

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Joe Courtney today announced that Groton's Poquonnock Bridge Fire Department secured a \$748,896 grant through the Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) program. The grant is a regional victory, and will allow seven fire departments – Poquonnock Bridge, City of Groton, Center of Groton, Old Mystic, Mystic, Noank and Groton Long Point – to improve the radio infrastructure of their dispatch center. The improvements will cover all of Groton and parts of Stonington.

“As we see consistently in emergencies, state-of-the-art communications equipment is absolutely essential to firefighters and their ability to respond effectively,” **said Congressman Courtney.** “This targeted will improve the communications infrastructure that our first responders use, and will allow the department to better serve the people of Poquonnock and the surrounding area. Chief Paige and his team deserve a tremendous amount of credit for demonstrating need in a challenging funding environment.”

The improved dispatch center infrastructure will improve mobile-to-mobile communication and portable radio-to-dispatch communication. It will also improve the ability of alerting first responders and volunteers of emergency calls and will ensure that communications equipment complies with FCC narrowbanding requirements before they take effect next year.

“This funding will eliminate gaps in radio coverage, and will allow our fire fighters to communicate more effectively,” **said Chief Todd Paige of the Poquonnock Bridge Fire Department.** “Improving the radio infrastructure for our dispatch center will ensure that units responding to calls can talk to each other and to the dispatch center. It will enable better coordination in emergencies, and will ensure that they are resolved more safely and efficiently.”

Congressman Courtney has consistently supported additional funding for AFG Program since his arrival in Congress. Since 2001, the AFG has provided approximately \$4.6 billion in grants to first-responder organizations to obtain much-needed emergency response equipment, personal protective equipment, firefighting and emergency vehicles, and training.

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