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ALLARD'S EFFORT TO RESTORE FUNDING FOR PUEBLO DEPOT CLEANUP MEETS WITH SUCCESS

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, announced Thursday that the U.S. Senate has approved a FY 2005 Department of Defense Authorization Bill that authorizes \$147 million for the continuation of cleanup at the U.S. Army's Pueblo chemical weapons depot. The vote was 97-0.

“This defense authorization bill signals a continuing commitment on the part of the U.S. Senate to maintain momentum in the Pueblo Depot cleanup project,” Senator Allard said. “Combined with last month's announcement by Under Secretary of Defense Michael Wynne that the Army has decided to stick with the current technology for the cleanup, today's vote represents a significant step forward toward getting the job done.”

The Department of Defense's (DoD) initial FY2005 budget request for the project, made in February, would have resulted in a significant shortfall in funding and, as a result, would have caused the cleanup to be delayed. But Senator Allard prevailed upon the Senate Armed Services Committee to restore the full funding needed for the project to continue on schedule. The Senate reaffirmed the committee's action by approving the FY 2005 DoD Authorization Bill Wednesday evening.

“The FY 2005 DoD authorization bill would allow the Pueblo Depot project to maintain its high-priority status,” Senator Allard said. “The full Senate has recognized the urgency in the need to destroy the Pueblo Depot's weapons stockpile, not only in order to meet our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, but for reasons of homeland security as well. In essence, the Senate voted to keep this project on track.”

The legislation that the Senate approved also authorizes a 3.5 percent across-the-board pay raise for military personnel and an additional \$925 million for heavily-armored Humvees and enhanced individual body armor. It recommends overall funding of \$422.2 billion in budget authority for defense programs in FY2005, an increase of \$20.9 billion above the amount authorized by Congress for FY2004.

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