

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 14th-- House Appropriations Committee Ranking Democratic Member Rep. Norm Dicks made the following comments after release of Continuing Resolution bill text:

"It is vitally important that we move quickly on this Continuing Resolution and ensure that FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers have the resources they need to address the aftermath of recent natural disasters.

"However, I'm concerned that the Republican Majority has chosen to partially offset the cost of supplemental disaster relief by rescinding money from a program intended to reinvigorate American manufacturing and decrease our reliance on foreign oil. Offsetting emergency funds is a radical departure from the standard practice and sets an unfortunate precedent.

"For fiscal years 2002 through 2006, President Bush requested supplemental disaster relief funding eight times. Each of the eight requests was designated as an emergency and none were offset. This was not controversial and many of these requests were approved by voice vote and unanimous consent.

"However the type of offset in this bill is exactly what our side of the aisle wanted to avoid and is a case-in-point for why offsets haven't been sought out in the past: the bill pits disaster funding against other important budget priorities. This offset draws from the Advanced Technology Vehicle Manufacturing Program which has an additional 18 loan applications in progress that are projected to create 50 - 60,000 jobs. Some of these jobs will be at risk by using this offset.

"Despite my concerns, I will support this CR. The last thing we need, with a fragile economy and regions reeling from natural disasters, is another partisan political fight in Congress. The American public wants us to act quickly. We should pass this CR and work together to enact FY 2012 appropriations that promote economic growth and encourage job creation."

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