

Talking Points: FY2012 Defense Authorization Amendments

Tuesday, May 24, 2011

Amendments 183 and 184, Strategic Ports

I want to thank the Committee for its consideration of my amendments here today. I especially want to thank Congresswoman Bordallo for her support of my first two amendments on Strategic Ports.

I have two amendments before the Committee that will help a National Program, the Strategic Seaports Program that contains 20 ports from around the Nation and the Pacific.

My first amendment, Amendment #184, would authorize funding for maintenance and infrastructure improvements to DOD- Designated Strategic Ports.

No one can argue that our Nation's Strategic Ports are not critically important and that they don't need to maintain and improve infrastructure to allow for efficient movement of our military forces and supplies

The 2008 Defense Authorization Bill directed a study on how to fully utilize our Strategic Ports, and while this study noted several problems and made recommendations, it did **not** look at **infrastructure** needs even though agencies participating in the study knew and

acknowledged that dealing with improving port infrastructure is something that is critical to National Defense.

The 2011 Defense Authorization Bill, recognizing the need to look at infrastructure issues, added report language directing the 2008 study to be expanded to examine the state of infrastructure in and around our Strategic Ports. I believe that our Colleague, Congresswoman Laura Richardson, intends to offer an amendment with the report language from the 2011 bill, as bill text, to the 2012 bill.

I believe we need a straight authorization of appropriations to address critical Strategic Port infrastructure needs if our military is going to be able to respond quickly and forcefully to defend this Nation.

If there simply is not sufficient support for the authorization of funds at this time, Ms. Bordallo and I offer Amendment #183, an enhanced, additional study provision that calls for not only a study of infrastructure problems and needs in and around our strategic ports, but it requires an assessment of what the infrastructure problems and needs are that directly and indirectly relate to the military use of those ports, and to study what the impacts on our military readiness will be if those improvements are not made.

I believe we are ready to fund these port improvements, and must make cuts to the security of our DOD-Designated Strategic Ports. In my mind, no further study is necessary, and I would urge my colleagues to invest in these infrastructure needs and improvements.

However, at the very least, we should have a good report and assessment of the needs so that we can eventually invest in these important ports.