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MIKULSKI, CARDIN SEND BILL TO PRESIDENT WITH \$54.5 MILLION FOR SOUTHERN MARYLAND 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 just over \$1.4 billion for defense and military-related spending in Maryland, including more than \$53.3 million in Southern Maryland. 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 \$25.9 million for the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Indian Head in Charles County, \$13.9 million of which will go towards sewage treatment plant upgrades. The remaining \$12 million will be used for initial construction of Indian Head's Energetics Lab Complex. Once completed, the Energetics Lab Complex will be used to support rapid development of new weapons technologies.

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 \$27.4 million for Southern Maryland defense projects includes:

- \$4.8 million to complete the fiber optic data link between Patuxent River Naval Air Station and Wallops Flight Facility to better meet the need for digital communications and to support advanced Navy aircraft testing between the Navy and NASA testing ranges and facilities.
- \$4.5 million for Energetics Science and Technology Workforce Development at the Southern Maryland Energetics Technology Center adjacent to the Indian Head Division, U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center. This funding will be used to help train scientists and engineers in the field of energetics.
- \$3.2 million for High Energy Conventional Energetics to target asymmetric threats, such as hardened weapons of mass destruction sites. This program is managed by the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Charles County.
- \$3 million for Air Combat Environment Test and Evaluation Facility Upgrades at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station. The upgrades will incorporate advanced instrumentation and display technology that will increase the value and capability of the Navy’s Atlantic Test Range.
- \$2.5 million for All Weather Sense and Avoid Technologies for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVS), which will mitigate the chances of UAVs colliding with other aircraft.
- \$2.4 million for Adaptive Infrastructure for Special Operations Forces Training. This funding will explore how to use new sensors and wireless technology to sharpen the capabilities of U.S. military’s elite special operations forces. Much of this research and development will be performed by the Win-Tec corporation located in Fort Washington.

- \$2 million for Special Operations Forces Test Environment for Team Collaboration Missions. This will enhance the value of Special Operations training by employing advanced technologies at the Pax River Naval Air Systems Command's Advanced Maritime Technology Center to assess how training exercises can take advantage of cutting edge network-centric warfare principles.
- \$2 million for Sure Trak Re-Architecture and Sensor Augmentation. Funding will support the redesign and improvement of tracking software in use at Patuxent River Naval Air Station and allow for the placement of additional security sensors.
- \$2 million for improved Interoperability Research and Development at the Pax River Naval Air Warfare Center's Surface / Aviation Interoperability Laboratory.
- \$1 million for Navy Science and Technology Outreach (N-STAR) – Maryland. Funding will extend a successful, project-based, middle school science and engineering program to Southern Maryland. Currently a demonstration project run by the Navy as a partnership between Dahlgren and surrounding Virginia school districts, the program is designed to focus on increasing and sustaining teacher and student knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and creating opportunity for STEM career exploration.

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