



February 29, 2008

Chairman David E. Price
Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Room B-307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price:

As you know, there are a variety of troubling cutbacks in President Bush's 2009 budget. I write today to address one of these issues, the cuts in the Port Security Grant Program.

The SAFE Port Act authorized \$400 million to be appropriated for each of the fiscal years 2007 through 2011. Unfortunately, the President's FY 2009 budget only requested \$210 million for the Port Security Grant Program. These drastic cuts are a setback to port security improvements, caused by a White House that talks tough about fighting terrorism but consistently refuses to invest in security upgrades.

Our maritime and port facilities face a variety of challenges. Perimeter security is often weak because many ports lack adequate fencing and cameras. Requirements for employee training and exercises specifically mandated by the Safe Port Act have yet to be implemented. Some facilities need additional security personnel while others do not check empty containers or seals.

America's ports play a critical role in our national economy. They handle 99 percent of the volume of cargo moving into and leaving our country. These facilities provide employment to thousands of workers in the longshore and maritime industries. An attack on port or maritime facilities would put thousands of people out of work and harm our fragile economy.

Unfortunately, years after the September 11th terrorist attacks our ports still face far too many security challenges. The longshore and maritime workers represented by the unions affiliated with TTD, as well as the entire transportation labor movement, understand that our port and maritime network is still too vulnerable to attack. I urge you to ensure that Port Security Grants are fully funded at the level established in the Safe Port Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', written over a white background.

Edward Wytkind
President

cc: The Honorable Harold Rogers