

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2003

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Byrd
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-218 Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As you deliberate Fiscal Year 2003 emergency supplemental appropriations in conference, the Port Security Caucus asks that funding for vital security infrastructure upgrades be increased to accurately reflect the needs identified by the U.S. Coast Guard.

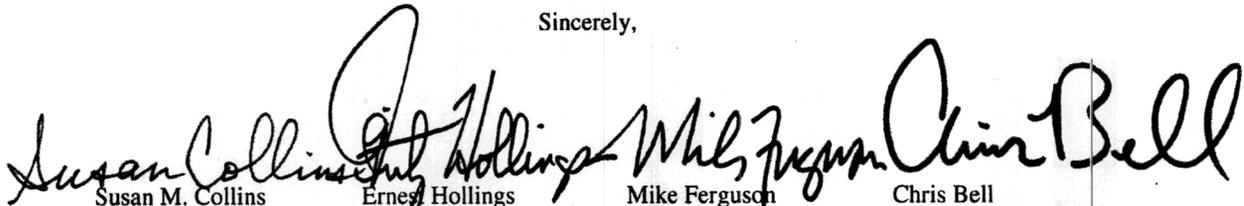
America's ports are our gateways of commerce to the world. Each year, nearly six million seaborne cargo containers enter our nation's ports, yet, of these, less than four percent are ever physically inspected. This security gap gives terrorist groups like al Qaeda, which U.S. intelligence officials have linked to 15 cargo ships, over five million opportunities a year to smuggle a nuclear device or weapon of mass destruction into the United States.

The Coast Guard estimated in December of 2002 that improvements to port security will cost \$963 million for fiscal year 2004 and \$4.4 billion over the next ten years. In the year-and-a-half since the attacks of September 11, Congress has appropriated only \$368 million for port security infrastructure improvements. While this funding is welcome, much more is needed. For DHS to meet its goals and for America to secure the homeland, money for port security infrastructure upgrades should be increased significantly and soon.

Once new regulations take effect, ports that are not operating under an approved security plan as mandated by the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA) can be legally shut down by the Coast Guard, potentially costing the U.S. economy billions of dollars. Paramount to any economic considerations though, is the threat posed to Americans themselves. The events of September 11 illustrate what a terrorist group intent on attacking America can accomplish. It is clear that groups like al Qaeda still have the will to attack. Providing funding for critical port security needs will help ensure the security of our homeland.

The threat to our nation's ports is a clear and present danger that cannot be ignored. We ask that you please consider fully funding the critical port security infrastructure needs identified by the Coast Guard. Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


Susan M. Collins Ernest Hollings Mike Ferguson Chris Bell
U.S. Senator U.S. Senator Member of Congress Member of Congress

CC: The Conference Committee

Tom Lantos James Madole (Rosa L.) Pan

Edith L. Engel Michael R. McNulty George Miller

Flora Joe Lucille Royal-allard

Andrew Sabaly Shirley Jochim Solomon P. Ortiz

Norm Dick Peter Long Frank (Ed.)

Madeline G. Boudallo Steve Al R. Lip

Nathan Pearson Jim Davis Josh

Pat Gandy Anna G Eshoo Tom Allen

Robert Wexler Michael Honda Eliz F. Cummings

C.A. Dick Roger Stutz Kirk Tauson Neil Abernethy

William D. Delaney Al L. (L.) Jim Fall

M Ellen O'Rourke Jim McDermott

Adam Smith

Ron Paul

Timothy P. Baker

Jo Bonner

Mike McIntyre

Ellen Ocasio

Bob Filner

Pete Dauterive

Marsha Blackburn

Clayton Kopp

Ed Markey

W. Paul

Paul Gosar
