

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2006

The Honorable Peter T. King
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House Of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Peter King:

First, we want to thank the Chairman and the Committee for their efforts on H.R. 4954, the SAFE Port Act, a bill to improve the security of the United States' critical maritime assets. The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States and the Committee's report accompanying the bill have both noted, "While commercial aviation remains a possible target, terrorists may turn their attention to other modes of transportation. Opportunities to do harm are as great, or greater in maritime or surface transportation."

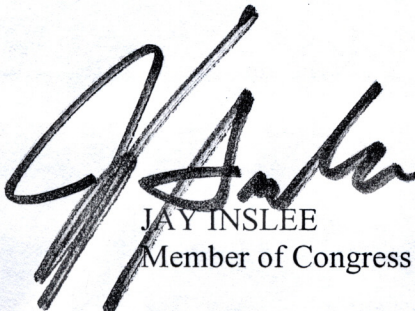
With this in mind, we wanted to draw the Committee's attention to an issue that we hope can be fixed in the manager's amendment to H.R. 4954. The language as currently written omits the use of funds for implementation and execution of facility and vessel security in the Port Security Grants program, reading as follows:

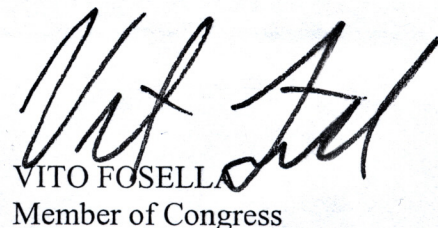
“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants awarded under this section may be used—
“(1) to help implement Area Maritime Transportation Security Plans required under section 70103(b) of title 46, United States Code;

We are asking the Committee to include section 70103(c) of title 46, United States Code, which covers Vessel and Facility Security Plans. This will allow for the use of Port Security Grant funds for critical infrastructure targets such as the Washington State Ferries service, the largest ferry fleet in the United States serving over 20 different terminals including the Port of Seattle, and the Staten Island Ferry, which handles over 65,000 people daily, which is one of New York's most popular tourist attractions, and provides the only direct transit link from Staten Island to Manhattan. The Staten Island Ferry is also the world's largest ferry system in terms of daily ridership along a single route.

It is our hope that this discrepancy can easily be fixed as we move forward in the legislative process.

Sincerely,


JAY INSLEE
Member of Congress


VITO FOSELLA
Member of Congress