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For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, announced that last night the House of Representatives passed a \$18.8 billion fiscal year 2008 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Appropriations Bill that includes funding for local livestock protection programs.

The appropriations bill includes \$200,000 to expand the Cooperative Livestock Protection Program throughout Pennsylvania. Every year Pennsylvania farmers lose thousands of dollars from wildlife predators, crop destruction and wildlife damage. For example, the Pennsylvania coyote population has soared from 100 in 1974 to well over 30,000 today. This population increase, combined with habitat destruction, causes coyotes to prey on farm animals and results in thousands of dollars in economic loss for PA farmers.

The Livestock Protection Program will provide PA farmers with the technical and operational assistance they need to identify, control, and prevent damage and economic loss caused by black vultures, Canadian geese, European starlings, coyotes, and other wildlife.

"This funding is necessary to control the predator population and allow local farmers to protect crops and livestock from damage," commented Murtha.

The FY08 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Appropriations Bill also makes key national investments into:

* Rural Housing Loans: \$176 million above the President's request to fund \$5.1 billion in affordable loans to provide housing to low-income families in rural areas, with no increase in fees.

* Rural Community Advancement Programs: \$729 million, \$158 million over the President's request, to support grants and loans to rural areas for community facilities, water and waste disposal systems, and economic development initiatives.

* Renewable Energy: \$1.2 billion, \$810 million above the President's request, for bio-energy and renewable energy research and development, including loans and grants in rural areas.

