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Heftel Backs Maritime Strike Shield

U.S. Rep. Cecil Heftel has joined Guam Rep. Antonio Won Pat in co-sponsoring legislation in the House of Representatives to protect Hawaii and other Pacific points from the effects of prolonged shipping interruptions.

The bill to protect "essential maritime transportation" is identical to legislation introduced in the Senate by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye.

Heftel said the bill, if it becomes law, would empower the secretary of commerce to take steps to provide for essential maritime services when needed.

BUT HE WARNED that there will be problems in enacting the legislation.

"I am going to push it as hard as I can with this bill, but anyone who says we don't have problems ahead of us in enacting this legislation is not being honest with the people of Hawaii," he said.

Heftel has said that he does not believe such a bill will be passed by Congress this year.

In a speech to the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii on March 31, Heftel said the main reason for his pessimism is that Rep. Frank Thompson, D-N.J., chairman of the committee which would handle the bill, has been hostile to earlier shipping strike legislation.

Heftel said that unless Thompson softens his stand, the bill will not make it through the House.

Labor - Legislation

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