

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus said his proposal to cut disaster aid red tape will save more than \$20 million for Alabama at a time when hard-hit communities are facing new cleanup costs from tornados that hit the state last week.

Bachus announced that he has won the support of the ranking member on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Representative John Mica (R-FL), for an amendment that would relieve the state and its localities from having to spend \$20 million of their own funds to match \$150 million in federal emergency assistance.

“Alabama would get all of the federal disaster aid it’s entitled to. But this would lift a financial burden from the state and our communities, some of which are facing new costs as a result of the recent tornadoes,” Bachus said.

The savings would come from eliminating the matching share requirement that states and communities must meet to receive special Hurricane Katrina and Rita recovery aid.

Under current law, the Federal Emergency Management Agency requires a local match from the State of Alabama or its communities for the following programs.

Category

<u>State Match</u>	<u>FEMA Amount</u>
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Public Assistance

\$105.8

million

\$ 5.6

million

Other Needs Assistance

\$

31.5 million

\$10.5 million

Hazard Mitigation

\$ 13.0

million

\$ 4.3

million

Alabama was not included in legislation that would exempt Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Texas from the matching share requirement. The bill, the Hurricane Katrina and Rita Match Relief Act, was approved was approved by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee last week.

Bachus' plan to offer an amendment when the full House considers the bill has won the backing of the top Republican on the panel.

“As ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I support Congressman Bachus' amendment and agree that

fairness and equity require Alabama be included in the relief from the matching requirement due to the extraordinary circumstances of the storms that devastated the Gulf Coast region,” stated Congressman Mica.

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