

## May 11, 2004- Democrats to Introduce Bill to Improve Security at Ports

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2004 MEDIA ADVISORY Democrats to Introduce Secure Coast Act to Increase Cargo Security at Ports

Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez , Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Security, Congressman Jim Turner, Ranking Member of the Committee, and House Democrats will introduce a bill tomorrow to improve port and cargo security throughout the United States .

Sanchez will introduce the Secure Containers from Overseas And Seaports from Terrorism Act, or Secure COAST Act, to ensure the security of the American coastline from terrorist attack.

The Secure COAST Act will:

- Set sealing standards for containers and a verification process to ensure containers are tamper-proof;
- Require installation of portal monitors at seaports and other ports of entry before September 30, 2005 and authorizes \$297 million in the FY2005 budget for this process;
- Provide \$537 million dollars in FY2005 for port security grants, \$491 above the Administration's request.
- Accelerate the completion of the Coast Guard's Deepwater program to provide new ships to the fleet from 22 to 10 years and build Coast Guard personnel levels to 50,000 people, almost a 25% increase from current levels.

"Ports are a prime target for terrorist attack, and yet this Administration has not done all it can to protect thousands of miles of coastline and millions of cargo containers entering this country each year. We must move faster to prevent our communities and the global economy from the impact of an attack at a U.S. port," stated Turner.

The legislation will be accompanied by America at Risk: Closing the Port Security Gap, a report updating material first introduced by Democrats in advance of the Department of Homeland Security's first anniversary on March 1.

The Secure COAST Act is the second in a comprehensive set of bills to be release by Homeland Security Democrats. Details are available at [www.house.gov/hsc/democrats](http://www.house.gov/hsc/democrats).