



ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

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ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY WELCOMES ENACTMENT OF BILL BLOCKING FUNDS FOR RAILROAD BYPASS

President Bush Signs Export-Import Bill into Law

Washington, DC - The Armenian Assembly today hailed the enactment of legislation prohibiting funding for a railroad linking Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia while bypassing Armenia. The bill was signed into law this week as part of a comprehensive measure known as the Export-Import Bank Reauthorization Act of 2006.

The legislation included an amendment by Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Rick Santorum (R-PA) ensuring that no Export-Import funding is used for a rail line which seeks to isolate Armenia from economic and regional transportation corridors. The provision mirrors the South Caucasus Integration and Open Railroads Act, which was introduced in both Houses with the support of the Armenian Assembly.

In a statement to the Assembly, the Co-Chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues welcomed the adoption of the Export-Import bill.

"We are pleased that this important amendment was included in the final overall legislation," said Reps. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Joe Knollenberg (R-MI). "U.S. policy in the South Caucasus seeks to foster regional cooperation and normalization of relations, not isolation. We urge Turkey to review its policy of alienating Armenia, end its 13 year blockade and take steps to cooperate with its neighbors."

Enactment of this provision is part of the Armenian Assembly's anti-isolation campaign and resulted in a successful outcome with final passage in the waning days of the 109th Congress.

"This Assembly initiative to combat Turkey's and Azerbaijan's attempts to isolate Armenia is just one of the many ways in which we are working to ensure a secure and prosperous homeland," said Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "We very much appreciate the leadership of House and Senate Members for bringing this important initiative to fruition."

"I also want to thank those organizations and individuals who joined us in this community-wide effort," he added.

The Armenian Assembly of America is the largest Washington-based nationwide organization promoting public understanding and awareness of Armenian issues. It is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt membership organization.

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