

## LARSON INTRODUCES MUNICIPAL PREPARATION AND STRATEGIC RESPONSE ACT IN THE HOUSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 23, 2001

LARSON INTRODUCES MUNICIPAL PREPARATION AND STRATEGIC RESPONSE ACT IN THE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) this evening introduced his legislation to fund \$1.5 billion for local governments, fire departments, police forces and emergency medical responders to deal with, and prevent, acts of terrorism on American soil. The bill, H.R. 3161, is called the Municipal Preparation and Strategic Response Act of 2001 and has 70 original co-sponsors in the House of Representatives. Additionally, the legislation was endorsed by the National Association of Regional Councils on Friday, Oct. 19.

Larson stated: "Of the nearly \$9 billion that is spent on counter terrorism by the federal government, less than \$350 million ever makes it outside of federal agencies. It is time for Congress to give first responders on the local level funding they need to respond to and prevent possible future terrorist attacks. There must also be a coordinated response between all local, state and federal agencies to acts of terrorism such as those seen on September 11. We must ensure that local governments, fire departments, police forces and emergency medical responders have the equipment, training and communications strategies they need to respond as effectively as possible. We need to coordinate our response from the bottom up, beginning with those departments and agencies that are the first on the scene as was the case in New York City, Washington, D.C. and the fields of Pennsylvania."

The bill would provide funding to municipal agencies for the strategic planning needed to ensure they are fully prepared, equipped and trained for emergency and security issues that arise from terrorist attacks. It would also provide for a coordinated regional response utilizing federal, state and local agencies in response to a terrorist attack.

Under the legislation, FEMA would award \$1 billion in grants to local government and emergency response units to develop strategic response plans, coordinate the activities and procedures of local, regional and state authorities, assess potential targets and threats, and determine what additional training and equipment is necessary to meet these needs. The public would also be educated about such plans and told how to communicate with authorities. The bill would also designate a representative for each state to advise local authorities and act as a liaison between the local and federal governments.

Additionally, the legislation would create new grant categories for counter terrorism under the Firefighter Assistance program and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program of \$250 million each. These grants would be awarded through the existing program to local fire and police departments specifically for counter terrorism training and equipment with no matching funding required from the local governments.

-30-