

LORAN—ACTION ALERT

Background – In recent years, Congress has appropriated approximately \$160 million -- including FY 06 funding of \$17.5 million in resources -- to the FAA and the Coast Guard to modernize the LORAN infrastructure under an existing Interagency Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the agencies. Recapitalization funding has been provided through the FAA budget and the Coast Guard budget has been provided resources of approximately \$27 million annually to operate the LORAN system.

In FY 06, in the report accompanying the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations bill which includes the Coast Guard operations funding, the Committee again reaffirmed the importance and benefits of LORAN and its support for continuing and completing the recapitalization effort (H. Report 109-79, page 61).

It is imperative to strengthen and protect our critical infrastructure consistent with national transportation safety and security interests. LORAN does that job by providing a reliable, cost-effective backup to the global positioning system (GPS) in multiple marine, transportation, military and other operations. Significantly, from a maritime perspective, the National Boating Federation (NBF), representing million of boaters, has been a strong, consistent advocate in support of maritime LORAN as a backup to GPS.

Issue: *Issue: In its FY 07 budget submission to Congress, the Coast Guard has proposed terminating LORAN. It is recommended that boaters oppose this proposal.*

Status - Numerous infrastructure safety and efficiency improvement projects have been completed at many of the 24 transmitter stations nationwide and other projects necessary to complete the modernization effort are also underway. When the work is finished, LORAN infrastructure O&M costs may be reduced by nearly 50% and total system operating costs are expected to be about \$15 million annually.

In recent years, repeated technical and economic studies by government agencies, academics, industry and others have provided convincing evidence supporting retention of LORAN as a valuable national asset to backup satellite navigation technology. In fact, Coast Guard representatives, along with an expert panel of academics, industry representatives, FAA officials and others participated in the most comprehensive technical evaluation ever undertaken to examine LORAN. That evaluation validated that LORAN meets marine requirements for harbor entrance and approach, aviation requirements for non-precision approach, and provides significant time and frequency capabilities; positive and favorable results confirmed by the DOT Secretary in letters to members of Congress.

Most significantly, the Administration's Space-Based Positioning, Navigation and Timing Policy announced just over a year ago identifies the need for backups. The policy mandates close coordination between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and DOT, as well as other Departments and Agencies in supporting the policy and related policy decisions related to critical homeland security, transportation and other civil and commercial infrastructure applications within the United States in the national interest. ***The Coast Guard's FY budget proposal to terminate LORAN was not coordinated with DOT, DOD or others as mandated by the Policy.***

Recent developments - In July 2005 the Coast Guard was advised by the *Military's missile Range Commanders Council (RCC)* that the organization supports the enhanced LORAN initiative. The RCC values LORAN as an alternative to the Global Positioning System (GPS) as a source of timing and frequency data and wants to see the work successfully completed. ***During 2005, there were important developments internationally.*** The draft European Radio Navigation Plan (ERNP) was released and listed LORAN as core technology for the European Union (EU) and it suggested a path to extend coverage to all of Europe. As further evidence of the future export potential for U.S. LORAN technology, the United Kingdom and France have announced long term support for LORAN as a backup to GPS and Norway has reversed a plan to stand down its numerous transmitters. Canada, Europe, Russia and the Far East, including Japan, Korea and China have widespread LORAN coverage.

Requested Action - It is requested that letters be sent to Senators and members of the U.S. House of Representatives urging that Congress provide the Coast Guard FY 07 resources necessary to continue operating and supporting the LORAN system and; that Congress continue to support completion of the LORAN modernization initiative and retention of LORAN for the long term future in the interest of national security and safety.

Your House Members/Senators information can be obtained at:

Senate: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

House: <http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml>