

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Darren Soto
9th District, Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 26, 2017

Contact: Oriana Piña, Communications Director
(202) 213-3332

Rep. Darren Soto Helps Secure \$4 million Grant for Polk County Fire Rescue

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Representative Darren Soto (FL-09) announced today that the Polk County Fire Rescue will receive a \$4 million federal grant to strengthen its operations by hiring additional firefighters and the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. The competitive Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), aims to more effectively protect the health and safety of the public with respect to fire and all other hazards.

In a [letter](#) of support sent to FEMA, Congressman Darren Soto argued that Polk County's forests and dangerous drought conditions made the area a vulnerable location for fires, including recent fires in the south part of the county. Soto reinforced that response time, efficiency, and safety when responding to fire emergencies will be exponentially increased with the support of additional funding.

"I'm proud to announce that Polk County Fire Rescue will receive over \$4 million from FEMA to ensure firefighters, our local heroes, have the resources they need to do their jobs effectively and safely. Not only will these funds help Polk County Fire Rescue respond to fire emergencies faster, but it will also help make Polk County a safer place to live," said Congressman Soto.

Other nearby awardees include Orange County, who was granted \$5.3 million in SAFER money. This was a collaborative effort by the Orange County delegation. The award grant, allocated through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), will help strengthen Central Florida's ability to respond to fire and fire-related hazards, and improve the overall level of preparedness. SAFER gives fire departments the ability to attain and maintain 24-hour fire department staffing, assuring that communities have adequate protection.

Congressman Soto will continue to support and encourage federal grant applications that improve the lives of Floridians. His office has a staffer dedicated to identifying grants and working with members of our community navigate the federal grants process.

###