

WASHINGTON – The U.S. House of Representatives today overwhelmingly passed U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell's legislation to re-authorize the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and strengthen efforts to fight urban wildfires. H.R. 4847 passed with a bipartisan vote of 412 to 0.

Mitchell's legislation, the U.S. Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2007, authorizes \$293 million to extend the Fire Administration for four year and also provides firefighters with modern training on response coordination to multiple large-scale events, hazardous material incidents, and advanced emergency medical services issues.

"Here in Arizona, we know too well how dangerous urban wildfires can be, and the threat of urban wildfires continues to grow," said Mitchell. "As we approach this wildfire season, we have a special responsibility to make sure our firefighters have the tools they need to keep us safe in the long-term. I appreciate my colleagues who are helping us move forward on this great opportunity to enhance our ability to fight wildfires and improve the safety of our firefighters."

Last week, dozens of Valley firefighters – including three fire chiefs – joined Mitchell to call on Congress to pass the legislation, which ensures that new recruits have the proper training to deal with wildfires, and have the newest research and technology for the prevention and fighting of those fires.

Specifically, Mitchell's legislation:

- Extends the USFA authorization for four years to 2012 and authorizes \$293 in funding for the USFA.
- Improves the National Fire Incident Reporting system and increases access to the data by directing the USFA to update the system to an Internet-based, real-time incident reporting database system.
- Authorizes the Fire Administration to offer training on firefighting in the wildland-urban interface, response coordination to multiple large-scale events, hazardous material incidents, and advanced emergency medical service issues.
- Directs the USFA Administrator to coordinate fire-related activities with Emergency Medical Services.
- Directs USFA to maintain a database of fire-related research projects funded by USFA and the Assistance to Firefighter Grants program.
- Directs the USFA Administrator to promote the adoption of voluntary national consensus standards to help lower the number of line of duty deaths suffered by the fire service each year.

USFA, which is housed within the Federal Emergency Management Agency, represents the needs and interests of the nation's fire service at the federal level, also:

- Provides resources and training to more than 30,000 of the nation's local fire departments.
- Runs the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland which offers advanced training to the nation's fire service.
- Operates the National Fire Data Center, which collects and analyses data on fire and

other emergency incidents across the country.

- Works with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and other federal agencies, like the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate, to develop important fire fighting technologies.

Mitchell's bill has earned the support of several major fire service organizations, including the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the National Fire Protection Association, and the Congressional Fire Services Institute.

The Senate must now consider legislation to re-authorize USFA before it can be considered by the President.