

For example, it includes \$910 million to defray firefighting costs and emergency fire-prevention efforts, and to help recover lands devastated by recent fires.

This has been one of the worst wildfire seasons on record, and while Colorado has not been as hard hit we have not been immune. Nationally, nearly 5 million acres have burned, costing over \$1.8 billion for Federal wildfire suppression activities, which is \$700 million above the average suppression cost.

So, it is appropriate that that measure includes a total of \$610 million for wildfire suppression activities, including sufficient funds to fully repay all agency operating and construction funds which were previously borrowed to support emergency suppression activities earlier this summer. This repayment will allow the Forest Service and the Interior Department to use contractors and staff to revive important projects which were delayed by the budget shortfalls earlier this year.

In addition, this legislation includes a total of \$175 million for urgently needed hazardous fuels reduction projects all over the Nation, including extensive areas in Colorado and other parts of the mountain west which are suffering unprecedented tree die-off from infestations of bark beetles and some other insects. Of this total, some \$125 million is for state and private activities and \$50 million for projects on national forests. Another \$100 million will be used for rehabilitation of burned areas, including \$75 million for the Forest service and \$25 million for the Interior Department, and another \$25 million is provided for firefighter retention.

Responding to the problems associated with insect infestations in Colorado's forests has been a high priority for me. I have worked with other members of our state's delegation on legislative proposals and have joined in efforts to secure increased funding for that purpose—so these parts of the bill are particularly welcome.

Further, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, I am also particularly glad to note that the FY09 Defense Department Appropriations bill included in this package puts our troops first.

It provides funds for necessary weapons and equipment and training, boosting funds particularly for the National Guard and Reserve; makes critical investments in the health of our troops, including \$300 million for traumatic brain injury and mental health; provides more than the president's request to improve army barracks and military hospitals; and compensates troops for every month their terms of service are involuntarily extended, also known as "stop loss." The bill also includes funding for important weapons systems and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance needs.

This legislation also provides FY09 funding for Defense Department military construction, including \$474 million for military construction projects at Fort Carson, as well as \$65 million for construction at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, \$4.9 million for land acquisition at Peterson AFB, \$18 million for Colorado National Guard readiness centers in Denver and Grand Junction, \$3 million for a satellite pharmacy and \$4.2 million for Alert Crew Headquarters at Buckley Air Force Base, and \$18 million to upgrade academic facilities at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Finally, this legislation includes FY09 funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs—

providing \$47.6 billion for veterans' medical care, claims processors, and facility improvements, including \$20 million for the new Fitzsimons VA hospital. The bill makes substantial increases in mental health and substance abuse programs, provides veterans with advanced prosthetics, provides additional resources for veterans who live in places where the VA does not offer sufficient services, increase the gas mileage reimbursement rate to 41.5 cents per mile, and improves access to care for veterans in rural areas.

In conclusion, I have decided the bill's merits—which include the fact that it will allow all federal agencies to continue their work until the next Congress can complete action on funding legislation for the remainder of this fiscal year—outweigh its defects, and I will vote for it.

TRIBUTE TO DENNIS OLEJNICZAK
AND GENE SCHULTZ

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Gene Schultz of Lansing, Iowa and Dennis Olejniczak of Decorah, Iowa for their service and dedication to their schools' baseball teams.

Together, their record is astounding: more than 2,500 wins, 12 state championships and 24 tournament appearances in a combined 79 years of high school baseball. But what is more interesting and incredible is that Gene Schultz and Dennis Olejniczak coach at rival high schools 35 miles apart.

Although Iowa has multiple seasons of high school baseball, which is one of the reasons for the high numbers, it truly comes down to their coaching philosophies. North Fayette's Dan Hovden, said this of Schultz and Olejniczak, "They both have a high regard for the game. They put the team above themselves and obviously it shows up in the end."

I thank and congratulate both Gene Schultz and Dennis Olejniczak for their hard work and commitment to coaching high school baseball. It is a great honor to represent Gene and Dennis in the United States Congress, and I wish them the best.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 2008

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the Republican Leadership standards on earmarks, I am submitting the following information for publication in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD regarding earmarks I received as part of, H.R. 2638—The Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009.

A. Rivet Joint ISR Network Integration (0305207F 192 MANNED RECONNAISSANCE SYSTEMS.) The entity to receive funding for this project is L-3 Integrated Systems, located at 10001 Jack Finney Blvd., Greenville, TX 75402. The funding would be

used to provide networking upgrades that will enable it to fully collaborate with a variety of Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) nodes so that more effective projections of threat environments can be made.

B. PrePreg Thickness Variability Reduction Program (0603680F 29 MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.) The entity to receive funding for this project is Cytec Engineered Materials, located at 4300 Jackson Street, Greenville, TX 78402. The funding would be used to reduce the variability of prepreg thickness to +/- 1 percent, which is a substantial improvement over even foreign prepreg capabilities. Reducing variation significantly complements and enhances the advancements expected to be made in the areas of tooling and manufacturing. These achievements are crucial for Cytec's military and commercial partners.

C. Stryker Common Active Protection System (APS) Radar (0603653A 62 ADVANCED TANK ARMAMENT SYSTEMS (ATAS).) The entity to receive funding for this project is Raytheon Network Centric Systems, located at 2501 West University, McKinney, TX 75070. APS is an externally mounted vehicle protection system that identifies, discriminates and intercepts RPGs, mortars, antitank guided missiles and artillery projectiles after they are launched toward a combat vehicle. The system consists of the Multi-Function Radio Frequency (MFRF) radar, launchers, fire control processors and countermeasures.

Please see attached for financial plan of each project. Neither I nor my spouse has any financial interest in these projects.

FINANCE PLAN

Requesting Member: Rep. RALPH M. HALL.

Bill Number: H.R. 2638.

Account: Air Force, RDT&E, Line 192, PE 0305207F, Manned Reconnaissance Systems.
Project Name: Rivet Joint ISR Network Integration.

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: L-3 Communications Integrated Systems.

Address of Requesting Entity: 10001 Jack Finney Boulevard, Greenville, TX 75403.

Anticipated sources of funding for the duration of the project: Additional funding would be provided by the Air Force to procure this capability after successful demonstration of the developmental prototype, in their future years budget requests.

Percent and source of required matching funds: N/A, this program is providing a good or service to the Department of Defense.

Justification for use of federal taxpayer dollars: The RIVET JOINT will provide networking upgrades that will enable it to fully collaborate with a variety of Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) nodes so that more effective projections of threat environments can be made. Detailed analysis of RIVET JOINT operations shows that full integration of networked capabilities will result in a 25 percent improvement in critical Threat Analysis Measures of Effectiveness for priority dual-use commercial communication threat environments. The specific threats that will be addressed by this system upgrade are the highest priority threats to ongoing military operations.

Detailed finance plan: \$750,000 is for Non-Recurring Engineering Design and Development; \$750,000 is for Manufacture Design and Production of Networked Speech, Geo-Location, and Reach-back Processing and Data