

INDIAN HEAD, MD - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today joined Naval District Washington Fire Chief Edward Stillwell; Bruce Poore, President of the IAFF Chapter at the U.S. Naval Academy and IAFF liaison for federal facilities in Maryland; and Joe Gronau, President of the IAFF Chapter at the Indian Head Fire Department to announce the award of \$1.1 million he secured for the Naval District Washington, which is responsible for efficiently delivering services to over 120 mission commands located within the region.

At Congressman Hoyer's request, this funding was included in the Fiscal Year 2005 Defense Appropriations bill passed by the Congress last year and will be used to purchase three fire vehicles, one of which will be located at Indian Head Naval Surface Warfare Center. The funding will also help address some of the serious funding shortfalls projected for firefighting operations at facilities within the Naval District Washington, including Patuxent River, Indian Head, U.S. Naval Academy, Chesapeake Beach, Carderock, and Dahlgren. Following are Congressman Hoyer's remarks, as prepared for delivery.

"I am happy to be here today to see the results of the funds we were able to secure in last year's Defense Appropriations bill.

"This new ladder truck will be an important addition to the equipment in service here at Indian Head, and will allow the department's 45 firefighters to better serve not only the men and women working here on base, but also all the people who live and work in Charles County.

"Under the mutual aid agreement with the County, last year this station responded to more than 300 calls outside the gates of this base, making Chief Thompson's firefighters an asset not only to the United States Navy, but also to our community.

"So I was pleased to work with Bruce Poore, Joe Gronau, Leroy Wilkison and others from the union to secure these funds to provide Chief Stillwell with some flexibility to purchase new equipment, and I understand that two additional trucks have been purchased and will be stationed at Dahlgren and Bolling.

"I am happy that we have been able to provide some relief for a number of installations throughout the Naval District of Washington, and I am always proud to fight hard in support of our volunteer, career, civilian and federal firefighters.

“And, I will continue to champion increased funding for equipment, training and staffing, enhanced pay and benefits, and improved safety conditions for firefighters in Maryland and across the country.

“But having said that, I am disappointed that we have to be here, fighting for extra dollars to make sure we have adequate firefighting equipment to protect our military bases. Chief Stillwell does a remarkable job taking care of our region’s facilities and the people serving them with the resources available to him.

“But this is a very specific example of an argument I have been making for some time – that we are underfunding our military, even though the Pentagon will spend more than half a billion dollars this year.

“Between the hundreds of billions of dollars being spent on ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the trillions of dollars being squandered by the irresponsible and immoral fiscal policies implemented by this Administration over the past four years, we are underfunding Pentagon requirements for ships, aircraft, and other critical weapons systems.

“And, we are asking the men and women serving our military installations as firefighters to do so with outdated and inadequate equipment.

“While I will continue to fight to provide additional funding for Chief Stillwell and our federal firefighters in the Naval District of Washington, I remain ever more committed to undoing the fiscal reality that has required me to become involved.”

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