



**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER, MARITIME, AND GLOBAL  
COUNTERTERRORISM**

**REMARKS ON SELECTED ASPECTS OF SEAPORT SECURITY**

**BY**

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Florida's 12 active deepwater seaports handle nearly 130 million tons of cargo, 4.0 million containers (TEU's) and over 14 million cruise passengers annually. The Port of Tampa is Florida's largest seaport accounting for approximately 50 million tons of cargo annually, or nearly 40% of the State's total waterborne trade.

Tampa is one of the nation's largest and most diverse seaports. The port's core bulk business includes almost 20 million tons of petroleum products -- virtually all the gasoline and jet fuel consumed in West and Central Florida -- and over 15 million tons of fertilizer and related products. Tampa is rapidly diversifying its cargo base into containerized freight with the recent introduction of new direct container services from Asia; shipments of vehicles and steel are increasing; and the current annual volume of 4-5 million tons of cement and aggregates is expected to double in the next few years.

Tampa is also a major cruise port handling over 900,000 cruise passengers in 2006. Additionally, the Port has the largest ship repair facilities between Pascagoula and Norfolk, and has a thriving retail / entertainment complex along its downtown waterfront area. The Port of Tampa encompasses over 5,000 sprawling acres and a relatively narrow main ship channel that stretches 42 miles across Tampa Bay. In short, few ports in the country face the diverse and complex security challenges that confront the Port of Tampa.

In Florida, the State Legislature passed security legislation (Florida Statute 311.12) prior to September 11, 2001, that mandated enhanced security standards throughout the Florida port system. The primary emphasis for the original Florida legislation was to address drug interdiction and cargo theft. This law was quickly revised after 9/11 to encompass additional requirements to prevent terrorism. With security plans in place early, Florida ports were in a position to receive and immediately implement federal security grant funds when the Port Security Grant Program began in 2002. Florida's seaports have been at the forefront nationwide in developing comprehensive strategies for addressing security issues.

Tampa has relied on a very effective layered seaport security approach. This layered approach occurs on the infrastructure side (surveillance cameras, lighting, fencing, gates, etc.) and on the personnel side, where Tampa contracts with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office for 24/7 coverage of all port zones within our jurisdiction. In addition, the Port Authority contracts with private security as well as employing its own professional security force.

We work in concert with our local, state and national partners. Recently, the Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS) Tampa Bay was inaugurated. This innovative vessel traffic service allows real-time monitoring of vessels throughout the Tampa Harbor. The U.S. Coast Guard, the Tampa Bay Harbor Safety and Security Committee and the ports of Tampa, Manatee and St. Petersburg were partners in this endeavor. I commend the cooperative efforts of our community as a model for addressing and resolving security issues, and in fact, the Tampa Bay Harbor Safety and Security Committee was named the top harbor safety committee nationwide for 2005 by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Tampa Port Authority also works closely with another of its federal partners, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Every single inbound container to the Port of Tampa is scanned for radiation through radiation portal monitors operated by CBP. CBP has indicated that nationwide it is now scanning over 90% of all inbound containers for radiation and will increase this to nearly 100% by the end of 2008. Through careful planning, this has been accomplished without unduly disrupting port operations.

Congress is currently debating whether to require 100% overseas scanning of containers within 3-5 years which would include both scanning for radiation and imaging. The SAFE Port Act of 2006 calls on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to move to such a system, but first calls for a pilot program to more fully evaluate the effectiveness and practicality of this approach and required new technology. We agree with the American Association of Port Authorities that pilot projects are important and that quick implementation of 100% integrated scanning without incorporating the lessons from the pilots could be both costly and detrimental for our maritime transportation system.

There has also been some discussion about 100% inspection of inbound containers once they arrive in this country. Port directors across the country oppose this concept which would unnecessarily and severely constrain our nation's highly efficient and effective maritime transportation system. I do support the efforts to screen or scan 100% of all containers as they are loaded overseas, as well as 100% radiation scanning in the US and 100% inspection by CBP of all identified high risk containers. This layered approach would significantly strengthen container security.

The Regional Domestic Security Task Force is a unique component of security in Florida seaports that serves as the focal point for security coordination. It includes all federal and state First Responders and is headed by the local Sheriff and includes representatives of the local FBI, Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard. Tampa's local Area Maritime Security Committee is also very proactive and has been singled out as a national model for cooperation and collaboration.

One major annual exercise and multiple regional, state and local Port exercises are conducted within the framework of the Area Maritime Security Committee and the Regional Domestic Security Task Force. Additionally, our Hillsborough County Emergency Operations Center is a cornerstone for emergency response and coordination. Recent active Florida hurricane seasons have afforded multiple real-time opportunities to exercise the full spectrum of emergency response capabilities.

Our Regional Domestic Security Task Force brings together the leadership of the local First Responders in a very positive way. The information flow can be characterized as immediate and the leadership interacts daily. However, the flow of security information from the federal government remains bogged down due to dated security clearance requirements. A more effective security clearance system must be designed and put in place similar to the system used by the U.S. military, where an interim security clearance can be conveyed to an individual on a "need to know" basis, allowing that individual to receive an immediate clearance to formulate a plan to mitigate an immediate threat.

There has been significant enhancement of port security since 9/11 and the SAFE Port Act of 2006 should further strengthen the system. The costs, however, have been very high and continue to increase. Since September 11, 2001, the Tampa Port Authority alone has committed over \$50 million to security infrastructure and security personnel costs. Nearly \$30 million of the total expenditures have been for security infrastructure. In that regard, the Port Security Grant Program has certainly been helpful. The Tampa Port Authority has received \$10.7 million since the program's inception, with much of that funding going toward access control infrastructure. Tampa handles over 11,000 truck movements daily, and efficient flow of vehicles through security checkpoints is vital to maintaining and supporting the commercial base of the Port.

Though Tampa has fared reasonably well and is grateful for the federal support it has received, we do advocate for the higher level of annual funding (\$400 million) supported by the American Association of Port Authorities for the nationwide grant program. Nationwide the program has been sorely under-funded with many ports unable to complete key security projects in a timely manner and all major ports, like Tampa, forced to spend millions of dollars on projects not funded by grants – millions of dollars that are badly needed for expansion of port cargo and container capacity to meet international trade demand that is projected to double over the next fifteen to twenty years.

Of greatest concern to the port community, at this time, is the issue of security access credentials. The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) will be another important tool to strengthen port security, but it will place an even greater financial burden on ports and port users. DHS has estimated that the card readers alone will cost \$300 million. There are additional concerns over the inability to meet the timetable in the Safe Port Act in a manner that will allow for the effective and efficient implementation of the system. Also, the biometric portion of the program must be extensively tested in the maritime environment. We respectfully urge adequate staffing and funding for TSA and the Coast Guard to test and provide oversight for the implementation of the TWIC program. The biometric / technology issues with the card must be resolved prior to full scale implementation. If these issues are not resolved and significant delays occur, the commercial trade we are seeking to protect will be compromised.

Florida's seaports have a special concern and dilemma regarding access credentials. Since 9/11 Florida's seaports have already successfully screened and badged over 100,000 users at Florida's ports, to include 7 year criminal background checks on each individual. In Tampa alone about 39,000 port badges have been issued. The Florida credential, created under Florida Statute 311.12, is vetted by both the FBI and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and is the model on which much of the TWIC is based. Federal officials and Florida officials have been working to resolve differences between the TWIC and the Florida credential. We are concerned about the apparent inability to integrate the Florida system with the Federal system which could lead to duplicative security checks, separate card reader systems and higher costs that hamper commerce without providing additional security for our seaports and the nation. A dual credential /

technology system requirement in Florida will be costly, inefficient, and will negatively disrupt the progress that has been accomplished in Florida to date.

I urge this Committee to review the issue of duplicative criminal history checks for port access, and require the development of a “one-card” criminal history vetting process for all U.S. seaports.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on these selected aspects of seaport security.