



April 14, 2011

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

On behalf of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), I am writing to applaud your introduction of the SAFE Port Reauthorization Act of 2011. This important legislation is essential for maintaining and enhancing our nation's maritime homeland security efforts. In particular, further strengthening the America's Waterways Watch program and improving the timeliness of port security grant applications is of particular interest to our organization.

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators is a national nonprofit organization that works to develop public policy for recreational boating safety. NASBLA represents the recreational boating authorities of all 50 states and the U.S. territories. NASBLA's mission is to strengthen the ability of the state and territorial boating authorities to reduce death, injury and property damage associated with recreational boating and ensure a safe, secure and enjoyable boating environment.

As you are aware, the U.S. Coast Guard depends heavily on cooperation with its state and local partners in maintaining the safety and security of our nation's waterways. The Port Security Grant Program is an integral aspect of this relationship as it not only provides monies for equipment and certain infrastructure, but most importantly the training necessary in order for the states to act as true force multipliers of the Coast Guard. Ensuring that grant applications and extensions are processed in a timely manner only further strengthens this vital relationship. While it is good forward movement, there is still more work to be done.

We hope that as you and your colleagues discuss and debate this legislation, that you will also consider expanding the cooperative enforcement agreements between the states and the Coast Guard to allow for more cooperative activities. Specifically, we feel that it is essential to maintaining our nation's maritime homeland security that the Port Security Grants should allow for training in a variety of protocols, including search and rescue. We believe that this harmonizes with the Coast Guard Authorization of 2010, which instructed the Coast Guard to not only establish a national standard for such training, but to actively engage with the states in implementing these national training and credentialing standards.

Thank you for your ongoing support of strengthening our country's maritime homeland security defenses and should you have any questions or require additional support, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

James Graybeal
President
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators