

House approves Barrow's request for an additional \$4 million in federal emergency response grants; new funding included in the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act

Washington, DC - The U.S. House of Representatives today approved a request by 12th District Georgia Congressman John Barrow (D-Savannah) to increase funding and improve safety training standards for the nation's 270,000 first responders, fire fighters, and emergency medical personnel.

The extra \$4 million a year in funding for the federal emergency response grant program was included in H.R. 5782, the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act, which passed the House by unanimous consent.

“This is important legislation to help make our communities safer, and give first responders the training and resources they need,” Barrow said in a speech delivered from the House floor. “In addition to increased funding, this amendment requires improved training standards that will ensure our emergency responders learn the advanced skills to protect lives when faced with an accident involving dangerous gases or hazardous liquid pipelines.”

The federal emergency response grant program provides funding for state, county, and local governments for emergency response management, training, and technical assistance. The program has been focused on training emergency responders nationwide on how to safely respond to any pipeline

emergency using a number of resources.

Barrow's efforts to increase funding for the federal emergency response grant program have been supported by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). In a July 2006 letter to Barrow, the IAFF praised Barrow's efforts to "provide adequate funding to ensure that all emergency responders are trained" and "ensure that responders are trained to contain any release from a safe distance, keep it from spreading, and prevent people, property, and the environment from harmful exposures."

H.R. 5782 now heads to the United States Senate, where it is expected to pass before heading to the President's desk for his signature.

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