

Bill Will Authorize Critical Funding and Protect Public Safety

July 30, 2012

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Stockton) introduced the bipartisan United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2012. The United States Fire Administration (USFA) administers grants that help create good-paying jobs within local fire departments and provides resources to train and educate the public.

“The fire administration plays a central role in bringing resources to help local fire departments hire and train new employees. We need to be focused on creating good jobs that will serve the public interest and help people persevere in today’s economy. Over the last decade, our region has received nearly \$5 million through these grants,” said Congressman McNerney.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants program, which is administered by the USFA, created or saved the jobs of over 1200 firefighters across the country in 2009. The program allowed 566 workers who had been laid off to be rehired, prevented an additional 139 workers from being laid off, and created nearly 400 new jobs in our nation’s fire departments.

“In addition to being a critical partner in bolstering our economy and creating jobs, the USFA provides important public safety information that helps prevent costly and damaging fires. Increasing preparedness and keeping our friends and neighbors safe is a responsibility we all share. My bill will make sure that local first responders have the tools they need to keep us out of harm’s way,” said McNerney.

The USFA was created in 1974 with the goal of reducing the number of fire-related deaths by half. This goal was met in 1988. According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2010 there were 1,331,500 fires reported in the United States. These fires caused 3,120 civilian deaths – down from 12,000 per year in 1973 – as well as 17,720 civilian injuries and \$11.6 billion in property damage.

The United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2012 was co-introduced by Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL).

“Whether it’s a fire, a vehicle crash, a dangerous spill, or even a terrorist attack – our fire fighters are first on the scene, protecting public safety”, said Biggert, Member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus. “They put their lives on the line every day, and our legislation will help to ensure they have the training and resources to accomplish their mission as safely as possible. This legislation also supports public safety awareness, and it will help local departments train for less common emergencies like a hazardous spill or wildfire.”

“I am pleased to join Representatives Biggert and McNerney in support of the U.S. Fire Administration Reauthorization Act,” said International Association of Fire Fighters General President Harold Schaitberger. “This important legislation will help ensure USFA has the resources it needs to continue supporting America’s fire and emergency services.”