



Member Floor Statement

The Committee on Energy and Commerce

W.J. "Billy Tauzin" Chairman

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**Statement of Honorable W.J. "Billy" Tauzin
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
H.R. 3448 Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Response Act of 2001
December 11, 2001**

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Response Act of 2001, which I have introduced with my good friend, Mr. Dingell, the Ranking Member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and a strong bipartisan list of cosponsors. This legislation about the safety and security of American families and our country; we are today stepping up to profound threats of terrorism and other public health emergencies. We do so by combining smart innovative policy with additional resources to prepare the country for bioterrorist threats and to improve our ability to respond effectively and quickly to such threats when they arise.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you some specifics on the important investments this legislation will make and the dramatic range of issues it will address. First, title I of the bill significantly steps up our preparedness and capacity to identify and respond to threats. This title will improve communications between and among all levels of government, public health officials, first responders, and health care providers and facilities during emergencies. Our bill authorizes \$1 billion in FY 2002 in grants to States, local governments, and other public and private health care facilities and other entities to improve planning and preparedness activities, enhance laboratory capacity, and educate and train health care personnel. We specifically authorize \$40 million in FY 2002 for training grants to relieve shortages of critical health care professionals.

The Department of Health and Human Services will have a new focus, and improved coordination and accountability, through a new Assistant Secretary for Emergency Preparedness. The legislation also authorizes the National Disaster Medical System, new planning and reporting provisions, health professional verification systems during emergencies, training exercises, and improved communications strategies. The bill further authorizes \$450 million in FY 2002 for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to upgrade its capacity to deal with public health threats, to renovate its facilities, and to improve its security.

H.R. 3448 will also ensure that we have sufficient drugs, vaccines, and other supplies for the Nation's health security. Title I authorizes more than \$1.1 billion for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to expand our current national stockpiles of medicines and other supplies, including the purchase of small pox vaccines. We will encourage and expand research and development of drugs, vaccines, and devices to combat bioterrorism and other potential disease outbreaks.

The bill also will enhance controls on deadly biological agents. In order to help prevent bioterrorism and to establish a national database of dangerous pathogens, Title 2 imposes new registration requirements on all possessors of the 36 most dangerous biological agents and toxins. It mandates tough new safety and security requirements to ensure that only legitimate scientists working in appropriate laboratory facilities can gain access to these potential weapons of mass destruction. Title 2 also enhances criminal penalties for those caught in possession of these agents, or transferring them, without proper registration.

Title 3 of the bill helps protect the safety of America's food and drug supplies. We're increasing by \$100 million the Food and Drug Administration's resources to hire more inspectors at our borders and develop new methods to detect contaminated foods. In addition, we're providing the Secretary the additional regulatory authority he requested for FDA to detain foods to investigate credible evidence of contamination, and to improve access to records and record-keeping to assist the Secretary in investigating such threats to the food supply. This title also improves our enforcement

and inspection capacities for our drug supplies. These new resources and authorities will substantially improve our country's ability to ensure safety and confidence in our food and drug supply.

Title 4 of the legislation will ensure that drinking water systems across the country assess their vulnerability to terrorist attack and develop emergency plans to prepare for and respond to such attacks. This title also requires a comprehensive review of ways to detect and respond to chemical, biological, and radiological contamination of drinking water -- as well as ways to prevent and mitigate the effects of physical attacks. In addition, existing criminal penalties and fines for tampering with drinking water systems are substantially increased. A total of \$170 million in Fiscal Year 2002 is authorized for these efforts.

Americans deserve to know we are taking concerted action to protect the water they drink every day. Title 4 will lay the groundwork for developing the necessary information, and emergency planning and response efforts that are needed to address this new threat.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation builds on the tremendous work and leadership of President Bush and his Administration over the last three months. And, importantly, it builds on existing programs, rather than creating new ones that will only delay the distribution of monies to the front lines. We have spent time to integrate programs and to make sure our National efforts are focused and better coordinated. We have worked closely with the Administration to achieve this result and I am confident that the President will sign this bill.

I want to thank Mr. Dingell and other Members of the Committee on both sides of the aisle for their tireless and good faith efforts to produce a great bill. It is remarkable legislation for remarkable times. The House can be proud of this product and America can be confident in our commitment to make the right investments and smart policy choices to meet the challenge and protect our Nation's public health. I urge all my colleagues to support this landmark legislation.



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