
U.S. Representative

John Spratt

South Carolina # 5th District

News Release

December 21, 2001, For Immediate Release

Contact: Chuck Fant, 202-225-5501

Rep. Spratt was cosponsor

House Passes Bill to Protect Water Supply

WASHINGTON – The U.S. House of Representatives has passed legislation cosponsored by U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) to help protect the nation’s water supply from terrorist attack.

“Our water system provides safe and plentiful water to more than 250 million Americans,” said Spratt, “but it was not built with security from terrorism in mind. This bill addresses that.”

H.R. 3178, which passed on Dec. 18, authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency to make grants or enter into cooperative agreements for the purpose of preventing, detecting, and responding to biological, chemical, radiological, or cyber attacks on the nation’s water supply system. The bill authorizes \$12 million for pilot programs for each of fiscal years 2002 through 2006 and requires that 50% of the funds for any specific project come from non-federal sources.

Spratt said threats to the nation’s drinking water and wastewater systems include chemical, biological, and radiological contaminants; disruption of flow through explosions or other destructive actions; and cyber attacks.

“Drinking water systems are at risk because of on-site stockpiles of chemicals that could create fire, explosion, or other hazards,” said Spratt. “In addition, because many systems are controlled by computers, cyber threats are possible.”

Wastewater treatment plants depend on toxic chemicals as well and often store large volumes of liquid chlorine and sulfur dioxide. “An explosion could create a toxic cloud that could threaten employees and surrounding communities,” Spratt said.

“In recent months, Congress has passed bills to guarantee the security of our airlines, our borders, and our public buildings. It is only fitting to include water resources in this effort. H.R. 3178 is a step toward achieving this goal,” he said.

###