

House Passes 2006 Interior Appropriations Legislation;

Bill sent to Senate for Approval

WASHINGTON - Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2006. In doing so, the House approved a request from 12th District Congressman John Barrow (D-GA) for money to improve the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area.

"This money is critical to the Augusta Canal's management, and will be used for much needed improvements," Barrow said. "These funds will be used for the preservation, conservation, and enhancement of the National Heritage area boundary."

"I'm glad that the House of Representatives agreed that investing in the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area should be a priority, even during this difficult budget year," Barrow continued.

During the Civil War, the Augusta Canal was home to the Confederate States Powder Works, producing almost three million pounds of gunpowder. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the canal has also been designated a National Historic Landmark, as a Regionally Important Resource by the State of Georgia, and a National Heritage area by Congress.

"The canal is one of Augusta's oldest treasures," Barrow said. "After 160 years, this waterway continues to serve the people of Augusta - providing recreation, education, and economic opportunities. In addition, the canal's power plant remains a reliable source of renewable hydroelectric energy."

Built in 1845, the Augusta Canal is the only industrial power canal of its kind still in use. Last year, the two Enterprise Mill hydropower generators operated by the Augusta Canal Authority

produced 7,368,096 kilowatt hours of electricity, generating \$227,123 of income used to match Congressional appropriations to the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area.

"The success of the canal's restoration and ongoing upkeep proves how important federal and local partnerships can be," Barrow added. "Working together, we're not only preserving a piece of our Augusta's history, we're also building an important community and business resource for the entire region."

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