

SECURITY IN THE NATION'S PORTS AND ON THE WATERWAYS

“Management of Seaport Security Priorities”

by

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Since September 11th, the total fabric of the seaport community has been tested to continue to perform our main mission of moving international commerce. Tested in the face of committing our total energies to the protection of our borders from terrorism threats.

We have developed a competing priority to our traditional role of moving commerce in the form of providing security to our borders. These competing priorities seemingly are compatible today. But, a failure to respond in a timely fashion to seaport security funding issues could create a short-term conflicting priorities. Why? The modern seaport manager has been instilled with the modern-day seaport culture of creating jobs, providing an efficient service model to the customer and moving commerce “just in time” to market.

But also, the stormy, swirling seas of seaport security have determined a new role for the seaport manager. The commitments associated with providing harbor safety, cargo and passenger inspections, landside access controls, modern gateways equipped with container screening capability, physical infrastructure barriers and security personnel forces seems never to achieve satisfactory response levels. Faced with multiple demands from the public domain, the seaport manager is scrambling for the financial resources to respond to the terrorism threat. To respond to the demands of the public domain for seaport security, the seaport manager is throwing all resources in all shapes and forms into the fray of providing protection, deterrence, and prevention in the hopes that these temporary, short-term gap measures are adequate responses to the unknown and undefined threats.

And yes, this is being accomplished with funds previously committed to the seaport customer and the modern culture of moving commerce. We are committing resources to security that traditionally would be used for moving commerce. We are swimming in these stormy, swirling seas of seaport security waiting for the federal commitment to its proper role in the resourcing of harbor safety, waterside access to seaports, cargo screening and providing trained seaport security forces.

And yes, the failure to provide proper funding resources in a timely fashion to the seaport security model will ultimately create a failure in the transportation model for international commerce. We must balance the security needs at seaports with the needs of commerce to move goods efficiently and with economic viability.

The seaports in Florida can testify to the stormy, swirling seas of seaport security. Let us tell you!!

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The State of Florida has created minimum standards for seaport security – the objectives of seaport security plans prior to September 11th were concerned with crime prevention and access control to restricted areas at seaports.

After September 11th, Florida’s seaports were swept into those stormy, swirling seas, and we have reacted mightily to meet the several tests of security in these many ways:

1. Upon mandate of state law enforcement, we employed (yes, hired) local law enforcement at our seaports to provide arrest powers. (This recurring cost to be paid by seaports and ultimately, their users.)
2. Upon mandate of the federal government (U.S. Coast Guard), we had to augment cruise ship security by authorizing Florida National Guard forces to provide terminal protection and passenger screening. This cost to be paid by the State of Florida and its seaports will continue until proper funding of U.S. Coast Guard forces.
3. Upon mandate of state law, seaport security plans are in place subject to audit and implementation of vulnerability assessments partially performed by U.S. Coast Guard, state law enforcement and consultants hired by the seaports. Yes, we are ready for federal funds.
4. Upon mandate of state law, we are conducting background checks and fingerprinting seaport workers. Also, we are badging all who desire access to our seaports – thus placing truck drivers and private sector movements into conflicting requirements for the conduct of business and the movement of commerce. Time and money expense are at risk to our private sector users of seaport facilities in an environment that acts too hastily to enforce inefficient security practices.
5. Upon mandate of state law, seaport managers will prepare “production ready” security plans awaiting federal funding for a host of physical infrastructure and security technology implementations designed to secure the seaport and its restricted terminals. Proper funding of security infrastructure and technology will mitigate the expense of security forces.
6. The intent of proposed federal legislation and enacted state law seems to ignore the “duality of security”-- that is, the mandated security improvements made by the public domain and the mandated security improvements made by the private sector to terminals and vessels required by their P&O insurance providers. Clearly there are management practices and associated risk evaluations made by the private sector associated with insured risk coverage. The question needs to be asked by the public security domain if such practices can be integrated into an efficient

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seaport security model.

Seaports are diverse, and each seaport will have different security applications. Innovative solutions to each seaport security environment must be developed by all parties working together.

I believe that the key to the solutions is not unfulfilled legislative mandates, but rather legislative guidelines which allow jurisdictional federal agencies, state law enforcement agencies, public management at seaports, and the private sector terminals operating at seaports to manage seaport security with Best Management Practices.

Legislative guidelines should provide the following:

1. Establish minimum standards for the several security issues required by each seaport;
2. Provide an atmosphere of self-regulation at seaports in achieving these standards by Best Management Practices;
3. Incentivize the private sector to engage with the public domain to achieve a true partnership in protecting our borders and defining Best Management Practices;
4. Provide for the training of seaport security personnel in best management practices – providing a 75-25 match between the federal government and seaports for the cost of such personnel to be located on seaports; and
5. Provide that legislative intent is to ensure that seaport security and moving commerce are competing, compatible priorities in order to ensure the safety, security and economic viability of moving international commerce in today’s global commerce.

We have a collective, national test. Failure to throw a financial lifeline in a timely manner to seaport management swimming in the stormy, swirling seas of seaport security could result in conflicting priorities in the movement of commerce – thus resulting in the development of impediments to our economy and global trade. The solution is apparent. We must work together to determine the best management practices for an efficient security model at the nation’s seaports, and in so doing, we must balance the needs for mobility, security, and economic viability at our seaports.

Thank You.