

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 17, 2019

Admiral Karl L. Shultz  
Commandant  
United States Coast Guard  
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Commandant Shultz:

We write with concern about the United States Coast Guard's decision to deploy personnel and divert resources to the U.S.-Mexico border in order to help U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) enforce the Trump administration's inhumane immigration policies. As members of the Senate Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Security, which has responsibility for Coast Guard oversight, we are especially concerned about the effect of diverting these resources away from the Coast Guard's core mission of ensuring the safety of U.S. waters.

In non-emergency times, Coast Guard personnel play a critical role in ensuring marine safety, protecting the maritime environment, and interdicting illicit drugs trafficked through U.S. waters. When emergencies and natural disasters strike, the Coast Guard stands ready to perform myriad lifesaving operations. Particularly during hurricane and tropical storm season — which spans most of the summer and fall in the United States — we rely heavily on the Coast Guard for preparedness, and, when necessary, to perform search and rescue missions.

As the first tropical storm of the season makes landfall, leaving parts of the Gulf Coast with massive flooding, we must ensure that the communities that rely on the Coast Guard and its rapid response capabilities will not suffer from lack of operational capacity.

To better understand the Coast Guard's role and its decision to divert resources to new functions at the U.S.-Mexico border, we respectfully ask that you respond to the following questions no later than July 22, 2019.

1. When the Trump administration previously proposed transferring Coast Guard funding to other parts of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in order to help enforce its immigration policies, some Members of Congress denounced the plan.<sup>1</sup> Did DHS or the

---


<sup>1</sup> Dan Lamothe, *Trump administration plans to use Coast Guard money to pay for border enforcement*, Wash. Post (June 22, 2018), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2018/06/22/trump-administration-plans-to-use-coast-guard-money-to-pay-for-border-enforcement/?utm\\_term=.2f080e96ce5d](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2018/06/22/trump-administration-plans-to-use-coast-guard-money-to-pay-for-border-enforcement/?utm_term=.2f080e96ce5d); Dan Lamothe, *It's 'nonsensical' to cut the Coast Guard to pay for Trump's border wall, dozens of lawmakers say*, Wash. Post (Mar. 13, 2017), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2017/03/13/its-nonsensical-to-cut-the-coast-guard-to-pay-for-trumps-border-wall-dozens-of-lawmakers-say/?utm\\_term=.0e46d06dc428](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2017/03/13/its-nonsensical-to-cut-the-coast-guard-to-pay-for-trumps-border-wall-dozens-of-lawmakers-say/?utm_term=.0e46d06dc428).


Coast Guard ever reallocate Coast Guard funding in order to provide support at the U.S.-Mexico border? If so, how much funding was transferred and for what purpose?

2. How many personnel has the Coast Guard reassigned to the border? Were these reassignments voluntary or involuntary? What functions are these personnel performing? Under what statutory or other authority has the Coast Guard reassigned these personnel?
3. What proportion of reassigned Coast Guard personnel are providing for the safety and security of U.S. waterways along the U.S.-Mexico border as opposed to engaging in other activities, including administrative or support functions? To what extent are Coast Guard personnel supporting the activities of CBP?
4. Has the Coast Guard reassigned any personnel to assist U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with its responsibilities? If so, how many? What functions are these personnel performing?
5. Who gives orders to Coast Guard personnel at the border?
6. What specific requests, if any, has DHS made of the Coast Guard to engage in immigration enforcement activities at the U.S.-Mexico border? What authority, if any, do you, as Commandant of the Coast Guard, have to deny these requests if Coast Guard personnel are needed for other critical mission activities?
7. Has the Coast Guard conducted any analyses or risk assessments to its core mission before deciding to send personnel to the U.S.-Mexico border? If not, why not? If so, did the Coast Guard factor into its analysis the expectation of weather-related events and emergencies? Please provide a copy of any analyses or assessments.
8. How, if at all, has the diversion of resources and personnel to the U.S.-Mexico Border impacted Coast Guard operations and strategy? In the last 10 years, has the Coast Guard ever been asked to divert resources or personnel to the U.S.-Mexico border for immigration support services? If so, please identify when and under what circumstances this happened.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Should you have any questions about this request, please contact Avenel Joseph of Senator Markey's staff at 202-224-2742.

Sincerely,

  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

  
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator