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## CARDIN SAYS OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL IS GOOD FOR MARYLAND AND GOOD FOR AMERICA

*Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), a member of the Senate Budget Committee, released the following statement after Senate passage of H.R. 1105, the Omnibus Appropriations Act, which finalizes funding for the federal government for Fiscal Year 2009. The bill now goes to President Obama for his signature.*

**“America has turned a corner. For eight long years, the priorities of the White House were not the priorities of the American people. That has now changed. The Omnibus Appropriations bill we passed tonight takes us down a new path of investment and opportunity for our nation. It will help keep our government working, create jobs, and help our economy recover. The investments we codified tonight are good for Maryland and good for our nation.**

“The Omnibus bill contains important funding for Maryland’s infrastructure and treasured programs. It rolls back proposed Bush Administration cuts in the EPA’s clean water programs; in the FBI’s public safety efforts, and in the nation’s commitment to improved health care. Additional Maryland-specific provisions include:

- **BRAC:** More than \$3 million each for transportation improvements at Fort Meade, Aberdeen Proving Ground, and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda to help accommodate the increased traffic due to BRAC. The military budget provides for the movement of personnel and the construction of facilities, but the state was left with the burden of meeting the transportation needs. These earmarks, requested by the State, the counties, and local communities, are a way to address a special federal responsibility.
- **TRANSIT:** We provide \$34 million for the purchase of additional Metro rail cars, and another \$13 million for the purchase of new MARC train equipment. The bill also contains \$475,000 in funding requested for the MetroBus program, and hundreds of thousands more for bus programs in Baltimore, Southern Maryland, and in communities across the state. We need to make major investments in our public transit programs, and the Omnibus takes us in that direction.
- **CHESAPEAKE BAY:** President Bush had proposed eliminating the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Program. This National Park Service Program is the closest thing there is to a Chesapeake National Park, and the Omnibus contains \$1 million that the delegation included, at the request of the State, local heritage organizations, and

county tourism departments. The Bay will also benefit from \$6.6 million to replenish oysters, and more than \$10 million to help our ailing blue crab fishery.

- **FOOD SAFETY:** The Omnibus contains over \$160 million for the continued construction of a new Food and Drug Administration complex at White Oak, in Montgomery County. The new FDA labs and offices will bring new state-of-the-art tools to our efforts to protect America's food and medical supplies.
- **SECURITY:** Local police, fire and ambulance corps are our front-line first responders. Building a statewide system of interoperable radios so that these dedicated public servants can communicate in a crisis situation demands more financial resources than they can afford. That is why we included \$500,000 in this year's omnibus budget, to make sure that our first responders have the tools they need to get the job done safely and well."

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