

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) today joined a bipartisan effort to provide earlier storm warnings to people who live in manufactured housing.

At a Capitol Hill news conference, Bachus advocated the passage of CJ's Home Protection Act (H.R. 2787), which requires all new manufactured and mobile homes to be equipped with weather radios. Bachus is a lead sponsor of the bill, introduced by Rep. Brad Ellsworth (D-IN) in response to a tragic tornado that took the life of a young child.

"This is the final link in protecting families and residents in these communities. We are able to get warnings out, sometimes as much as a half hour or more before a severe storm arrives. We have the ability to build shelters. Now we are going to give residents an opportunity to hear these warnings earlier so they can take shelter from the storm," Bachus said at a Capitol Hill news conference.

The legislation is named in memory of CJ Martin, a two year old boy who was killed during a tornado in southwest Indiana in 2005. His mother, Kathryn, helped pass a state law requiring the manufactured housing industry to install NOAA weather radios in all newly-built units and spoke at the news conference in support of similar federal legislation. Bachus will help spearhead the bill with Congressman Brad Ellsworth (D-IN), who as sheriff responded to the scene of that tornado.

"The cost of installing these radios is very small. This is going to save lives. It is going to save families," said Bachus, who said the incident prompting the bill was similar to a December 2000 tornado in Tuscaloosa County whose 11 victims included a 16 month old child.

The legislation, which is also sponsored by Reps. Dennis Moore (D-KS) and Kay Granger (R-TX), will be referred to the House Financial Services Committee, where Bachus serves as Ranking Member. Bachus said he will work to have a hearing scheduled on the bill.

Bachus is the author of a 2003 law that permitted federal community development block grant funds to be used for the construction of storm shelters. He attended a ribbon-cutting in April for a new storm shelter in Riverside in St. Clair County.

Congressman Bachus today also attended a NOAA Weather Radio awards ceremony at the U.S. Capitol honoring individuals and businesses who have promoted storm awareness and safety. The Chief Meteorologist for ABC 33/40 in Birmingham, James Spann, was presented with a special Mark Trail award for the station's public outreach and informational initiatives. WAFF Television in Huntsville was also recognized for its public safety outreach.