

Committee News Release

The Committee on Energy and Commerce
W.J. "Billy" Tauzin, Chairman

Tauzin Hails House Passage Of Sweeping Bioterrorism Bill

Washington (December 12) – Moving swiftly to protect Americans from the threat of bioterrorism, the House of Representatives today overwhelmingly approved sweeping legislation, authored by House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Billy Tauzin (R-LA) and Ranking Member John Dingell (D-MI), that significantly improves our nation's ability to respond effectively and quickly to bioterrorist threats and other public health emergencies.

The bipartisan bill, H.R. 3448, "***The Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Response Act of 2001***," was approved by the House this afternoon on a vote of 418 - to - 2, under suspension of the rules.

"That we are no longer immune to the threat of bioterrorism is abundantly clear," Chairman Tauzin said. "In a post September 11th world, it's critically-important that Congress strengthen our public health infrastructure at the national, state and local levels to better protect the American people.

"This sweeping package includes everything from beefed up food safety regulations to tightened controls on deadly biological agents. In short, this bill, when signed into law by President Bush, will improve our ability to respond effectively and quickly to bioterrorist threats and other public health emergencies."

Specifically, H.R. 3448:

- Authorizes more than \$1 billion 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, educate and train health care personnel, and to develop new drugs, therapies, and vaccines.
- Authorizes \$450 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to upgrade their own capacities to deal with public health threats, to renovate their facilities and to improve their security.
- Authorizes more than \$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 additional smallpox vaccines.
- Establishes a national database of dangerous pathogens, and imposes new registration requirements on all possessors of the 36 most deadly biological agents and toxins and mandates tough new safety and security requirements.
- Further protects our food supply by increasing by \$100 million FDA resources to enable the Secretary to hire more inspectors at our borders and develop new methods to detect contaminated foods.
- Better protects against chemical, biological or radiological attacks on our drinking water by authorizing over \$100 million for the development of vulnerability analyses and emergency response plans for our drinking water systems.

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