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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

May 18, 2006

Dear Senate Conferees:

We are writing this letter to urge that you support the \$227 million for port security grant funding included in the Senate passed bill as you proceed with the conference on H.R. 4939, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006. The additional \$227 million will provide for a total of \$400 million in port security grants for FY 2006 plus \$2 million for appropriate oversight and auditing.

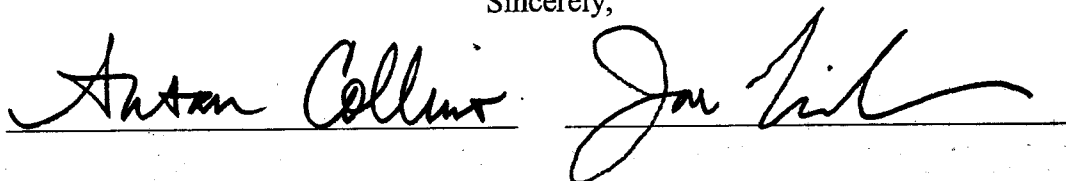
The Dubai Ports World controversy brought much needed attention to the critical issue of port security. While Congress moves forward with legislation to address enhancements to our nation's maritime security, identified needs in this area remain underfunded. The American Association of Port Authorities identified a funding level of \$400 million needed to implement the requirements of the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) and address port security priorities. Over the past four years, Congress has consistently provided increasing levels of funding to defray these costs, but it has not been enough.

The funding needs this year are even more critical. As the Department of Homeland Security begins to issue Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) cards to maritime workers, port authorities and facilities face significant additional costs to deploy new biometric access control systems. Deployment of these systems will be priority projects under the port security grant program. While issuing TWIC cards and conducting the required background checks will result in greater security comfort, true physical security at our ports will not be reached without implementing the next step of deploying access control systems.

During consideration of the FY 2007 Budget Resolution, the Senate accepted an amendment offered by Senators Collins and Lieberman including this funding. In addition, just two weeks ago, the House passed port security legislation authorizing \$400 million for port security grants, and legislation in the Senate will also consider this funding level.

America's sea ports, large and small, are our partners in keeping our nation safe and our economy moving. We believe this funding is crucial to enhancing our nation's security and must be provided as part of this Emergency Supplemental bill.

Sincerely,



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