **Counter-Proliferation:** Illegal export of United States military products, sensitive dual-use technology, weapons of mass destruction, or chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials.

To kick off the GTTF, HSI Detroit partnered with CBP and other agencies in a weeklong enforcement effort at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport and Port Huron Blue Water Bridge Ports of Entry. The action targeted merchandise and shipments entering and exiting the United States from foreign countries at the FedEx, DHL, rail, and the centralized examination station. During the weeklong surge, HSI and CBP seized more than \$1,000,0000 MSRP in counterfeit goods and counterfeit prescription drugs, which included, counterfeit Xanax pills and Botox, counterfeit Transceiver Network Modules, counterfeit e-cigarettes, and counterfeit Rolexes and iPhone, among other items.

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