

Seaport Security State Policy

Background:

Florida'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 U.S. and Florida seaports. Florida seaport security directors continue to work cooperatively with our 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. Together, federal, state, local law enforcement, and security professionals conduct maritime risk assessments and seaport security plans that “promote the safety and security of the residents and visitors of the state and promote the flow of legitimate trade and travel.”

Current Issue:

The Florida Legislature created a Seaport Security Grant Program (see, s. 311.12, F.S.) for the purpose of assisting in the implementation of security plans and security measures at Florida seaports. Funds may be used for the purchase of equipment, infrastructure needs, cybersecurity programs and other security measures identified in a seaport's approved federal security plan.

Florida is the cruise capital of the world and a leading port of entry for international cargo. Like other passenger and cargo terminals around the country, we struggle with limited federal port security grant funds and federal law enforcement personnel to help secure these ports of entry.

Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology and other wireless technological security tools have enabled law enforcement and security forces at our seaports to compensate for limited federal agents and security measures.

Recommendations:

The Florida Ports Council recommends the **Florida Legislature appropriate at least \$700,000** for the Seaport Security Grant Program contained in section 311.12, F.S.

The Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Council (see, s. 311.09, F.S.) is required to review and approve any eligible projects identified as eligible for funding by security professionals at Florida's seaports. Any funds appropriated by the Legislature for this grant program would be subject to approval and audit under a statutory process.

The types of projects that would be submitted by Florida seaports for approval under this program include technology to allow for integration of law enforcement and security efforts between several seaports and other law enforcement personnel, wireless integration of cameras and other monitors with security forces at seaports, and other similar technology to improve cargo and passenger screening/monitoring efforts.