U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard

Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2100 Second Street, S. W.
Washington, DC 20593-0001
Staff Symbol: CG-00
Phone: (202) 372-4400
Fax: (202) 372-4960

5730
JUL 23 2008

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye:

This letter sets forth the Coast Guard's views on S. 3198.

The transnational drug trafficking organizations' use of self-propelled semi-submersible (SPSS) vessels to transport cocaine and other illicit cargo to the United States is an increasing threat for which there is no adequate remedy in current law.

From the Coast Guard's perspective, the essential elements of effective anti-SPSS legislation must include: (1) a definition of SPSS that will be difficult for transnational criminals to circumvent, but will not have an adverse effect on legitimate vessel operators or domestic hobbyists; (2) criminalizing the operation of or embarkation in stateless SPSS's (and submarines) on international voyages; and (3) a penalty provision that delivers consequences commensurate with traditional maritime drug trafficking activity even absent the seizure or recovery of contraband from the SPSS. If S. 3198 were amended to include a penalty provision, the measure would fully satisfy each of these elements. As such, the Coast Guard would strongly support the bill.

I join the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy in their view that the criminalization of operating or embarking stateless SPSS's on international voyages is imperative. I would be pleased to work with you, the other Members of the Committee, and your staffs to ensure that Congress enacts this vital legislation as expeditiously as possible.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that, from the viewpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the presentation of this letter to Congress. An identical letter has also been sent to Vice Chairman Stevens.

Thank you sir!

Sincerely,

THAD W. ALLEN
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard

Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2100 Second Street, S. W.
Washington, DC 20593-0001
Staff Symbol: CG-00
Phone: (202) 372-4400
Fax: (202) 372-4960

5730

JUL 23 2008

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Vice Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Vice Chairman Stevens:

This letter sets forth the Coast Guard's views on S. 3198.

The transnational drug trafficking organizations' use of self-propelled semi-submersible (SPSS) vessels to transport cocaine and other illicit cargo to the United States is an increasing threat for which there is no adequate remedy in current law.

From the Coast Guard's perspective, the essential elements of effective anti-SPSS legislation must include: (1) a definition of SPSS that will be difficult for transnational criminals to circumvent, but will not have an adverse effect on legitimate vessel operators or domestic hobbyists; (2) criminalizing the operation of or embarkation in stateless SPSS's (and submarines) on international voyages; and (3) a penalty provision that delivers consequences commensurate with traditional maritime drug trafficking activity even absent the seizure or recovery of contraband from the SPSS. If S. 3198 were amended to include a penalty provision, the measure would fully satisfy each of these elements. As such, the Coast Guard would strongly support the bill.

I join the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy in their view that the criminalization of operating or embarking stateless SPSS's on international voyages is imperative. I would be pleased to work with you, the other Members of the Committee, and your staffs to ensure that Congress enacts this vital legislation as expeditiously as possible.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that, from the viewpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the presentation of this letter to Congress. An identical letter has also been sent to Chairman Inouye.

Thank you sir.

Sincerely,

THAD W. ALLEN
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant