



NEWS From -

Conference of Professional Operators
for Response Towing

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**Marine Assistance Towing Operators Commend Senate Committee
in Passage of Vessel Discharge Legislation**

C-PORT, Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing, the national trade association representing over 200 marine assistance companies nationwide, commends the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee for passing on to full Senate vote, S2094 Vessel Incidental Discharge Act. The bill would exempt from discharge requirements commercial service vessels that are less than 79 feet, vessels that operate in a geographically limited area and vessels belonging to the U.S. Armed Forces. It also would exempt discharges that occur for research or safety purposes. In addition, it establishes national standards for vessel discharge regulation.

Under the Clean Water Act, commercial vessels under 79 feet would be required to have an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Vessel Discharge Permit originally effective July 31, 2010. Recreational vessels are exempt from this requirement and commercial vessels over 79 feet are already required to obtain a vessel discharge permit. In 2008, there was a two year moratorium from compliance placed on fishing and commercial vessels under 79 feet allowing for the EPA and the Coast Guard to conduct a study to evaluate the impacts of discharges incidental to the normal operation of these vessels. The results of that study were to be used to determine whether and how the EPA should regulate the discharges. The study evaluated water discharges from fishing vessels, tugboats, water taxis, tour boats, towing and salvage vessels (some of C-PORT members' marine assistance vessels were used), small research vessels, and the like. In July 2010, the date of the moratorium on these vessels was extended to December 18, 2013 and then again to December 18, 2014.

"These small businesses operate vessels overwhelmingly the same in size, type and power as most recreational vessels," stated Terry Hill, C-PORT Chairman. "The overwhelming majority of the marine assistance industry vessels do not have gray water discharge created from showers, sinks and the like. These commercial vessels are designed without these conveniences reducing the ill effects of any such discharge." Tina Cardone, C-PORT Executive Director added, "Marine assistance vessels do not produce the discharge and pollutants, nor pose the risk of introducing invasive species, to which the permit refers. We appreciate the committee's actions on this issue and look forward to having this bill enacted into law."

C-PORT appreciates the leadership shown by Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) working with the marine assistance industry on this issue since 2010, Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) for his leadership and attention to this issue and the following Senators for cosponsoring this important bill: Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Roy Blunt (R-MO), John Boozman (R-AR), Bob Casey (D-PA), Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Susan Collins (R-ME), Chris Coons (D-DE), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Angus King (I-ME), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Edward Markey (D-MA), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Mark Pryor (D-AR), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Richard Shelby (R-AL), Patrick Toomey (R-PA), David Vitter (R-LA), Mark Warner (D-VA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Roger Wicker (R-MS).

C-PORT was founded in 1986 to act as a liaison between the marine assistance industry and public agencies and organizations involved with boating safety, marine assistance, marine salvage and other marine-related operations. Our members are dedicated to providing prompt, professional and timely assistance to all boaters and to actively partner and cooperate with local law enforcement and U.S. Coast Guard. They are professionals, dedicated to the growth and development of their respective businesses and committed to furthering the advancement of our waterways and the boating community. For more information, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit www.cport.us.