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Governor Patrick Presses Federal Regulator to Require U.S. Crews on LNG Tankers Bound for Massachusetts**Governor's letter to Maritime Administrator urges safety and security for LNG shipments**

BOSTON - Tuesday, February 6, 2007 - Governor Deval Patrick, citing the need for heightened security, is urging federal authorities to require U.S.-trained and certified crews on LNG tankers operating in Massachusetts waters.

"The safe and secure transportation of liquefied natural gas is critical to the well-being of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The use of U.S. citizen crews will help to accomplish this critical obligation," Governor Patrick said in a letter dated Feb. 5 to Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Connaughton is expected to act this week on the deepwater port license application of Excelebrate Energy of Texas, one of two companies planning to operate offshore LNG loading facilities 10 miles off Gloucester. A deepwater port license for Suez Energy North America was approved last week.

"The safety and security of LNG transportation is a serious issue which deserves serious attention," Governor Patrick said. "I appreciate your efforts to secure commitments from Suez and Excelebrate Energy to utilize U.S. citizen crews on LNG vessels coming into Massachusetts. The use of U.S. citizen crewmembers on these vessels will help to best serve the Commonwealth."

U.S. merchant mariners, including graduates of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, receive extensive instruction and training and are subject to background checks by both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Coast Guard. Governor Patrick said crews made up of mariners who are licensed and certified by the Coast Guard are "highly trained professionals best qualified to command and operate vessels and, therefore, safeguard U.S. citizens."

Governor Patrick is one of several Massachusetts officials supporting the need for U.S. crews on the LNG tankers. Also supporting the requirement are Congressmen Stephen Lynch and William Delahunt and Senators John Kerry and Ted Kennedy, along with several state legislators.

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