

United States Senate

December 12, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
300 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

We write today to urge you to move expeditiously to equip the U.S. Coast Guard to enter cost-effective, mutually beneficial intergovernmental support agreements (IGSAs) with state and local governments. We understand the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been assessing Coast Guard IGSA authority for several years now, and while we appreciate the need to deliberate and set clear, effective procedures, we encourage DHS to complete this process as soon as possible and unlock the enhanced cost savings, mission effectiveness, and local partnerships that IGSAs can deliver Coast Guard installations and neighboring communities.

In 2013, Congress authorized military services to enter IGSAs with local and state governments to support installation services, as long as these sole-source agreements provided financial benefits or improved mission effectiveness. This FY 2013 NDAA-passed provision (10 U.S. Code § 2679) aimed to rein in the military's installation support costs, and it has delivered clear successes: using thorough vetting processes, services, with the exception of the Coast Guard, have approved over 170 IGSAs across nearly 100 installations for services ranging from waste removal to public transportation to childcare services to animal control.¹ A 2018 GAO report studied eight IGSAs and found just those agreements generated financial benefits of at least \$9 million – not to mention the less tangible benefits of reduced administrative time, increased service efficiency and quality, and improved relationships with surrounding communities.²

While the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy have benefited from IGSA benefits, the Coast Guard has inexplicably not received the required guidance from DHS to implement these agreements and unlock key cost savings, improved efficiency, and higher-quality services. We understand that DHS and Coast Guard leadership agree that 10 U.S. Code § 2679 provides the Coast Guard IGSA authority, as it did the other services in 2013, but DHS has moved too slow to issue the guidelines and approval processes required to initiate IGSAs.

We appreciate DHS's attention to IGSA authority and the benefits it can deliver the Coast Guard and local communities, including expanded educational offerings for local children, increased employment options for military spouses, and greater opportunities for small businesses. However, we are concerned by the delay in issuing IGSA guidance and procedures for the Coast Guard, and we worry that unless DHS leadership quickly addresses this disparity, our Coast Guard communities could be left waiting to see these agreements' benefits for years more. While DHS has many competing demands and procedures that differ from the DOD, we feel strongly that the department should prioritize finalizing the IGSA authority that promises to deliver the Coast Guard enhanced mission effectiveness, efficiencies, or economies of scale – especially at a

moment when arbitrary budget constraints and increasing global threats are forcing the service to do more with less.

As part of the IGSA implementation effort, we also expect that you will ensure the FY26 budget request reflects an increase to the Coast Guard's Operations & Support budget. We view this as essential to not create another unfunded task for the Coast Guard which would compound the disparities that exist between the Coast Guard and other branches of the military.

With this in mind, we urge you and your department to act quickly in the weeks ahead to incorporate best practices from other services using IGSA's, to formalize effective internal approval processes with all necessary safeguards, and to equip the Coast Guard and local governments to take full advantage of these agreements wherever mutually beneficial. We also request answers to the questions below no later than 21 days from the date of this letter:

- What specific constraints is DHS facing in finalizing and issuing IGSA authority for the Coast Guard, if any?
- What specific benefits does DHS expect IGSA authority to deliver to the Coast Guard?
- What concerns, if any, does DHS have about issuing IGSA authority to the Coast Guard?
- For what specific types of services does DHS expect the Coast Guard to use IGSA's?
- How is DHS engaging the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and DHS agencies to learn from their experiences with IGSA's and to develop guidance and approval processes based on their successes and lessons learned?
- What guardrails is DHS planning to incorporate into its IGSA guidance and internal approval processes to ensure such agreements prioritize Coast Guard installations' enhanced mission effectiveness, efficiencies, or economies of scale?
- How is DHS and the Coast Guard planning to collect and monitor information on the financial and nonfinancial benefits of implemented IGSA's, in order to ensure accountability and improvement of procedures over time?

Based on the successful use of IGSA's by other military services, we believe that the Coast Guard and local communities stand to benefit greatly from the cost savings, administrative efficiency, and improved local relationships that these agreements can deliver. Our constituents, inside and outside the service, look forward to swift action by DHS in issuing IGSA authority and unlocking the improved installation services, cost efficiency, and business opportunities that Coast Guard communities are asking for and deserve.

We appreciate your close attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
U.S. Senator



Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator



Roger Wicker
U.S. Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
U.S. Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
U.S. Senator



Tim Kaine
U.S. Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
U.S. Senator



Mark Warner
U.S. Senator

¹ <https://defensecommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-IGSA-Report.pdf>

² <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-19-4>