

Defense Bill Authorizes \$92 Million Investment for 5th District Military Facilities

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) and a majority in the House voted late last Friday to pass the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2011 (H.R. 5136) to strengthen military readiness and counterterrorism efforts and to ensure that service members and their families receive the benefits they deserve and have earned. The bill, which authorizes investments in Department of Defense operations for the next fiscal year, includes a number of projects for military installations in Maryland's 5th Congressional District. Authorizations are the first step towards funding, which will be determined later this year during the appropriations process.

“This important legislation continues our work to ensure our military is prepared to defend America from violent extremists and that we uphold our commitment to support our service members and their families,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “I am pleased this legislation authorizes such a significant investment to support and expand operations at our area’s military facilities. These authorizations mark these projects as priorities and underscore how critical the work done at Pax, Indian Head and St. Inigoes is to our national defense.”

The following 5th District projects are included in the Defense Authorization bill. All but the Atlantic Test Range Addition – which was included at the request of Congressman Hoyer on behalf of Pax River - were included in the President’s budget.

Atlantic Test Range Addition - \$10.16 million

The construction of an addition to the existing Atlantic Test Range will house new control rooms for Unmanned Air Vehicles, intelligence data acquisition laboratory spaces, as well as a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility area.

Agile Chemical Facility - \$34,238,000

This project will replace the existing Agile Chemical Facility at Indian Head, a nearly 70-year old outdated facility which no longer meets current safety standards, with a state-of-the-art facility which will continue to be the Navy's sole provider of torpedo fuel.

BAMS Test and Evaluation Facility - \$42,211,000

This project will construct a hangar to house Unmanned Air Vehicles and provide administrative space, communications rooms, lab spaces, and a mission control system. The facility will directly support the Navy's Broad Area Maritime Surveillance Program, which is critical to ensuring the Navy has persistent maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance data collection and dissemination capability.

Tactical UAS Facility- \$5.5 million

This project involves the construction of an Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Training Facility that will house the Army National Guard at Webster Field. This facility will provide a permanent and secure space for a Guard Unit that currently leases space for equipment storage and training operations.

Overall, the bill continues Congress' work to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its extremist allies. It fully supports the President's strategy to strengthen strategic partnerships with key nations such as Pakistan and Yemen to help combat terrorism, and it places a strong emphasis on understanding the recruitment and fundraising tools being used by terrorists and taking the necessary action to stop them. The bill also makes historic investments in nonproliferation programs to keep vulnerable nuclear materials and weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of our enemies.

"The efforts of terrorist organizations like al Qaeda to obtain nuclear capabilities is one of the most serious threats facing our nation today, and this bill takes steps to stop them," said Rep. Hoyer.

To protect American soldiers, the legislation authorizes resources to ensure they have the equipment and armor they need on the battlefield, and will help commanders cut through red tape to get the equipment they need when they need it. And it strengthens support for troops and their families, extending TRICARE coverage to dependent children up to age 26, and for the first time since 2004, increasing the family separation allowance for troops whose deployment requires them to live away from their families.

"At a time when our brave men and women in uniform are fighting two wars, it is more important than ever that we maintain our sacred promise to give them the tools and equipment to stay safe and to provide them and their families with the benefits they have earned," said Rep. Hoyer

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