

## ***Moloka'i Times***

# **Armed Services Committee Approves 2008 Defense Bill with Abercrombie Amendments: Bill Includes \$72 Million for Hawaii-Based R&D**

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(Washington, D.C.) - The House Armed Services Committee early Thursday morning approved the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act, which articulates the nation's defense policy, authorizes all operations of the U.S. Department of Defense and sets priorities for defense spending.

The committee adopted Rep. Neil Abercrombie's Air and Land Forces Subcommittee recommendations, including reductions in funding for design elements of a multi-billion dollar high tech weapons system still on the drawing board. The reductions freed up critically-needed funds for National Guard and Reserve forces to replace equipment that has worn out, been destroyed or that had to be left in Iraq when the unit rotated home.

"We have had to make some tough choices because the defense budget we were given to work with is not a bottomless well," said Abercrombie. "Making sure that our troops in combat have everything they need is our top priority - period!"

Abercrombie was also successful in targeting more than \$72 million to military research and testing contracts in Hawaii, including:

• \$8 million for sonar mapping, water quality testing and analysis in the areas where the U.S. military dumped tons of chemical munitions into the ocean at the end of World War II;

• \$6.24 million for further research, development and installation of marine mammal detection systems on Navy aircraft. These aircraft would fly over naval training areas before their use and help ships avoid harming dolphins and whales with sonar equipment.

• Eleven different projects totaling more than \$42 million for defense research and the development of laser communication, new sensor technologies and advanced systems to detect explosives and biological contamination.

"These research and testing programs are critical for our national defense and will bring good high-tech jobs to Hawaii businesses and institutions," said Abercrombie. "All these projects will allow our military services to operate more effectively and, ultimately, keep our country safer."

Abercrombie also garnered \$500,000 for STARBASE Hawaii, an innovative Department of Defense educational curriculum aimed at promoting improved academic performance in science and mathematics. STARBASE Hawaii will be conducted by the Hawaii Air National Guard with fifth grade students on the Big Island.