

## **Background**

Earlier this month, the House of Representatives passed HR 1, the continuing resolution for the FY11 budget. 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.

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

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.

## **Action**

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 funding levels on par with previous budget proposals.

In addition to the necessity of the Port Security Grant Program for ensuring the security of our nation's ports and waterways, the grant dollars made available also enable the Coast Guard to actively partner with state and local law enforcement.

Last year Congress passed the 2010 Coast Guard Authorization Bill, which included language directing the Commandant to establish 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 to test and deliver such training.

Currently, the only Federal resources available to achieve these mandates are monies derived from the Port Security Grant Program. Not only are the Federal dollars needed to maintain current initiatives, but they are vital in further developing initiatives with state and local law enforcement to better secure our nation's borders.

It is imperative that Congress not cut any monies from this program and instead maintain the same level of rigorous commitment to securing our nation's waterways as previous Congresses have shown.