

SENATE RESOLUTION 246—TO EXPRESS THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE MISSIONS AND PERFORMANCE OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD IN RESPONDING TO HURRICANE KATRINA

Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. INOUE, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. LOTT, and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 246

Whereas the United States Coast Guard has been charged by Congress with missions central to protecting the lives and well-being of individuals and communities in the United States, including protecting homeland security, conducting search and rescue of lives in danger, protecting marine environments from pollution, maintaining maritime safety and aids to navigation, enforcing Federal fishing laws, and intercepting illegal drugs and migrants before they reach our shores;

Whereas the Coast Guard anticipated the potential for significant loss of life and property as Hurricane Katrina approached Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama and made landfall on August 29, 2005 and, in advance of the storm, relocated its personnel, vessels, and aircraft out of harm's way;

Whereas Hurricane Katrina made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane with winds reaching 175 miles per hour and massive storm surges, the combination of which left a trail of devastation unprecedented on United States soil, as it leveled countless homes, businesses, and other structures, displaced millions of people from their communities, and otherwise made coastal urban and rural areas unliveable;

Whereas the Coast Guard immediately deployed nearly 1,000 personnel, including captains, crew, pilots, rescue swimmers, pollution response teams, and other specialists and reservists, from stations all over the country, to coastal areas affected by the hurricane, for a total regional force size of approximately 3,619 personnel;

Whereas Coast Guard personnel who had never personally worked together before began to work as teams to conduct and coordinate search and rescue operations while Hurricane Katrina continued to bear down on the central Gulf of Mexico shoreline;

Whereas the Coast Guard rescued or evacuated 33,544 individuals as of September 21, 2005, a number that represents eight times the number of lives saved by the Coast Guard in an average year;

Whereas three Coast Guard pollution response Strike Teams responded to 1,129 pollution incidents as of September 20, 2005, which include total discharges of more than 7 million gallons of oil, unknown amounts of sewage, and unknown quantities of other toxic chemicals, and the Coast Guard has contained or otherwise closed 426 of these cases;

Whereas Coast Guard buoy tenders have responded to 964 discrepancies in buoys and other aids to navigation and have restored 39 of 48 critical aids to navigation as of September 21, 2005;

Whereas the costs of responding to Hurricane Katrina have depleted the Coast Guard's operations and maintenance budget for fiscal year 2005 and are rapidly depleting

its budget for fiscal year 2006, and the Coast Guard's costs associated with this hurricane are anticipated to exceed \$500 million;

Whereas the Coast Guard performed its hurricane response missions largely with outdated legacy assets, increasing the wear and tear on these assets while foregoing regularly scheduled maintenance activities in the interest of sustaining its surge in life-saving operations;

Whereas the Coast Guard already conducts its missions with the 40th oldest fleet of the 42 nations with Coast Guard or naval fleets;

Whereas the Coast Guard's program, known as Deepwater, for modernizing its fleet of vessels and aircraft, is vital for increasing the capabilities in performing its missions in the face of ever-increasing natural and human threats;

Whereas the Deepwater program requires sustained Federal funding commitments in order for the citizens of the United States to realize the benefits of the Coast Guard having state-of-the-art vessels, aircraft, technologies, and interoperable communication equipment;

Whereas in addition to covering operation and maintenance costs of a rapidly aging fleet, the Coast Guard needs to rebuild several Coast Guard facilities in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, including Station Gulfport which was completely destroyed and where personnel are now working in trailers amidst the ruins of that station;

Whereas the Coast Guard needs a strong Federal funding commitment to ensure that all of its unexpected expenditures during its response to Katrina are reimbursed;

Whereas more than 700 Coast Guard personnel stationed in the Gulf region lost their homes and all personal property and are now living on overcrowded Coast Guard vessels and in makeshift shelters;

Whereas before, during, and after the landfall of Hurricane Katrina, Coast Guard personnel exhibited determination and a full commitment to their missions, and the Coast Guard has proven to be one of the most resourceful and capable services in the United States government;

Whereas before, during, and after the landfall of Hurricane Katrina, Coast Guard personnel performed their missions with the highest level of bravery and self-sacrifice, and their effectiveness in performing their missions is unparalleled in the United States government;

Whereas the Coast Guard has an operational and command structure that allowed it to quickly take a leadership role in saving lives, without waiting for instruction or permission to act;

Whereas the Coast Guard's operational and command structure continues to serve as a model for other agencies that need to respond quickly to large-scale natural and man-made disasters;

Whereas the Coast Guard's effective leadership in responding to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and the appointment of Vice Admiral Thad Allen as the primary Federal officer in charge of this response, is helping to restore the public's confidence in the Federal response effort: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Senate That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the United States Coast Guard should receive Congress's highest commendation for its tremendous and highly effective response to the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina;

(2) the United States Congress should commit to providing the Coast Guard with the resources it needs to modernize and maintain its fleet of vessels and aircraft; and

(3) the Administration should ensure that the Coast Guard receives sufficient funding

to cover its unexpected operational and capital costs associated with Hurricane Katrina.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to commend and praise the extraordinary response of the U.S. Coast Guard to Hurricane Katrina, to demonstrate why that response exemplifies the imperative of providing that service with the modern assets required to carry out these lifesaving missions, and to submit a resolution recognizing the awe-inspiring efforts of the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard.

I just visited the gulf coast region on Monday with the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Tom Collins, and we were guided by Eighth District Commander ADM Robert Duncan. What I saw and heard on that day is a story of heroism and a relentless can-do attitude that is nothing short of miraculous. The human spirit I witnessed was truly transcendent and a level I had never before experienced.

As we well know, Hurricane Katrina was the worst natural disaster ever to visit itself upon the United States, with an almost unimaginable magnitude of devastation and loss. The scale of the destruction has been most horrifically reflected in the faces of those we have seen over the past week, faces etched with an indelible and almost unimaginable sorrow, suffering, and burden. Their images have reverberated throughout a country in solidarity with their terrible plight. In Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama lives have been forever transformed along with the landscape, as we have witnessed untold scenes of homes that no longer exist, floods that ravaged entire neighborhoods and cities, fires that consumed what remains of buildings, and men, women, and children missing loved ones. We have also seen and heard the stories of those individuals who have rushed to the aid of our fellow man, demonstrating that no human or natural act can deprive us of our unyielding and singularly determined spirit. While the hurricane winds and rain have long since dissipated—and now we have anticipation of Hurricane Rita—we all have the collective concern and strength of this Nation that continues unabated, unbroken, undaunted, and unflagging.

We must now bring to bear all of our collective will and resources over what will undoubtedly be a long but ultimately victorious process of reclaiming the gulf coast towns and cities for the future. I extend my thoughts and prayers to my colleagues, Senators COCHRAN, LOTT, SESSIONS, SHELBY, LANDRIEU, and VITTER, as they work to guide their constituents and their families through these most difficult of times. I will certainly do everything I can to assist them and the citizens of their States.

Today, as chair of the Fisheries and Coast Guard Subcommittee, I believe it is entirely appropriate to focus the Nation's attention on the performance of the U.S. Coast Guard in response to Hurricane Katrina, as I believe it is an

exemplary model for future responses. As I do so, I also thank all of our military Active-Duty and Reserve for their heroic service in the gulf shore region. Their performance under these conditions has been outstanding and unprecedented on American soil.

As a result of the U.S. Coast Guard's unparalleled performance and operations responding to the unfathomable destruction along the Gulf of Mexico, the plans for which were put into motion even before the storm subsided, thousands of children, senior citizens, and entire families are sleeping safely tonight. Indeed, the heart-wrenching stories I heard during my visit to the Coast Guard—of crews rescuing families trapped in attics, of children separated from their parents, rescue swimmers tapping on roofs seeking signs of life in submerged houses—will be forever etched in my own mind. People waving towels from windows signifying the need for help, pregnant women about to go into labor being hoisted into awaiting helicopters, rescue crews busting into windows and roofs because there was no means of escape for the occupants—the stories are real, seemingly endless, and all faced with an unrelenting sense of duty and humanity by the men and women of the Coast Guard.

Indeed, over the past few weeks, as we see in this chart, we have witnessed time and time again from news sources and television stations the perilous helicopter rescues occurring each and every day. There is an outstanding example of one on this chart that shows exactly the kind of circumstance the Coast Guard has to perform in which to save life after life. Incredibly, the Coast Guard, as of September 20, has saved 33,544 lives. That is the equivalent of the number of rescues performed by the Coast Guard in 8 to 10 years. They accomplished those rescue missions in just the past 2 weeks. The Coast Guard air station in New Orleans, which I visited on Monday, under the incredible leadership of CAPT Bruce Jones, has saved 6,471 lives, almost double the 3,689 lives the station had saved over its previous 50 years of operation.

This chart shows the level of catastrophe to which the Coast Guard responded. I talked to a rescue swimmer who genuinely believed that if he had completed 15 rescues that day, it somehow wasn't enough. What is perhaps most remarkable is that the Coast Guard simply did not rescue these people and deliver them to a nearby field or highway overpass until they could get further help. Nor did they forget that other family members remained in peril, not yet rescued. Rather, the men and women of the Coast Guard took it upon themselves to ensure to the best of their ability that families would be kept intact and assisted those they rescued even after the rescue operation was complete. They actually returned to overpasses to follow up with those whom they had rescued.

And if they still needed additional assistance or they hadn't been taken to where they should have been going with the medical rescue crews, they made that happen.

They got them water if they needed it. If they required food, they brought them food. As ADM Robert Duncan, District Commander for the gulf region, so eloquently expressed:

When the Coast Guard rescue teams touched a person, they owned them.

This meant the Coast Guard was making itself responsible for their continued well-being. I ask my colleagues, what could be a more touching or profound testament to the boundless will and compassion that the U.S. Coast Guard exhibited during this operation? The people of the Coast Guard have conducted themselves oblivious to the true level of their own personal sacrifice and seemingly without regard to the horrific conditions in which they serve. Seventy percent of them alone lost their houses; lost everything, that is, but their sense of duty to their fellow human beings in distress and despair.

The fact is, the Coast Guard has been, is, and will always remain a vital component of America's national security and disaster response. Coast Guard personnel risk their lives each and every day protecting our Nation and saving lives, no more so than during this national tragedy. Leadership, as we all know, starts from the top. For the U.S. Coast Guard, that individual is ADM Tom Collins. Admiral Collins has been a solid steady force in ensuring the rapid and safe execution of rescue operations.

In the midst of the storm and bureaucratic interagency chaos, the Coast Guard remained resolved, organized, focused, and responsive to those in desperate need.

The bottom line is that the members of the Coast Guard did not wait to be told to conduct their mission. They knew their mission. They refused to let anything, including redtape, get in their way. When they needed fuel for helicopters, they found fuel. When they needed water for their crews or for those they rescued, they found water. They did not ask if an operation was actually a State responsibility or local responsibility or another Federal agency's responsibility. They made it their responsibility. They took ownership of the life-and-death tasks at hand. Again, the can-do attitude of the Coast Guard is what allowed them to shine.

As Vice Admiral Allen, the principal Federal officer in charge of the relief operation, so simply stated:

The Coast Guard has a bias for action.

And from all I have seen, I could not agree more.

Indeed, the results are a living testament to the service's efficiency and organization and the superlative leadership of Admiral Collins.

The Coast Guard had the foresight and the wherewithal to pre-position its

assets before the storm struck and to respond rapidly to its aftermath. Moreover, the Coast Guard's exceptional planning led to not a single loss of a Coast Guard plane or boat and enabled it to be on the scene immediately upon the passage of the storm. This planning expertise and management of assets should be the example for all Federal agencies to follow.

The Coast Guard also sent to the area personnel from Coast Guard stations from around the country to help with the effort as part of its well-conceived plan. These personnel specialize in different fields and had never previously worked together yet got the job done as if they had been on the same team forever.

I think of the 160 crew members attached to the Coast Guard cutter Harriet Lane, a 270-foot cutter I visited on Monday, docked in New Orleans, that normally berths just 100 crew members. Yet all of those aboard worked flawlessly together, overcoming obstacle after obstacle.

In one instance, due to the cutter's inability to make water from oil-polluted river water, the crew set out to procure water from wherever possible. This mission led them to the discovery of water held in tanks controlled by the Forest Service on the pier. Unable to simply give them the water due to bureaucratic hurdles, the Coast Guard found a contractor who was able to pump water from their tanks into the cutter.

This is a ridiculous hurdle that should never have existed in the first place. Yet, once again, the Coast Guard didn't waste time with bureaucratic paperwork; instead, they got the job done.

The bottom line is, from what we have seen to date, I believe that the Coast Guard's Herculean efforts provides a model for the proper planning and execution of a mission to respond to a national emergency or crisis. And on that note, I was certainly pleased that Vice Admiral Allen was selected to coordinate the Federal response to Katrina. He will bring that Coast Guard sensibility to the entire operation.

These astounding results, however, do not come without a cost. The Coast Guard has already used the funds allocated for search and rescue operations for the entire year and beyond. Furthermore, the extensive rate of use during the rescue mission is also degrading Coast Guard assets faster and delaying necessary maintenance.

Supplemental funding, which the Coast Guard has not yet received, is essential to ensure that cutters, small boats, and aircraft can operate and continue its heroic service in the coming months.

The Coast Guard has sustained damage to several small boat stations and air stations and to other facilities throughout the region. The Coast Guard station in Gulfport, MS, simply no longer exists.

The Coast Guard is actively assisting Americans, and we in the Congress must return the favor and start helping the Coast Guard by providing them with crucial supplemental funding to cover the entirety of their operational requirements and to provide the necessary funding to replace its lost infrastructure.

In that light, I have sent a letter to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget encouraging him to include a funding line in the next supplemental appropriations bill for the Coast Guard. I thank my many colleagues who have joined me in support of this request.

In addition, the Coast Guard is charged with maintaining all the aids to navigation within the region, including those of the Mississippi River. These aids were either totally lost or severely damaged.

Again, it shows on this chart that Congress has also mandated the Coast Guard to respond to marine environmental pollution, which is now reaching untold levels of hazardous contamination throughout the Mississippi and Gulf of Mexico, and I think it is an indication of all the responses to the contamination of oil spills in the region to which the Coast Guard has had to respond. More than 7 million gallons of oil has polluted the water in New Orleans.

The bottom line is, not only have the people of the Coast Guard been risking their own lives to save the 33,544 other individuals, but they have also responded to hazardous liquid spills in the region, conducted 4,688 sorties, carried out 11,548 small boat and cutter sorties, repaired vital aids to navigation to facilitate the flow of commerce in the Mississippi, and have assisted in the replenishment of critical supplies to thousands of displaced persons.

Yet, as capable and successful as the Coast Guard has been in carrying out all of its missions, including opening the ports and the waterways and drug interdiction—they are even doing that down there in combination with all of these other missions—this service was already stretched thin in the aftermath of 9/11. Unless Congress pledges to equip the service with modern equipment, we jeopardize the success of any future missions. The Coast Guard requires new cutters and aircraft now, and it can start this process only if Congress fully funds Deepwater, the service's recapitalization program for procuring new cutters, small boats, and aircraft.

The Senate version of the Coast Guard bill authorizes a total of \$8.2 billion for the Coast Guard, \$400 million over the administration's request. Within that request, Deepwater authorized \$1.1 billion, \$134 million over the administration's request. We must ensure our numbers, the Senate numbers, which are the higher numbers, are maintained in conference of this legislation.

By accomplishing this, it will allow for a targeted acceleration of required

assets, those resources deemed most critical to the Coast Guard now.

The current situation can only be categorized as dire. It is a national disgrace that this service that is integral to search and rescue operations, integral to our homeland security, as we saw in the aftermath of September 11 when they immediately secured New York Harbor, integral to our fishing industry, would be operating the 40th oldest fleet out of 42 in the world. Only the Philippines and Mexico have older fleets. Deepwater is designed to remedy this situation, but in 20 to 25 years, rather than as I have insisted and I have requested, that Deepwater needs to be completed in 10 to 15 years at the outset.

If anyone questions the condition of the Coast Guard assets, I suggest they go out and sail on an aging cutter, go fly on an aging airframe, and you will witness firsthand the conditions that we continue to place upon the dedicated members of the Coast Guard. You only have to recall the graphic portrayals of what occurred during Hurricane Katrina, when these Coast Guard men and women performed under such perilous circumstances, when they were able to save so many thousands and thousands of men and women—in fact, more than 33,544 individuals under very hazardous circumstances and conditions.

At my subcommittee's June 21 hearing on the revised Deepwater implementation plan, we once again revisited the Coast Guard's current status of its legacy assets and the extremely high maintenance costs associated with them. The inescapable conclusion was the Coast Guard cannot continue on the path it is currently being forced to walk. It requires the additional money, the additional cutters and aircraft, and the latest technologies associated with command, control, and communications.

On my visit to the cutter Harriet Lane in New Orleans this last week, I was briefed on the extreme difficulties encountered in trying to establish effective communications among Federal, State, and local agencies. This cutter does not have the communications capabilities of what a new Deepwater cutter would be able to provide.

In fact, when cell phones didn't work and text messages were limited, they tried to find old satellite phones to use to communicate. We know that the new equipment on the new ships would provide this kind of capability that is absolutely essential. They would be paramount in streamlining and making these rescue efforts more efficient.

Yet, even without this new technology, the Coast Guard, as I said, made it work with the resources they had at their disposal. With an inadequate amount of satellite receivers, the cutters still prioritized and switched communication channels to effectively prosecute the mission.

Yet the undeniable truth is, such a workaround should not have to happen

and would not happen on new Deepwater cutters.

The Coast Guard is a service clearly already populated with heroes. We should not ask them all to be MacGuivers, as well as jury-rigging and Rube Goldberging rescue operations already perilous enough.

Doesn't America deserve better? Don't the men and women of the Coast Guard who perform so heroically deserve more from us than fighting 21st century threats and the war on terrorism with equipment from World War II?

Think about it: Some of these ships were operating when Emperor Hirohito of Japan surrendered to the United States, operating through the Korean war, the Vietnam war, the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union, and yet they remain as part of our U.S. Coast Guard in the year 2005. Some vessels are so old the Coast Guard has to go to maritime museums to find spare parts.

How can we relegate the Coast Guard to this fate? As you look on this chart, USA Today did a very in-depth story on the Coast Guard and its aging assets of ships and aircraft. It says, and this was done July 6:

Aging Fleet Could Threaten Service's Anti-terror Mission.

That is what it is all about. We should have learned in the aftermath of September 11 what we need to accelerate, what we need to establish for priorities and making sure the agency we ask so much from, the Coast Guard, that we ask to do so much for so little, gets at least the equipment they deserve when they are performing these risky missions, as we have seen so graphically over the last few weeks.

How can we relegate the Coast Guard to this fate? How can a nation of such resources fail to provide them to this indispensable service?

While the people of the Coast Guard certainly go above and beyond the call of duty, the very equipment they sail and fly on has gone way beyond the call of duty, and it is time they were retired for good.

Yet the Coast Guard will continue to operate one of the oldest fleets for another 20 to 25 years with the current funding formula that is being made available for the Deepwater program. We are not just talking about ships. Under Deepwater, vital aircraft, including the outdated HH-65 Dolphin and the HH-60 Jayhawk helicopters we have all seen conducting the rescue hoists on television, would be reengineered and reoutfitted with improved navigation and radar equipment. But if Deepwater is not fully funded, these crucial improvements will not occur on a timely basis, preventing the Coast Guard from being fully capable when the next tragedy strikes.

These are not exaggerated predictions. Pilots told me firsthand that with the new technology, they could have seen much more clearly in the

total darkness that loomed over New Orleans, allowing them to identify downed power lines, vertical obstructions, and citizens requiring assistance.

That is why I repeatedly urged the administration and the Congress, for the last 4 years, to increase the funding for this program immediately and why I successfully fought to include a report on the possibility of accelerating the Deepwater program from a 20-to-25-year program to a 10-year program in the Homeland Security bill.

The fact is, by reducing the duration of implementation for the program, the Coast Guard could receive these vital assets 10 to 15 years sooner, and not a moment too soon in my book. We cannot forget that ships are not constructed in weeks or months. They take years to design and fabricate.

Now, only one national security cutter is in fabrication. The offshore patrol cutter is not in production, and the fast response cutter remains in the design phase. So we must act now.

Moreover, the unequivocal findings of the report I required was acceleration of the Deepwater program is not only feasible, it would also save the American taxpayers a billion dollars in total acquisition costs.

So, I ask, what exactly is there not to get? By accelerating the Deepwater program, we would provide desperately-needed updated equipment to this premier security and search and rescue service, while saving taxpayer money, not to mention ultimately saving lives. Simply put, it defies the laws of common sense to not implement Deepwater as soon as possible.

That is why I have recently sent the appropriations committee a letter, urging them to increase the funding for Deepwater in this year's Homeland Security appropriations bill. Specifically, in the Senate version of the Coast Guard's authorization bill, we authorize \$1.1 billion to be appropriated for Deepwater. This level will keep the Coast Guard on the proper road to guide them toward a modern maritime fleet of cutters and aircraft, able to perform their vital missions in the 21st century.

It is critically important we not only provide the level of funding but we also ensure that we accelerate the Deepwater acquisition program to 10 to 15 years as absolutely vital and essential.

So I hope we would be able to also release from the Senate the Coast Guard authorization legislation that allows for the increased funding, that allows for this process to continue and, in addition, to get the higher amount of the appropriations and to get the acceleration of the Deepwater program.

That is what I ask, that we release the Coast Guard authorization bill that is bottled up in the Senate. We need to remove all of the excuses and allow this process to go forward for the service that has conducted itself so courageously and heroically during the course of Hurricane Katrina.

In visiting with the men and women of the various Coast Guard stations, in

New Orleans as well as the station in Gulfport, MS, I can tell you not one was complaining—not one. In fact, one admiral said, you know, we have just been telling you some of the obstacles we had to overcome to do our job, and we will do it no matter what, no matter the circumstance. We are asking you not to use it as a rationale to defer the needed repairs, maintenance, and the new equipment for the future because we don't know what is in the future when it comes to unforeseeable events. We cannot predict. We did not predict 9/11. We predicted Hurricane Katrina. Look what happened. It was the Coast Guard that performed that mission. But we have to make sure that the Coast Guard receives the funding it requires in the future in order to enable it to respond as it did during the course of Hurricane Katrina. We cannot build ships nor aircraft overnight. It takes several years to get these ships in the pipeline.

So unless we get the authorization bill out of the Senate and out of the entire Congress that we have been urging for months to get done, to have an accelerating program, to get the appropriations that are essential, that cannot happen. So I am pleading with the Senate, pleading with the Congress to do what is right for this magnificent agency that is, by the way, on the frontlines for protecting us and our homeland security, one of the greatest problems of which, as you know, is the transshipment of weapons of mass destruction.

The Coast Guard is also essential and a vital component in protecting our homeland.

They are a multimission agency. They are asked, as I said earlier, to do so much with so little. And even as they are performing down there in the gulf, they didn't ignore their other responsibilities—because of homeland security—for keeping the waterways open, which they have now done in the gulf, because it is important we continue the commerce, the interdiction of drugs; as a matter of fact, even over the weekend, providing the humanitarian assistance that is so vital, cleaning up the oil spills and the pollution that has occurred. As I showed you in a previous chart, as we have seen here in the active response that they have provided in so many areas, because of the spill of oil that is polluting the area and contaminating the water, that has complicated the task of the cleanup. You can't ask the Agency to do more in addition to the saving of 33,000 lives. When I talked to the rescue swimmers and the pilots, I asked them what was the greatest challenge and they said: You know, we were overwhelmed, we were overwhelmed because we had so many people to rescue, and we feel we are doing nothing in a day when we are rescuing 15 individuals—under, as you can imagine, some very difficult and dire circumstances.

I ask my colleagues, what more does the Coast Guard have to do to prove its

immense value to America? After the service's heroic and well planned efforts in responding to Hurricane Katrina, they have clearly and convincingly shown that all Americans are well served by the United States Coast Guard.

Therefore, I am proud to send this resolution to the desk for consideration in the Senate, which gives recognition to the valiant work of the Coast Guard. The resolution also notes the necessity of improving the Coast Guard's aging fleet of ships and aircraft. I hope all of my colleagues can support this resolution.

Now is the time for us in the Congress to fully recognize the importance of the Coast Guard and provide the service with the assets it needs to do the job now and into the future. The time has come, it is now our responsibility and our solemn duty to ensure it has the resources needed in order to serve the citizens of the United States for decades to come and I hope my colleagues will join me in that effort.

It is vital because they are on the frontlines. They responded magnificently, and they should be recognized and rewarded and applauded for the job they have done and the job they will continue to do in the future. I thank the Chair.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Will the Senator yield to me for a request.

Ms. SNOWE. Yes, I am happy to yield.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Will the Senator allow me to be a cosponsor of her resolution?

Ms. SNOWE. Yes, I will be happy to.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I compliment her for her forceful words on the Coast Guard, and I wish to align myself with them, as I fully believe in the remarks of the Senator.

Ms. SNOWE. I am delighted to add my colleague, the Senator from Maryland, as a cosponsor. She has been an ardent advocate and supporter of the Coast Guard. I thank the Senator.

I ask unanimous consent to add the Senator from Maryland as a cosponsor of this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.