
CAPITOL CONNECTION

A Weekly Update of News and Views
For Opinion Shapers and Policy Makers

Congressman Gary G. Miller
42nd District, California



November 2, 2007

Santiago Fire Update

Congressman Miller would once again like to extend his gratitude to all the firefighters and law enforcement officers continuing to battle the Santiago Fire in the 42nd District. Currently, the fire is 90 percent contained, and full containment is expected by Sunday night. Congressman Miller would also like to remind readers about the following resources available to those impacted by the fire.

Air and Water Quality: Individuals starting the cleanup and recovery process should be aware of certain health hazards and precautions. The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) recommends that individuals wear a well-fitted paper mask or bandana, full-coverage clothing, and gloves during cleanup. The California Environmental Protection Agency also provides information regarding recovery on their website at www.calepa.ca.gov/disaster.

FEMA: Recovery processes have already been implemented and impacted residents are strongly encouraged to begin applying for aid either online at www.fema.gov or by phone at (800) 621-FEMA.

Orange County Local Assistance Center: Located at the One Stop Center/Strip Mall on 126 Technology Way, Suite #200 in Irvine, the Local Assistance Center is also available as a one-stop information center with representatives available to assist in filling out necessary paperwork.

Taxes: Both the State of California and the IRS are extending deadlines and providing important fire-related tax help. For further information regarding tax extensions and other related inquiries, please call the IRS Disaster Hotline at (866) 562-5227 or visit their website at www.irs.gov. Additional information and forms are available through the California State Board of Equalization online at www.boe.ca.gov or by phone at (800) 400-7115.

For additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Congressman Miller's Brea office at (714) 257-1142.

Water Supply Bill Authored by Congressman Miller Passes the House

Last week, the House unanimously approved a bill authored by Congressman Miller to significantly increase Southern California's supply of water. The Santa Ana River Water Supply Enhancement Act authorizes federal funding for a number of important local water projects including wetlands development in the Prado Basin, expanded groundwater desalination in the Chino Basin, and the construction of regional brine lines. When complete, these projects will increase Southern California's water supply by 37 billion gallons per year. Congressman Miller believes that if we are to sustain America's economic growth and provide for a rapidly increasing population, we must continue to ensure that our communities have efficient and reliable access to water resources. He is pleased to report that a companion measure was introduced in the Senate on Wednesday.

Congress Acts to Defend Flag Folding Ceremonies

Recently, military families were denied traditional ceremonial burial services at the Riverside National Cemetery. Following objections to the 13-fold flag recitation, which contains religious references, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) responded by banning the recitation entirely. Outraged, Congressman Miller joined his colleagues in signing a letter to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs asking that the recitation be allowed if the family of the deceased makes the request. Yesterday, the VA issued a memo to all cemetery directors in the National Cemetery Administration that states the 13-fold flag recitation will again be allowed at military funerals. Congressman Miller is pleased this misguided policy was reversed and believes that we must send a signal to these brave men and women that our government takes care of all those who sacrifice on our nation's behalf.

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