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Admiral Robert J. Papp
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Admiral Papp,

I strongly support your Service's ongoing efforts to protect our nation's economic and natural resources while securing our homeland from domestic and international threats originating from a maritime environment. I am mindful of the nation's call to practice fiscal responsibility in a time of increasing financial deficits, but within this framework, priority must be placed on ensuring the safety and security of the American people and to guarantee the world's greatest Coast Guard is adequately prepared to address the current and future Arctic mission requirements.

As you are aware, there are different options being proposed for the acquisition of new Icebreakers, to include long term leasing. I have been told that such recommendations could only be made following a Business Case Analysis (BCA). Section 307 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-281) required a BCA to be completed by October 15, 2011, together with recommendations you consider appropriate. This deadline has passed without the data that Congress desperately needs to do its job in support of the Coast Guard's Arctic mission.

I am greatly concerned with the current and projected state of the United States Coast Guard's ability to adequately conduct its Arctic mission. While the Coast Guard has long demonstrated the ability to "do more with less," the recent High Latitude Study took a focused look at the state of the Coast Guard Arctic capability. According to this study, the Coast Guard requires six heavy and four medium icebreakers to fulfill its statutory missions and maintain the continuous presence requirements of the Naval Operations Concept. With one medium and no active heavy icebreakers currently in its fleet, new assets are clearly needed, and this approach begins with your BCA. I respectfully request the Coast Guard promptly submit to Congress the BCA and supporting documentation required by law as soon as possible. Such a plan from the administration will help address the asset gap that has left deficiencies in our Arctic North Patrol, Arctic West Science and Antarctic/McMurdo Station missions.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa Murkowski", written in dark ink.

Senator Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator