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For Immediate Release
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Stevens Joins Snowe on Coast Guard Authorization
Act of 2005

Today, Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), Chairman of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation joined Senator Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) and other Senators in co-sponsoring the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2005. The bill will be considered by the Senate Commerce Committee on Thursday, June 23, 2005.

The bill reauthorizes the United States Coast Guard for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 at a level of \$8.2 billion and for FY07 at a level of \$8.8 billion. This authorization will enable the Coast Guard to perform non-homeland security missions such as search and rescue, fisheries enforcement, and marine environmental protection, as well as fund the necessary missions related to ports, waterways, and coastal security.

In Alaska, the Coast Guard, the 17th District, is responsible for the waters around Alaska, which includes performing search and rescue, environmental protection, and the maintenance of waterways, specifically, icebreaking.

The Coast Guard Authorization Act authorizes funds for a pilot project that would allow the Coast Guard in Alaska to conduct long-range tracking of up to 2,000 vessels using a satellite tracking system. This project would be conducted with the assistance of the Marine Exchange of Alaska, a non-profit organization established to serve the Alaska maritime community by providing communications and services to ensure safe, secure, efficient and environmentally responsible maritime operations. This partnership will use a satellite communications systems to transmit data in an effort to aid the Coast Guard in responding to maritime emergencies and threats to maritime security.

“With satellite tracking, the Coast Guard will be able to better serve our mariners locating vessels in trouble. Hundreds of search and rescues have been performed in the waters off of Alaska. This technology will allow for search and rescues to be conducted more quickly and easily,” said Stevens.

Also contained in the bill is language authorizing the Marine Vessel and Cold Water Safety Education program that allows the Coast Guard to continue to use existing agreements with organizations that provide marine vessel safety training and cold water immersion education to fishermen and children. The Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA) benefits from this initiative. AMSEA has trained over 600 instructors and 200 teachers to provide cold water safety education to more than 100,000 school children, commercial fishermen, recreational boaters and agency personnel.

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