

Washington, DC -- Included within the fiscal year 2008 Defense Authorization bill (H.R. 1585) passed by the House of Representatives today is language secured by U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) authorizing \$6.6 million to complete construction of a new NEADS facility in Rome, NY. As a federal military construction project, funds cannot be appropriated to complete construction of the NEADS facility without prior authorization.

“Today’s announcement marks a vital step in the funding process,” said Arcuri, who was able to secure the largest military construction authorization of any member of Congress not on the Armed Services Committee. “There’s still more to be done, but without this critical authorization language we would not be able to attain funding to complete the NEADS project, growing our economy, creating jobs, and strengthening our national defenses. Rest assured I will continue to aggressively pursue the necessary funding to complete construction of this much needed facility, while supporting all of our crucial defense facilities at the Griffiss Park.”

In 2005, the United States Air Force announced the consolidation of the Northeast Air Defense Sector with the Southeast Air Defense Sector (SEADS) to form the East Air Defense Sector (EADS), which remained in Rome, NY, and provides military air surveillance for the entire east coast, east of the Mississippi River. The existing NEADS headquarters building is a 1940’s vintage facility that is improperly configured and inconveniently located. The facility is supported by aging HVAC and utility systems requiring constant attention and maintenance from a limited building maintenance staff.

“This is what I was sent to Congress for – to work to strengthen our national security while at the same time strengthening our local economy. I hope this authorization will further strengthen the commitment of the U.S. Air Force to continue its mission in Rome,” said Arcuri.

Since September 11, 2001, NEADS and its support component have grown exponentially to provide homeland defense. Located in a non-secure public business park, this facility does not meet Department of Defense force protection standards. Due to lack of space, the security forces augmentation team is located in a rented government warehouse several blocks away. Both the headquarters facility and the security forces are geographically separated from the Sector Operations Control Center making adequate force protection challenging. Current location of this facility inhibits rapid response for controller and security forces augmentation of the control center. The \$6.6 million project authorized in the Defense Authorization bill today relocates and consolidates NEADS operations and personnel into one facility.

H.R. 1585 authorizes \$503.8 billion in budget authority for the Department of Defense (DoD) and the national security programs of the Department of Energy (DoE), and \$141.8 billion to support ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan during fiscal year 2008. The bill would provide the necessary resources and authorities to quickly and efficiently reverse declining trends in training and equipment readiness. H.R. 1585 authorizes a raise for all service members, increased funding for National Guard readiness, and includes the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act to ensure wounded service members receive the highest quality care as well as increase the efficiency and accountability of the Veterans' Administration (VA) health care system.

H.R. 1585 would authorize:

- A pay raise of 3.5 percent for all service members -- 0.5 percent more than the President's budget request, and provide special pays and bonuses.
- A \$1 billion Strategic Readiness Fund to give the Department of Defense the ability to rapidly address equipment shortfalls.
- \$1 billion for National Guard and Reserve equipment to address documented shortfalls.
- Evaluation and reporting on the preparedness of the National Guard for homeland missions, such as disaster response.
- \$1.2 billion for personal body armor.
- \$2.5 billion for up-armor humvee production and \$1.2 billion for vehicle add-on armor.

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