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House of Representatives

SUPPORT FOR OUR COAST GUARD!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 889, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2005, and in strong support of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Mr. Speaker, I have never been more proud of the men and women that serve in the United States Coast Guard. In the past 2 weeks, these valiant men and women have shown their dedication to our Nation. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Coast Guard was the very first government entity to arrive. The Coast Guard is solely responsible for saving thousands of Americans from the destruction and flood waters brought by Hurricane Katrina.

The Coast Guard, whose motto is *Semper Paratus*, always ready, was prepared to respond to this storm. Before levees ever broke, the Coast Guard was flying additional helicopters and extra aircrews to the Gulf region. Once the storm hit, the Coast Guard air and boat crews were operating 24 hours a day to save their fellow citizens.

The best decision that the President has made in the past 2 weeks is to place Vice

Admiral Thad Allen in charge of the emergency response to the Katrina disaster. To the Coast Guard, being prepared to respond to a disaster is not just a paper exercise to sit on the shelf when the big one comes. Responding to emergencies and tragedies is a part of the daily routine for the Coast Guard. By working to create relationships with State and local government officials, and those in the private sector, the Coast Guard has the resources to respond in times of crisis. To date, the Coast Guard has saved over 12,500 lives with their air resources, and in using boats or other surface transportation methods has saved over 11,500 lives. They have also evacuated over 9,400 people to hospitals.

And when the storm had passed, they remained on the scene helping to cleanup the mess and protect the environment. In New Orleans, they are coordinating the cleanup of 15 significant oil spills, and helping to coordinate the removal of sunken ships and barges.

Mr. Speaker, the Coast Guard has responded with all of the resources at their command to the Katrina disaster. It is time for the House of Representatives to respond to the

Coast Guard by ensuring they have the resources they need to carry out their missions in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have joined with my Committee Chairman, Mr. *LoBiondo*, in crafting language in this bill that not only

provides the appropriations and authorizations for the Coast Guard, but more importantly, gives proper recognition and gratitude for their efficient response to the Hurricane disaster. Make no mistake of it Mr. Speaker, while there was confusion and chaos, it was the Coast Guard that was there, on the ground saving lives.