

Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson Has Expressed Her Strong Support for the Rapid Deployment Fortification Wall in the U.S. Defense Budget

JO ANN EMERSON
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
8TH DISTRICT, MISSOURI

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2506

April 2, 2003

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The Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2340 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hunter and Ranking Member Skelton:

I am writing to ask for your continued support of the Rapid Deployment Fortification Wall (RDFW) as you prepare the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004. I am grateful that the committee authorized initial funding for this technology in FY 03 under *PE 636-10M for Marine Corps Advanced Technology Demonstrations* and ask for an additional authorization of \$3.5 million in FY 04.

As you recall, the RDFW is a collaboration between Geocell Systems, Inc., Eastman Chemical Company, and Spartech Plastics, a Missouri-based company with a production facility in my congressional district. The U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Warfighting Lab already is in the process of purchasing sample grids of RDFW with the funds authorized and appropriated in FY 03. These samples will be used for testing revetments and bunkers. In fact, a portion of these grids will be shipped immediately to the Middle East for use in the Persian Gulf. Beyond that, the USMC has indicated that more samples will be needed to conduct ballistics and bomb blast testing. Therefore, I am requesting \$3.5 million in FY 04 to purchase RDFW for these additional tests.

Last year during a demonstration in my district in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, I was able to witness firsthand the incredible advantages of RDFW over sandbagging. The fortification wall was developed as a replacement to the outdated task of filling and stacking sandbags. This new technology can be used as a direct replacement for sandbags in a number of applications including military force protection, homeland security, and flood protection.

The RDFW, developed through a cooperative research and development agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is an expandable, stackable, modular wall made of a tough, lightweight, environmentally responsible plastic that can be filled with sand, or other locally available fill material, for use in a number of disaster, emergency and military protection applications. It can be constructed in one-twentieth the time, using only one-fifth the labor, of a comparable sandbag wall. With RDFW, a crew of six people and one loader operator can

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construct a fortification wall 100 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 4 feet high in just one hour. An equivalent sandbag wall requires 35 laborers and over 19 hours to construct.

Like sandbags, RDFW is a flexible tool with multiple applications. From a military standpoint, RDFW's speed can be used to rapidly establish blocking positions, forward operating points, and fire support bases. Originally designed and Army-tested for bomb blast protection, RDFW can serve as a direct replacement for sandbags in a wide variety of field fortifications, including standoff blast protection, artillery emplacement shelters, bunker wall construction, and vehicular barriers.

Again, I thank the committee for providing initial funding for the RDFW. Your support has opened the door to providing our military with a new tool that greatly improves its force protection capabilities. I urge your continued support of the RDFW in FY 04. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



JO ANN EMERSON
Member of Congress

JAE/gc



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The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations
H-149 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Murtha
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations
2423 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lewis and Ranking Member Murtha:

It is my understanding that our colleague, Loretta Sanchez, is requesting funding for the continued support of the Rapid Deployment Fortification Wall (RDFW). As you prepare the Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2004, I would like to lend my strong support for this request. I am pleased that the committee appropriated initial funding for this technology in FY 03 under *PE 63640M for Marine Corps Advanced Technology Demonstrations*, and I support the request for an additional appropriation of \$3.5 million in FY 04.

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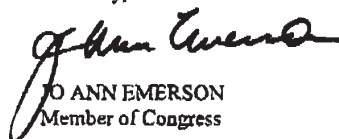
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