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Barrow-Kelly Nuclear Security Amendment Passes House Transportation Committee

*Bipartisan measure gives U.S. Coast Guard the primary responsibility for
defending nuclear power facilities located on navigable waterways*

Washington, DC – The House Transportation Committee yesterday passed a bipartisan nuclear security measure introduced by Georgia Congressman John Barrow (D-Savannah) and Republican Congresswoman Sue Kelly (NY-19) that will give the U.S. Coast Guard primary security responsibilities for defending nuclear power facilities located on navigable waterways.

“This measure is extremely important since nearly all of the country’s 104 nuclear facilities are located near navigable waters,” Barrow said during the Transportation Committee hearing. “Terrorists have used speed boats in attacks against Israel and in the Persian Gulf, and we need to take this kind of threat seriously here in the United States.”

“This provision will go a long way towards protecting a segment of our nation’s energy infrastructure that remains vulnerable,” Congresswoman Kelly said.

Both Rep. Barrow and Rep. Kelly represent congressional districts that have nuclear power plants located on navigable waterways: Barrow represents Plant Vogtle, located on the Savannah River outside of Waynesboro, Georgia, and Kelly represents Indian Point Energy Center, located on the Hudson River in Buchanan, New York.

The Barrow-Kelly amendment makes the Coast Guard the primary federal agency responsible for the naval defense of nuclear power plants. Currently, the Department of Energy has this responsibility. The amendment requires the Coast Guard to provide boats capable of intercepting and destroying water-borne threats to nuclear power facilities, and gives the Coast Guard greater access to information and better cooperation with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission regarding the defense of nuclear facilities.

The amendment was added to the FY '07 Coast Guard Authorization, which will receive a full vote on the House floor later this year. If passed by Congress, it would provide \$9 billion in new funding for the Coast Guard.

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