

Legislative work—cont.'d

The regional Energy Advisory Board will create a biomass cluster that will develop a comprehensive map of the regional biomass assets, capitalize on opportunities to promote existing biomass efforts, and organize around specific actions to develop organization capacity to transform the Valley into a national leader in biomass expertise, research, and development.

Fire Fighting

Congressman Nunes expressed his concerns to House Speaker Dennis Hastert about an amendment to H.R. 1588, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004.

The amendment would establish a 2-year pilot program providing for the use of Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard Modular Airborne Fire-Fighting Systems to fight wildfires by waiving the Economy Act of 1934. This provision, if enacted, could negatively affect the business interests of private contract aerial fire fighting operations in the San Joaquin Valley. Waiving the provisions that require land managers to exhaust all private and commercial sources, prior to accessing military equipment or personnel for use in fighting forest wildfires, removes any free-enterprise protections and clearly places private business in a precarious position - potential bankruptcy.

General

Congressman Nunes honored the Space Shuttle Columbia crew by cospon-



Rep. Devin Nunes is concerned a proposal could negatively affect private contract aerial firefighting businesses that have been so valuable to the region.

soring legislation that will name the Downey Space Learning Center after the doomed spacecraft.

The City of Downey is home to the site of the former Rockwell International aerospace plant. It was at this site that the space shuttle fleet was manufactured, including both the Challenger and the Columbia. City residents and former Rockwell employees are proud of their accomplishments in building the shuttles and remain very committed to the shuttle program. This bill would designate the science learning center in Downey as the Columbia Memorial Space Learning Center as a living memorial to the seven Columbia astronauts who died serving their country in the name of science and research.

Government Waste

Congressman Nunes joined the Congressional Working Group to Eliminate Government Waste. This working group aims to find legislative solutions to the growing problem of waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government. Additionally, the working group will focus on educating other members and staff about the vast abuse of taxpayer money in the federal government.

Healthcare

Rural Healthcare

Congressman Nunes became a cosponsor of H.R. 1675, the *Health Care Access and Rural Equity Act of 2003*. Major provisions of the bill include:

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