

Altmire Secures \$45 Million for Ohio River Navigation Projects

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-4) announced today that he has secured \$45 million for important Ohio River navigation projects through a bipartisan effort involving President George Bush, U.S. Senator Arlen Specter, U.S. Senator Bob Casey, and Rep. Mike Doyle (PA-14). The funding was included in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act for FY 2008 (H.R. 2641) which passed this afternoon in the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 312 to 112. H.R. 2641 must be approved by the U.S. Senate and the President of the United States before it becomes final and the funding is made available to the recipient, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District.

Congressman Altmire successfully obtained \$43 million to make emergency repairs to the Emsworth Locks and Dams, located on the Ohio River immediately downstream of the City of Pittsburgh. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has declared that the Emsworth Locks and Dams are in an exigent situation, requiring immediate attention. There is a 74 percent likelihood of failure of one of the dam gates, and the systems are unreliable due to recent failures resulting from extreme corrosion.

Congressman Altmire also secured \$2 million to implement the Upper Ohio River Navigation Study for Emsworth, Dashields, and Montgomery Locks and Dams. The study will determine the best plan for maintaining safe, reliable, efficient, and environmentally sustainable navigation of the Upper Ohio River. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this is the most important navigation study on the Ohio River.

"I am pleased that the bill includes funding for these vital projects for our region," said Congressman Altmire. "The Port of Pittsburgh is the second largest in-land port in the nation with 20 million tons of goods transported annually through the locks on the Ohio River on their way to and from Ohio, West Virginia, and as far away as the Gulf of Mexico. Reliable navigation at the Emsworth, Dashields, and Montgomery Locks and Dams directly contribute to 19,000 jobs and \$4.3 billion in wages and salaries each year."

"The Ohio River's locks and dams are among the oldest in the nation," explained Congressman Altmire. "The 85-year-old Emsworth Locks and Dams, the oldest of the three, received an F grade from the American Society of Civil Engineers. A failure at any of these sites along the Ohio River could be devastating to the economy of the region. This funding will enable the beginning of modernization efforts at these sites and will help ensure that the Port of Pittsburgh remains open for business."

"Congressman Altmire led the House effort in securing the necessary funding to repair and upgrade the locks and dams along the Ohio River," Congressman Doyle stated. "Our region's waterways are essential components of our economic infrastructure. If we don't modernize them, economic growth in our region will be choked off. Consequently, I was glad to work with Congressman Altmire to produce this important accomplishment."

"The Port of Pittsburgh Commission appreciates the critical priority that the House of Representatives' action places on maintaining safe and reliable locks and dams in southwestern Pennsylvania," said James McCarville, Executive Director of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission. "This funding is badly needed. We appreciate the quick interest Congressman Altmire has taken in these projects."

Colonel Michael P. Crall, Pittsburgh District Engineer, commented, "These projects are vital to the region and will enhance the reliability of our critical navigation infrastructure."