

Help Disaster-Affected States Update Their Communications Systems

Co-Sponsor, Rep. Cao's H.R. 3348, Amendment to The Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005

Current Co-Sponsors: Rogers (AL), Honda, Faleomavaega, Bonner, Diaz-Balart, Rehberg

Dear Colleague:

With hurricane season approaching, it is critically important for our first responders to have updated, functional communications equipment. This is a critical aspect of disaster preparedness, but some states still recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and recent severe flooding may not have this emergency communications equipment in place.

In 2005, Congress established the \$1 billion Digital Transition and Public Safety Fund which includes the Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program. The grant program provides aid to states upgrading their emergency communications systems. While many states have drawn from this fund, a number (particularly in the Gulf Region) have struggled to meet the program's requirement for matching funding and project completion deadlines. To help give these states much needed time to complete their repairs and upgrades, Rep. Cao has introduced H.R. 3348, an amendment to the Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 which extends the grant program's deadline from FY2010 to FY2012.

The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed this amendment and determined that it does not spend any additional money. It merely shifts the program's original budget deadline forward. This change will give state homeland security agencies the time needed to access grant funds and complete communications projects.

This bill has the support of the International Fire Chiefs Association, The National Emergency Management Association and the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials.

If you would like to co-sponsor this bill or need more information, please contact Rep. Cao's Legislative Assistant, Monica Sanders at Monica.Sanders@mail.house.gov or 202-225-3118.