

WASHINGTON, Thursday, March 22, 2001 - The House of Representatives today gave its overwhelming approval to legislation introduced by U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-AL) to help cities and counties build tornado-safe shelters in manufactured home communities.

"Today, the technology is there to give early and normally ample warning to our citizens when a powerful tornado approaches. What is missing for many of our citizens is a safe shelter from that storm," said Bachus.

The legislation, which allows local governments to use Community Development Block Grant funds to construct shelters, passed the House 400-6.

During debate on the floor, Bachus pointed out that current shelter programs discriminate against mobile home residents.

"Communities can use existing federal programs to build shelters and safe rooms for site-built homes, apartment buildings and schools. For some inexplicable reason, manufactured housing is left out. That's not right. Mobile home residents shouldn't be excluded. My bill simply levels the playing field so manufactured housing communities qualify, just as others already do," said Bachus.

Yesterday, Bachus announced that Alabama is receiving a \$2.7 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to build safe rooms in site-built homes. A safe room is a reinforced interior space within an existing home where an individual or family can survive a tornado with little or no injury.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is one of the

largest sources of federal assistance to local governments. Last year, Alabama received almost \$60 million in CDBG funds.

Bachus introduced the bill on January 30.