

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0505

January 24, 2012

The Honorable John Mica
Chairman
House Committee Transportation
and Infrastructure
2187 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
2307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank LoBiondo
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Coast Guard
and Maritime Transportation
2427 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Coast Guard
and Maritime Transportation
108 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

I commend the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for calling a hearing to review cruise safety in light of the recent Italian Costa Concordia cruise ship tragedy. This incident highlights the need to more closely examine policies and regulations relating to the cruise industry. To this end, I respectfully request that the scope of this hearing be broadened to include testimony and a status report on the Coast Guard's implementation of the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-207).

As you know, the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act was signed into law in July 2010, with many provisions scheduled to go into effect this month. The law requires the cruise industry to comply with a number of security provisions, including specific rail heights, warning devices, and the installation of peep holes and other measures to improve cabin security. Moreover, this law necessitates that vessels be equipped with a video surveillance system to assist in documenting and prosecuting crimes, and that a log book be maintained to record reports on specific complaints. Finally, this law mandates that cruise vessel personnel contact both the FBI and the United States Coast Guard immediately after receiving a report of a crime involving homicide, suspicious deaths, missing U.S. nationals, kidnapping, assault and other serious occurrences. Because of the number of significant provisions the law contains, I believe that, as your committee considers the safety of cruise ships, it is also crucial to expand the hearing to ensure the proper implementation of the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act.

Additionally, I would welcome the opportunity to testify on the importance of increased safety measures and the need for adequate oversight and regulation. Furthermore, I would respectfully request that the International Cruise Victims (ICV) also be included at this hearing and in future discussions on how best to achieve our common goal.

Again, I applaud you for bringing awareness to this important issue, and I look forward to working with you to ensure all passengers have the safest voyage possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doris O. Matsui". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress