

On March 10, 2011 FEMA released an advisory explaining the delay in announcing the FY11 Port Security Grant, due to the status of the federal budget operating under a continuing resolution.

Earlier this month, the House of Representatives passed HR 1, the continuing resolution for FY11. Among many other cuts, the legislation reduces funding for the Port Security Grant program by two-thirds; bringing the funding level down from \$300 million to \$100 million. The authorized level for the program, \$400 million, has been appropriated in earlier budgets.

Just a few days ago, the Senate rejected this proposal, but also failed to pass their own version. If the House and Senate do not reach a compromise by March 18, 2011, the Federal government faces a shutdown.

In this brief window of opportunity, NASBLA and its members must urge policy makers to make the right choice and keep Port Security Grant Program levels on par with previous budget proposals.

The purpose of the Port Security Grant Program is to create a sustainable, risk-based effort to protect critical port infrastructure from terrorism. The program provides grant funding to port areas for the protection of critical port infrastructure from terrorism and are primarily intended to assist ports in enhancing maritime domain awareness, enhancing risk management capabilities to prevent, detect, respond to and recover from attacks.

The message we should send to our representatives is that; The Coast Guard has put forth "strengthening of partnerships" as one of their core strategies and objectives for 2011 and beyond, depends on the collaboration and cooperation amongst its state and local maritime law enforcement partners. In every port in the country, the assistance that State and Local law enforcement provides is evident, and its continuation is dependent on the support of the PSGP.

In addition the Coast Guard Authorization Bill, under Section 828, directs the Commandant to establish, by regulation, national standards for training and credentialing law enforcement personnel to enforce a security zone or assist in such enforcement. It also requires the Commandant to develop training curriculum and the Bill allows agreements with public or private entities to test and deliver such training. It also directs the establishment of a related training grant. **NASBLA currently holds the only training curriculum accepted by the Commandant.**

Through NASBLA, we as partners are doing our part to ensure that we operate and respond on a singular standard through the training that the Coast Guard has supported and endorsed. We can continue this "partners on the water" effort only if there are the funds to support the allocation of our S&L resources and personnel