

News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)

Assistant to the Democratic Leader

Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget

US House of Representatives – Washington, DC

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Contact: Chuck Fant, 202-225-5501

Spratt Secures Funds for Fairfield County Airport

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) announced today he has secured \$440,000 for a much-needed 500-foot runway extension at Fairfield County Airport. The money was included in the Omnibus Appropriations Act the House passed on Monday.

The airport has been valuable to the smaller communities it serves and a back-up to Owens Field, the general aviation airport in Columbia. It is a critical asset in attracting major industry to the area.

While Fairfield's existing runway – 5,000 feet – is adequate for small business jets, it is unable to handle cargo-carrying or corporate jets. These aircraft can take off and land on a 5,000-foot runway if they are carrying reduced loads in favorable weather, but when the runway is wet, they cannot do so safely.

Spratt said the airport has conducted environmental assessments and feasibility studies that prove the need for this extension, and there has been no public opposition.

“Mack Truck was attracted to Fairfield County partly by the county's airport,” Spratt said, “and the runway was extended to 5,000 feet to accommodate Mack. I am convinced that Fairfield's chances of locating a replacement industry will be enhanced by these improvements of its airport. So, I am pleased to see these airport improvements funded, and I hope that the resulting business investment will bring more jobs to Fairfield County, and soon.”

Spratt also credited Senator Hollings for his help in securing these funds. “For years,” said Spratt, “Senator Hollings has been instrumental in bringing money back to South Carolina for projects like this one.”

Spratt, who obtained \$375,000 for the airport last year, said he was pleased the money came through, despite the budget. “At a time when the federal budget is tight, I am especially pleased that we were able to get funds for the airport that will make Fairfield County more attractive for industrial development.”

The Omnibus Appropriations Act now moves to the Senate, which might not take it up until mid-January. “Until the omnibus bill passes the Senate, and the President signs it,

provisions of this kind are still in play,” said Spratt. “But Senator Hollings has been a great help in the Senate, and with his help, I am optimistic that it will pass.”

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