

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF AMERICA'S
WATERWAY WATCH PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 14, 2007.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. OBERSTAR, from the Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H. Res. 549]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, to whom was referred the resolution (H. Res. 549) recognizing the importance of America's Waterway Watch program, and for other purposes, having considered the same report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the resolution be agreed to.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

H. Res. 549 recognizes the importance of the America's Waterway Watch program.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The America's Waterway Watch program was developed by the United States Coast Guard to encourage ordinary residents to assist in enhancing the security of tunnels, bridges, ports, ships, military bases, coasts, and other water-related resources. The program, similar to the well known Neighborhood Watch program, focuses on marine-related areas and compliments existing waterfront watch programs.

The United States has more than 290,000 square miles of water and more than 95,000 miles of shoreline. At any time, terrorists have the ability to target coastlines, rivers, ships, tunnels, bridges, ports, waterside industries, and military bases. The Coast Guard and local first responders are charged with protecting these areas, but given limited resources, cannot do it alone.

Through the America's Waterway Watch program, the Coast Guard and its Reserve and Auxiliary components conduct outreach

efforts to people who live, work, or play around America's waterfront areas. These efforts include outreach to fishermen, marina operators, longshoremen, tow boat crews, pilots, beach goers, waterfront homeowners, and over 70 million recreational boaters. The program gives people specific examples of where to look, what to look for, and what to do if a suspicious activity is discovered.

Millions of brochures, wallet cards, and posters have been distributed to recreational boaters, marine dealers, marinas, and other businesses located near our waterways. The educational material encourages participants to report suspicious activities to the Coast Guard and other law enforcement agencies by calling 911 or 877-24WATCH. This centralized national phone number is manned 24 hours a day; 7 days a week.

In 2003, a potential terrorist incident was thwarted when a merchant mariner, who was aware of the America's Waterway Watch program, called the hotline because he observed suspicious activity. Sayed Abdul Malike, a suspected terrorist with known connections to Al Qaeda, asked Captain John Martin unusual questions and took pictures as the boat transited under Miami, Florida's I-95 bridge. Captain Martin's call led to the investigation of Malike and his eventual apprehension in Brooklyn, New York, the same year.

The program acts as a force multiplier for the Coast Guard and local law enforcement and gives normal citizens the ability to act as the eyes and ears of our waterways in a way that is both meaningful and productive. It is an excellent way for citizens to contribute to America's homeland security.

SUMMARY OF THE LEGISLATION

H. Res. 549 recognizes the importance of the Coast Guard's America's Waterway Watch program. The program is a maritime security public outreach effort that encourages 70 million recreational boaters and others who live, work, or play around America's waterways to have a heightened sense of awareness and report suspicious or unusual activities in the maritime domain to the Coast Guard National Response Center or other law enforcement agencies.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On July 16, 2007, Representative Bilirakis introduced House Resolution 549.

On August 2, 2007, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure met in open session and ordered H. Res. 549 reported favorably to the House by voice vote.

RECORD VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the House of Representatives requires each committee report to include the total number of votes cast for and against on each record vote on a motion to report and on any amendment offered to the measure or matter, and the names of those members voting for and against. There were no recorded votes taken in connection with ordering H. Res. 549 reported. A motion to order H. Res. 549 reported favorably to the House was agreed to by voice vote with a quorum present.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in this report.

COST OF LEGISLATION

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(d)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H. Res. 549 is a resolution of the House of Representatives and therefore does not have the force of law. As such, there is no cost associated with this resolution for fiscal year 2007, or for any fiscal year thereafter.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, and 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee advises that the resolution contains no measure that authorizes funding, so no comparison of the total estimated funding level for the relevant programs to the appropriate levels under current law is required.

2. With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee advises that the resolution contains no measure that authorizes funding, so no statement of general performance and objectives for any measure that authorizes funding is required.

3. With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee advises that the resolution contains no measure that authorizes funding. Neither a cost estimate nor comparison for any measure that authorizes funding is required.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XXI

Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H. Res. 549 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

With respect to (3)(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H. Res. 549 is a resolution of the House of Representatives and therefore does not have the force of law. As such, clause (3)(d)(1) of rule XIII does not apply.

FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

H. Res. 549 contains no Federal mandates.

PREEMPTION CLARIFICATION

Section 423 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 requires the report of any Committee on a bill or joint resolution to include a statement on the extent to which the bill or joint resolution is intended to preempt state, local, or tribal law. The Committee states that H. Res. 549 does not preempt any state, local, or tribal law.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act are created by this resolution.

APPLICABILITY TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the resolution does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act (Public Law 104-1).

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

H. Res. 549 makes no changes in existing law.

