

Thursday, June 23, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District joined with a number of his colleagues to introduce bipartisan legislation that provides vital support to firefighters and first responders. H.R. 2269, the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act, reauthorizes programs that assist firefighters and first responders with the equipment, training, and personnel needed to protect their communities.

“As a number of fires continue to burn throughout New Mexico, it is critical that we provide our firefighters with the resources they need to successfully do their job,” Congressman Luján said. “Their bravery and service to our community is unparalleled as they fight on multiple fronts to protect New Mexico’s families, homes, and land. These fires are bound to take a toll on the equipment our firefighters rely on, and these grants will help ensure they have the tools they need to get the job done.”

H.R. 2269 reauthorizes the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program. The AFG program provides funds to local fire departments to purchase equipment and provide training. The SAFER program assists fire departments in hiring personnel. The bill authorizes \$1 billion for the AFG program each fiscal year from 2012 to 2016 and \$1.1 billion for the SAFER program during the same time period.

In addition, the legislation modifies the programs to make it easier for local fire departments to take advantage of funding through AFG and SAFER by lowering the matching requirements for the AFG program and modifying the time and matching commitments for the SAFER program.

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