

**3616 UNITED MARINER**  
**HARTLAND DRIVE**  
**NEW PORT RICHEY FL,34655**  
[unitedmariner@yahoo.com](mailto:unitedmariner@yahoo.com) [www.geocities.com/unitedmariner](http://www.geocities.com/unitedmariner)  
**Phone: 727-534-4081**

Dear Mariner:

The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004 was passed by the house in August. It goes to the Senate to allocate \$ 8,167,610,000 to the missions of USCG. \$24,200,000 of that amount will go toward research, development, test and evaluation. How much of that \$24,200,000 actually will go to the REC's budget is a good question. Keep in mind that about \$6,000,000 returns to the general fund from fees collected for licenses, MMD, and other mariner related charges. H.R. 2443 authorizes funds for many areas of security and marine transportation. Those directly affecting us include:

Section 402. Removal of mandatory revocation for proved drug convictions in suspension and revocation cases— gives the Coast Guard discretion to take actions other than revocation of merchant mariner's credentials in cases involving minor drug offenses.

Section 403. Records of merchant mariners' documents— strikes the prohibition on "general or public inspection" of merchant mariners' documents (MMDs).

Section 407. Revision of temporary suspension criteria in document suspension and revocation cases— allows the Coast Guard to temporarily suspend or revoke a merchant mariner's credentials if the mariner has been convicted of certain National Driver Register Act offenses.

Section 408. Revision of bases for document suspension and revocation cases—allows the Coast Guard to suspend or revoke a merchant mariner's credentials if the mariner commits an act of incompetence, or presents a security risk.

Section 409. Hours of service on towing vessels— allows the Coast Guard to prescribe regulations governing maximum hours of service for individuals working on a towing vessel.

Section 410. Electronic charts— requires certain classes of vessels to be equipped with and be able to operate electronic navigational charts.

Section 415. Inspection of towing vessels— allows the Coast Guard to prescribe regulations to require the inspection of towing vessels.

Section 416. Potable water— requires vessels subject to inspection by the Coast Guard to have an adequate supply of potable water for drinking and washing.

Section 611. Merchant Mariners' documents pilot program— authorizes the Coast Guard in the areas it is operating in to establish a pilot program to improve processing and procedures for issuing merchant mariners' documents.

To review H.R. 2443. You can find it under reports at: <http://www.house.gov/transportation>

Section 611 was included in the report due to our efforts, your letters to your representatives and the assistance provided by the folks at the Gulf Coast Mariners Association, AWO and MIRAID. 611 is a testimonial to what can be accomplished when Management, labor and government work together toward a common goal.

Now that the USCG has authorization for a pilot program our challenge will be to convince them that it is in everyone's best interest to allow mariners to work through their grace period. We believe Section 611's purpose was to provide USCG with that authority. To accomplish this will take some doing. We need to keep our interest in their focus. I am planning to attend the September 28-29, 2004 TSAC meeting in Washington DC for that reason. I will try to attend the

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NY Harbor Operations meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Anyone wishing to join me give me a call for more information.

Frank Lobiondo is the chairman of USCG Maritime Transportation Subcommittee. A letter to him addressing your REC experiences would be helpful. Ask him to support our efforts "right to work through the grace period".

Frank Lobiondo  
U.S. House of Representatives  
507 FHOB Washington DC 20515

USCG has requested approval from the Office of Management and Budget to conduct a "Customer Satisfaction Survey" I am attempting to get a copy and forwarding information so you can voice your opinions.

Your right to free movement: CFR 33 105.200 specifies facility security requirements for shore side plants which we must pass through in order to conduct boat business. Your crew change, grub shopping, personal shore leaves, boat supplies and administrative business are provided for by 105.200. CFR paragraph b7 states that facilities must; "Ensure that an identification system is established for checking the identification of facility personal or other persons seeking access to the facility. Allows temporary or continuing access for facility personal and visitors, including seafarers, chaplain and union representatives, through the use of a badge or other system to verify their identity.

Several people have contacted me concerning my suggested "job action". I realize that the REC renewal delay problem is one issue we all agree on. The mariner, owner and even the Coast Guard all have a common concern. It is not my intention to promote any action that would cause a work slow down or any monetary lose to anyone. That would only alienate those who have been most supportive and prove defeating to our efforts. I would like to point out that loses from a couple of minutes of transportation time will be pennies compared to future monetary loses should USCG REC renewal delays continue.

Some have asked me why I have taken this on. My number one reason is; I was asked to look into the REC problem by Local 333 after the Union received complaints about REC delays and disrespectful treatment toward it's members; The industry has provided me with a lifetime carrier. Why not help out those who have helped me; I'm old school. Like many of us I have come up through the hawsepipe from a time when men in this industry stood together. I think we still can, many still do; Mariners deserve the right to voice their professional opinion in the rule making that affects their future. When I leave I would like to see a better place then the industry I entered for the young men and women who choose the towing industry as a carrier.

This was passed on to me and I would like to pass it along to you in closing:

**The Long Rangers Creed**

That all men are created equal and that everyone has within himself the power to make this a better place.

That God put the firewood there but that every man must gather and light it himself.

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In being prepared physically, mentally, and morally to fight when necessary for that which is right.

That man should make the most of what equipment he has.

That this government, of the people, by the people, and for the people shall live always

That man should live by the rule of what is best for the greatest number.

Respectfully Yours  
Joseph Dady