

March 17, 2006- Sanchez Visits LA/Long Beach Port

Sanchez Reviews Port Operations at Los Angeles and Long Beach Ports

LONG BEACH, CA - Rep. Loretta Sanchez, Ranking Member of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection and Cybersecurity, joined Rep. Dan Lungren (R-Sacramento) and other local, state and federal homeland security officials for a tour of security operations at Long Beach and Los Angeles ports. The delegation was briefed by the U.S. Coast Guard on the day-to-day security operations at both ports, including the inspection of all cargo containers.

Sanchez, a long-time port security advocate has pushed for increased federal funding for improved security measures at our nation's ports to protect Americans against potential acts of terrorism.

Sanchez stressed the importance of unified coordination and policy in port security particularly the inspection process. "I think the federal government needs to provide more coordination, regulations and resources for you. It is critical that the government upgrade the Container Security Initiative (CSI) and the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) programs to ensure that unknown or hazardous cargo does not enter our ports. Improving these policies will also ensure compliance from our international trade partners and protection from terrorism."

The Orange County Congresswoman also noted the need to increase customs officials to oversee the more than 12,000 containers that arrive at the ports each day. Currently, 80 Homeland Security inspectors check incoming cargo and deal with more than 10,000 companies that arrive at the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports.

Sanchez has co-sponsored the "Security and Accountability For Every (SAFE) Port Act" that would:

- Streamline \$400 million for port security grants.
- Require DHS to conduct terrorist watch-list checks of all port employees with access to secure areas.
- Ensure 100 percent of containers are scanned for radiation.
- Provide risk-based funding through a dedicated Port Security Grant Program to harden U.S.ports against terrorist attacks and enhance capabilities to respond to attacks and resume operations.
- Require the Secretary of DHS to develop protocols for resuming trade after a transportation security incident.