

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 18, 2010

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Department of Homeland Security  
301 7th Street SW, Mail Stop 0150  
Washington, DC 20528-0150

Admiral Thad Allen  
Commandant  
United States Coast Guard  
470 L'Enfant Plaza East, Room 7110  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Secretary Napolitano and Admiral Allen:

We are writing in strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts to the Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST). As you know the President's proposed FY 2011 budget would eliminate five of the twelve MSSTs, including MSST 91108 St. Marys.

MSSTs were created in strategic locations as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and developed to meet a shortfall in capability in maritime security. Given the critical missions that MSSTs perform we were surprised that the President's budget would target MSST 91108 St. Marys for closure, especially in light of the attempted terrorist attack less than two months ago. As you know Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay is a high profile ballistic missile submarine base and is in very close proximity to Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Florida. The Department of Defense recently decided to homeport a nuclear powered aircraft carrier at Naval Station Mayport in the near future. MSST 91108 St. Marys is strategically located within four hours of the ports from Charleston, South Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. Efficient and effective homeland security requires quick reaction time, and the consolidation of bases that the President is proposing would leave the East Coast vulnerable with response teams only in Miami, Florida, Chesapeake Bay, Virginia, and Boston, Massachusetts. Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay and the Camden County, Georgia area also offer a very low cost of living for our men and women in the Coast Guard.

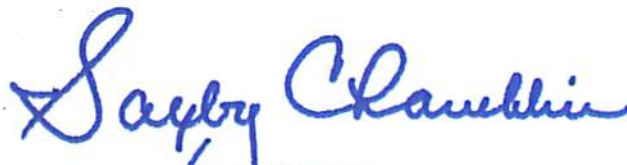
The decision to eliminate MSST 91108 St. Marys does not make sense from a strategic or budgetary perspective and we strongly urge you to reconsider this plan. We also ask that you direct your staff to brief our offices and share with us the metrics and criteria used in making this decision. We do not believe the President should cut any MSST teams given the critical nature of their missions and the capabilities they provide for the anti-terrorism mission of the Department of Homeland Security. Should the Administration choose to proceed with this plan, we are prepared to work with our colleagues in other affected communities to prevent this plan from moving forward.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this issue, and look forward to your response. Should you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or Michael Quiello (Isakson), Tyler Stephens (Chambliss), and Meg Gilley (Kingston) in our offices.

Sincerely,



Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator



Saxby Chambliss  
United States Senator



Jack Kingston  
Member of Congress