



U. S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

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July 22, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation

FROM: Staff, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation

RE: Hearing on "How to Improve Operations and Implement Efficiencies for the United States Coast Guard"

PURPOSE

On July 26, 2011, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation will meet to receive testimony on ways to improve Coast Guard operations and implement efficiencies in Coast Guard programs.

BACKGROUND

The authorization of appropriations for the Coast Guard expires on September 30, 2011. In the near future, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure intends to move legislation to reauthorize funding for the Coast Guard and make improvements to Coast Guard programs. In preparation for that legislation, the Subcommittee is holding this hearing to review ways to improve Coast Guard operations and administration.

Annual Authorization

The Subcommittee will analyze authorization levels necessary to maintain existing Coast Guard operations and implement major Coast Guard acquisitions. For fiscal year 2011, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-281) (CGAA) authorized \$6,970,681,000 for operation and maintenance, \$1,640,000,000 for acquisition, \$1,400,700,000 for retired pay, and \$135,675,000 for the Coast Guard

Reserve program. Additionally, it authorized the Coast Guard to maintain up to 47,000 active duty members. This hearing will assess whether or not these numbers are appropriate for fiscal year 2012 and beyond.

Asset Recapitalization Programs

In spite of a series of acquisition reforms undertaken by the Coast Guard, there are still significant capability gaps and delays in acquisitions projects. As such, the Subcommittee will consider ways to address each of the following issues:

- Delays in selecting an Offshore Patrol Cutter to replace the aging Medium Endurance Cutter Fleet.
- Delays in selecting and acquiring cutter boats and unmanned aerial systems for the National Security Cutter (NSC). These systems are necessary for the \$780 million NSC's to achieve their promised capability increases over the High Endurance Cutter (HEC) Fleet they are replacing.
- Delays in developing a four-for-three crew rotation system for the National Security Cutters, or otherwise increase operational days at sea for the cutter. Congress began purchasing the NSCs after being promised that eight ships could replace twelve HECs by rotating four crews through every three ships in order to keep the ships underway longer. The Coast Guard has not yet released a plan to achieve this rotation.
- Unmet Coast Guard needs in the now seasonally ice-free waters of the Arctic. Neither of the Coast Guard's Class-I icebreakers are currently serviceable. The POLAR SEA is scheduled to be decommissioned and the POLAR STAR requires costly and lengthy repairs. The Administration has not requested any funding for new polar assets.

Coast Guard Administration

The Coast Guard continues to face challenges in administration of certain programs. The Subcommittee intends to explore these issues, which include:

- Outstanding reports, determinations and regulations mandated by statute, but not yet delivered. Specifically, the Administration is delinquent on the cost-constrained Fleet Mix Analysis and the determination on the need for a back-up navigation system to GPS required under section 219 of CGAA.
- Increased operational costs associated with the new Coast Guard headquarters being built on the West Campus of St. Elizabeth's Hospital. H.R. 2017, the

Homeland Security Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2012 which passed the House of Representatives on June 2, 2011, does not include funding for any other agency to move to St. Elizabeths. The Subcommittee needs to understand the costs and operational implications of moving only the Coast Guard to St. Elizabeths and the costs associated with operating a new headquarters facility.

Parity:

The Coast Guard is the nation's fifth Armed Service. However, active, reserve and retired members of the Coast Guard and their dependents do not always receive the same benefits available to members of the other armed services. In addition, the Coast Guard lacks many statutory authorities available to the other armed services to improve administration and operations.

The CGAA addressed several parity issues, such as leave retention and child care expense authority. However, others were not included and still more have come about as a result of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010, which passed after enactment of the CGAA. As such, the Subcommittee will examine these issues and look for ways to put the Coast Guard and its servicemembers on equal footing with the other armed services.

Marine Debris:

The Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act (Public Law 109-449), was signed into law on December 22, 2006. The Act authorized \$10 million annually through fiscal year 2010 for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to implement a program to map, identify, and conduct impact assessments of marine debris, i.e., any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes, as well as undertake removal and prevention activities, research and development of alternatives to fishing gear posing threats to the marine environment, and outreach activities. The Act also authorized \$2 million annually through fiscal year 2010 for the Coast Guard to enforce the requirements of MARPOL Annex 5, which prohibits the at-sea discharge of plastic and trash from vessels. The Act also requires the Coast Guard to conduct outreach programs to boaters to increase awareness of problems associated with marine debris, establish a program to improve waste collection and recordkeeping, take action to improve international coordination, and set up a voluntary program to report locations of marine debris and hazards it present to navigation.

On March 17, 2011, Representative Farr introduced H.R. 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011 to reauthorize funding through fiscal year 2016 and make changes to certain programs administered by NOAA.

WITNESSES

Vice Admiral John Currier
Deputy Commandant for Mission Support
United States Coast Guard

Vice Admiral Brian Salerno
Deputy Commandant for Operations
United States Coast Guard

Dr. Holly Bamford
Deputy Assistant Administrator
National Ocean Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration