



Coast Guard Moving Ships From New Bedford

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Guard Cites Security Issues

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NEW BEDFORD, Mass. -- News Channel 10 reported Wednesday the Coast Guard will move its two cutters assigned to New Bedford to Maine sometime this fall.

The Coast Guard uses the 270-foot Tahoma (pictured, right) and Campbell for offshore security. But the guard, according Jolie Shifflet in Washington, will transfer the ships to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine for their own safety in uncertain times.

Shifflet called New Bedford -- a fishing port -- too open.

"We had to change that somewhat because of the new conditions we're in," Shifflet said.

New Bedford solicitor Matthew Thomas said the city understands.

"It's important the cutters be at a secure facilities," he said.

The Pentagon sent the cutters to protect New York harbor after Sept. 11, 2001.

The cutters also patrol fishing grounds, though the Department of Environmental Management learned about the reassignment from News Channel 10.

"They definitely enforce the regulations, but they're there more for us," fisherman John Welch said. "I never feel like they're out to bust me or anything."

But they do bust smugglers.

"They were used for drug interdiction

and security along the coast," Thomas said.

New Bedford has already started talks with the Coast Guard to get smaller search-and-rescue boats stationed in New Bedford.

News Channel 10's Larry Estepa reported when the cutters weigh anchor, they will leave behind a lot of history.

The Coast Guard started its first academy in New Bedford. And the mothballed Derecktor Shipyard in Middletown, R.I., built the Tahoma and Campbell.