

*Funds will expand weatherization assistance programs, create jobs, and weatherize 14,000 homes*

**Washington, D.C.** - Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) announced today that the State of Georgia will receive close to \$50 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funds to expand weatherization assistance programs. These funds, along with additional funds to be disbursed after the state meets certain Recovery Act milestones, will help achieve the goal of weatherizing 14,000 homes, lowering energy costs for low-income families that need it, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating green jobs in Georgia. The Recovery Act was passed by Congress with Congressman Barrow's support and signed into law by President Obama earlier this year.

"This money is going to do a lot of good, and quickly," said Barrow. "Not only is weatherization a key factor in bringing down energy costs for families who are hurting the most, it's going to put a lot of folks back to work."

"These awards demonstrate the Obama Administration's strong commitment to moving quickly as part of the country's economic recovery -- creating jobs and doing important work for the American people -- while ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly," said Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "Today's investments will save money for hard working families, reduce pollution, strengthen local economies, and help move America toward a clean energy future."

Georgia will receive 40 percent of its total weatherization funding authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act today. This installment adds to the initial 10 percent of weatherization funding allocations that have already been awarded for training and ramp-up activities. Under the Recovery Act, the states may spend up to 20 percent of the funds to hire and train workers.

Georgia will use its Recovery Act funds to weatherize more than 13,600 homes over the next three years. The Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority, which manages the weatherization program in the state, intends to leverage Recovery Act funds in partnership with the Georgia Power Company to weatherize 500 additional homes. The state is giving priority to weatherizing homes occupied by elderly residents and elderly residents with disabilities, and expects at least half of all weatherized homes will go to these high-need residents.

After demonstrating successful implementation of its plan, the state will receive an additional \$62 million, for a total of nearly \$125 million.

The Department of Energy (DOE)'s Weatherization Assistance Program will be available to families making up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level - or about \$44,000 a year for a family of four. Weatherization projects allow low-income families to save money by making their homes more energy efficient, which results in average savings of 32% for heating bills and savings of hundreds of dollars per year on overall energy bills. States will spend an average of \$6,500 to weatherize each home.

The funding allocations for the Weatherization Assistance Program follow a stage-gate process: on March 12, funding allocations by state were announced and the initial 10 percent of total funding was provided to states and territories to support planning and ramp-up activities; comprehensive state applications were due on May 12; following DOE reviews for each state, 40 percent allocations are awarded; and the remaining 50% of funds will be released when states meet reporting, oversight, and accountability milestones required by the Recovery Act.

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