

CARDIN, MIKULSKI, CUMMINGS, SARBANES ANNOUNCE STAFFING AWARD FOR HOWARD COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senators Benjamin L. Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski and Congressmen Elijah E. Cummings and John Sarbanes (all D-Md.) today announced Howard County Fire and Rescue Services have been awarded more than \$1.3 million in federal funding through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP). As a member of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Mikulski continues to fight to increase federal funding for the AFGP each year. Senator Cardin is a member of the Budget Committee, which each year sets priorities for funding to federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security.

“First responders have always been on the front lines, keeping our families and our neighborhoods safe from harm. I thank these brave men and women for their continuing service and sense of duty to our community,” said Senator Cardin. “I am proud to support federal investment through local grants like this, which are essential to ensure our community heroes have the equipment and training they need to do their jobs safely and efficiently.”

“I know how important this funding is to Maryland firefighters – often it’s the difference between life and death. First responders protect our homes and communities, and the federal government has a responsibility to protect them by providing them with the tools they need to do their jobs safer and smarter,” said Senator Mikulski. “Every day when our first responders report for duty, they don’t know what they will face. That’s why I fight every year for the equipment, training and staffing our protectors and communities deserve.”

Congressman Cummings said, “Our nation’s first responders are true heroes, risking their lives every single day to keep our families safe. It is with great gratitude toward the Howard County firefighters that we announce this grant. With the 12 new full-time firefighters who will be hired with these funds, the fire department will be able to continue to do a superb job of keeping our neighborhoods safe.”

“Too often, firefighters risk their lives with insufficient staffing, inadequate training and obsolete equipment,” said Congressman Sarbanes. “We have an obligation to provide firefighters with the necessary resources to perform their jobs and keep our communities safe.”

Howard County Fire and Rescue Services have been awarded \$1,300,560 to hire 12 full-time firefighters. This increase in staffing ensures the county’s compliance with NFPA and OSHA standards, which mandate that a minimum of four firefighters must respond to a fire or emergency call. This is the first SAFER award for Howard County. For more information, call Anna Lucente at 410-313-5723.

SAFER grants, which are part of the AFGP, were created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter organizations to help them increase the number of trained, front-line firefighters available in their communities. Since 2001, Howard County fire and emergency medical services (EMS) units have been awarded nearly than \$2 million in federal assistance through the AFGP. Statewide, Maryland fire and EMS departments have been awarded more than \$66 million.

#