

Seaport Security Federal Policy

Background:

Our nation's seaports are international borders and gateways to Florida and beyond. The federal government and Florida have spent millions to protect these gateways and prevent the introduction of harmful materials into the U.S. Florida seaports continue to work cooperatively with federal partners within the Department of Homeland Security – U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Customs and Border Protection – to ensure the protection of our nation against potentially grave danger.

Current Issue:

The federal Port Security Grant Program continues to be invaluable to all U.S. ports. In fiscal year 2016, Congress provided \$100 million for this program in a specific line-item, and urged an increase to authorization and appropriation levels to previous levels of \$400 million.

Florida is the cruise capital of the world and a leading port of entry for international cargo. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents are on the front line when this cargo and passengers enter our country. Not only is CBP short 500 officers in the U.S. maritime environment, but their current staffing level is inadequate to meet increased cargo and passenger flows.

Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology such as Radiation Portal Monitors and other security screening measures are an integral part of cargo and personnel scanning by CBP at U.S. seaports. This equipment helps ensure that ports comply with federal mandates to screen cargo and prevent nuclear or other radiological devices from entering the U.S. Many of these current radiological detection devices are in need of repair or replacement.

Recommendations:

The Florida Ports Council supports appropriations of **at least \$100 million for the Port Security Grant program in 2017.**

The Florida Ports Council **supports an increase in CBP funding and staffing resources specifically directed to maritime activities at seaports of entry.**

The Florida Ports Council recommends that Congress direct the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to **conduct a study on the costs of repair or replacement of NII technology at our seaports, as well as the introduction of additional technology to screen cargo and personnel.** The study should include a recommendation for a sustained and predictable federal funding source for such technology. (Note: Funds for existing Radiation Portal Monitors were appropriated by Congress to DHS.)