



MAGGIE HASSAN

United States Senator *for* New Hampshire

Vessel Tracking for Sanctions Enforcement Act of 2023:

To develop a pilot program using big data analytics to identify vessels evading sanctions and export controls

Summary:

Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and James Lankford (R-OK) introduced this bipartisan bill that would create a pilot program within U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) National Targeting Center to use data analysis to identify ships that are disabling or manipulating their Automatic Identification System to evade U.S. sanctions and export controls. This bill would give the pilot program specific guidelines on types of data to consider and direct the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to design it in a way to provide actionable intelligence to federal agencies and partners that are capable of interrupting vessels' illicit actions.

The Problem:

Recently, the New York Times reported that Russia is using transponder disabling and spoofing to maintain its oil trade and keep foreign currency flows high – despite U.S. sanctions and export controls.¹ Unfortunately, simply tracking transponder turn-offs is not sufficient to identify illegal activity, as hundreds of vessels experience outages daily for legitimate reasons or maintenance issues. This leaves American law enforcement agencies sifting through huge amounts of data to try to identify bad actors and intervene.

The Solution:

Create a pilot program using data analytics to enable law enforcement authorities to better identify fraudulent outages or potential spoofing incidents much closer to real time, increasing the chances of interdiction.

- This program would be based at CBP's National Targeting Center, which already includes representatives from across the federal government, including many law enforcement agencies, as well as strategic foreign partners.
- Intelligence produced by this pilot program could be more rapidly disseminated to foreign partners, without revealing source methods, which is especially important in nations where transshipment is highly likely, such as the UAE and Singapore.
- This program would be scheduled to sunset after four years following a report to Congress that includes statistical data on efficacy and a recommendation on its effectiveness and support to law enforcement.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/05/30/world/asia/russia-oil-ships-sanctions.html>