House Approves Bilirakis Security Initiatives as Part of TSA Authorization

 WASHINGTON (4 June) – Today, the U.S. House of Representatives approved H.R. 2200, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Authorization Act of 2009 which included two measures sponsored by U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.) to enhance pipeline security and fund explosive detection equipment at our nation’s airports.

Over the past six years, there have been multiple instances of individuals rupturing pipelines in the Tampa Bay area. Most recently, in November 2007, a 30-mile-long anhydrous ammonia pipeline in Riverview, Florida, was vandalized which led to the release of a poisonous chemical cloud and the evacuation of 300 local residents. The authorization included a provision Bilirakis authored to clarify federal pipeline safety and security procedures and determine whether additional measures are necessary to protect our nation’s critical pipelines.

 “The rupturing of pipelines in the Tampa Bay area in recent years should serve as a reminder that federal agencies must remain vigilant to ensure residents are not at risk,” Bilirakis said. “We must do all we can to make certain our nation's pipeline infrastructure is protected from possible terrorist attacks as well as acts of vandalism.”

 In addition, the bill included a Bilirakis authored provision that will ensure that airports that took early action to protect travelers by purchasing explosive detection equipment after the September 11th terrorist attacks will receive the reimbursement they were promised by TSA and Congress.

"Tampa International Airport has spent more than $100 million for equipment and deserves to be reimbursed in as timely a manner as possible for its willingness to spend scarce resources to protect the flying public," Bilirakis added. “I expect that this provision will result in Tampa and other airports around the country finally receiving the funds they were promised years ago, which will ultimately allow for further security enhancements."
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