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Barrow Reintroduces Bill to Help Families Exposed to Formaldehyde in FEMA Trailers

Washington, D.C. – Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) this week reintroduced legislation to help people who lived in trailers supplied by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) that contained toxic levels of formaldehyde, a known human carcinogen. Thousands of victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 lived in these trailers, and reports are show that these same contaminated trailers are now showing up in other parts of the country, including the Augusta area.

“It’s bad enough that folks who survived the 2005 storms are getting sick because they stayed in the only housing that was available to them, but now these trailers are making their way to other areas, and putting other families at risk,” said Barrow. “We need to take care of the ones who are already sick, but we also need to make sure that no one else gets sick from the same source.”

The “Travel Trailer Health Registry Act” (H.R. 1661) will provide free health examinations, consultations, and mental health counseling to people who were exposed to formaldehyde in government-provided emergency shelters. That information will then be used to monitor health effects as part of an epidemiological study of the ongoing medical needs of people who have been exposed.

The bill will also require the Secretary of Homeland Security, along with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to establish and maintain a health registry for people who may have been exposed to formaldehyde in an emergency trailer in order to monitor the health effects of exposure over time. The bill will also direct Homeland Security to develop a public information campaign to inform eligible individuals about the health registry, including how and where to register, and the benefits of registering.

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