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CARDIN, MIKULSKI SEND BILL TO PRESIDENT WITH \$441.3 MILLION FOR CARROLL, CECIL AND HARFORD COUNTY DEFENSE PROJECTS

Includes \$1.4 billion for Maryland projects

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-MD) today announced the fiscal year 2009 Military Construction/Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense spending bills include over \$1.4 billion in defense and military-related spending in Maryland, including more than \$441.3 million in Carroll, Cecil and Harford Counties. Both bills passed the Senate today as part of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act. That legislation now heads to the President to be signed into law.

The Military Construction/Veterans Affairs spending bill provides nearly \$1.4 billion for projects at Maryland's military facilities, including \$865 million in Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) projects. The bill also includes \$87.9 billion funding for critical Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs, including \$41 billion in discretionary funding to improve the quality of facilities and care offered by the Veteran's Health Administration, which is \$3.5 billion more than the President's budget request. This includes \$375 million that will allow the VA to enroll thousands of Priority 8 veterans previously not eligible for benefits. The bill also provides \$94 million above the President's budget request to hire at least 1100 additional claims processors to address the backlog of compensation, pension, and disability claims. It also rejects the President's proposal to cut assistance for homeless veterans.

"I am proud that this bill contains the resources necessary to provide Maryland's installations and communities with the resources needed to implement the BRAC recommendations, care for our veterans, and improve the quality of life for military families," said **Senator Cardin**. "This legislation is critical to our country's current and future military mission."

"I told Maryland's military leaders I would fight for this funding. My promises made are promises kept," said **Senator Mikulski**. "A stronger America begins at home. That's why I fight every year to make sure our military has the tools it needs to keep us safe. I will keep up my work to make sure Maryland communities have the resources in the federal checkbook to implement BRAC recommendations and sustain our military installations."

The Military Construction/Veterans Affairs spending bill provides \$424.7 million for Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) in Harford County, including:

- \$241 million in BRAC funding to continue construction on C4ISR facilities

- \$43 million in BRAC funding to consolidate Army Test and Evaluation Command headquarters.
- \$35 million in BRAC funding to consolidate Army Research Lab vehicle technology facilities.
- \$28 million for an aviation support facility for the Army National Guard at Weide Army Airfield in Edgewood.
- \$27 million in BRAC funding for a medical research lab on chemical and biological weapons defense.
- \$27 million in BRAC funding for a non-medical chemical and biological facility.
- \$23.7 million for the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense.

The Department of Defense (DOD) spending bill provides equipment and funding for the operations of the United States military. This includes tens of thousands of uniformed and civilian employees in Maryland involved in many different activities such as weapons research and development, intelligence gathering and analysis, and military medical care.

“We have no greater obligation as elected officials than our duty to take care of our troops and their families who have sacrificed on our behalf,” said **Senator Cardin**. “I am pleased that this bill sets the right priorities for providing critical equipment and training, strengthening military health care for our troops and their families, and giving our military families the support services and living conditions they deserve.”

“We need to do everything we can to support our troops with the equipment they need on the battlefield, the benefits and services they deserve when they return home, and support for their families on the home front. We know how critical these funds are for our troops to fulfill their mission and return home safely,” said **Senator Mikulski**. “I will keep fighting to put money in the federal checkbook for our troops.”

The \$16.6 million for Carroll, Cecil and Harford County defense projects includes:

- \$4 million for a Joint Chemical Agent Detector for the National Guard from Smiths Detection in Harford County. This will provide funding for the latest chemical warfare agent and toxic industrial detectors.
- \$3.2 million for Extended Cold Weather Clothing Systems for the Army National Guard from W.L. Gore in Cecil County to provide protection during extreme cold and/or wet weather for troops deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.
- \$ 4 million to continue the enhancement of laser-based explosive detection technology at Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG). This will enhance technology available to military and first responders by improving sensors with the capability to instantly detect explosive materials at close contact and/or at a safe range.

- \$3 million for Integrated Power System (IPS) research and development. This work will explore ways to create lighter weight, more modern ship designs for the next generation of Navy cruisers.
- \$1.6 million for Next Generation Non-Tactical Vehicle Propulsion from General Motors Corporation in Harford County, which will provide Army vehicles with significant operational advantages.
- \$800,000 for cutting edge research on Multi-Mode Space Propulsion (MMP). This research will improve the flexibility and utility of United States military satellites.

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