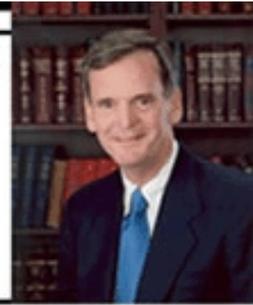


NEWS RELEASE

Judd Gregg

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BILL TO PREVENT SPREAD OF WEST NILE VIRUS PASSES SENATE

Washington, DC - Both Houses of Congress have passed a bill to help stop the spread of the threatening West Nile Virus. The legislation, sponsored by Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, will help state and local governments control their summer mosquito population by directing federal money straight to the efforts of these local authorities. The bill, called the Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act, also directs the National Institutes of Health to continue research into the best ways to stop the insects and vermin that are responsible for spreading diseases like West Nile. The bill passed the Senate on June 16th and the House of Representatives on July 25th.

Already this year, 164 people have been affected by the disease in 16 states. According to the Centers for Disease Control, at least four people have died. This marks a concentrated rise in the spread of West Nile Virus.

“A lot of rain this season and high humidity has led to new reporting of birds dying of the West Nile Virus, and new fears that this disease can continue to spread. The legislation we have passed will provide immediate relief to local and state authorities to help them keep this summer’s mosquito population under control, and therefore the risk of West Nile low. People can now spend the ‘dog days of August’ sitting by the lake and at family barbeques without worry that each pesky mosquito they swat is potentially dangerous, and they can rest assured that significant work is being done to prevent the spread of West Nile” said Gregg.

The West Nile Virus, first discovered in Africa, spread to North America in 1999 showing up in New York City. The disease is spread by mosquitoes and can infect humans and other mammals, sometimes fatally. According to the Center for Disease Control, there were over 4,000 U.S. human cases of West Nile Virus and 284 deaths in 2002.

Summary of the MASH Act:

S. 1015, The Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act:

- Provides \$100 million total in local grants to control the mosquito population - the bugs responsible for transmitting West Nile Virus.
- Creates grants for local governments to implement mosquito control programs.
- Creates grants for states to coordinate efforts within their state.
- Instructs the NIH to conduct research on how best to control insects and vermin responsible for spreading diseases like the West Nile Virus.

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