

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

May 11, 2010

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bailey Hutchinson
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Rockefeller and Ranking Member Hutchinson,

I am writing to urge adoption of the House language regarding the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card exemption for passenger boats of one to six passengers during the conference process of S. 1194, the 2010 Coast Guard reauthorization bill.

I understand the importance of requiring TWIC cards for ensuring safety of marine vessel operations. However, this requirement poses an unintended burden for operators of small passenger boats accommodating one to six people, commonly known as "six pack" vessel operators. Right now, such operators in Minnesota are required to take two trips to a TWIC processing facility, once to be fingerprinted and once for card activation. This poses an undue burden on these small boat operators and doesn't provide any added benefits for national security because these boats are generally too small to have sensitive control areas.

The House bill includes language that will exempt six pack vessel operators from the TWIC card requirement unless they have unescorted access to the secure area of a vessel. I encourage you to cede to the House position on this language and include it in the final bill reported by the conference committee.

Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator