

Billions sought in U.S. 'pork' projects

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Pork-barrel funding, curbed by the U.S. Congress a year ago, is making a stout comeback with billions of dollars aimed at home districts, a watchdog group says. Earmark spending in the U.S. House of Representatives' defense authorization bill soared 29 percent, from \$7.7 billion last year to \$9.9 billion, reports Taxpayers for Common Sense, a non-partisan Washington watchdog group. The Senate bill, which hasn't been approved, includes an increased number of earmarks, although for a slightly lesser total cost, The Washington Post said. Lawmakers promised to cut back on earmarks and did last year but the practice is surging again, reports say, as hundreds of projects were added quietly to the congressional spending plans. In the Senate, Joseph Lieberman, Ind-Conn., led the way with his participation in 14 requests worth more than \$292 million, some of them involving other lawmakers, and Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., made 48 requests, many with colleagues, worth more than \$198 million, the report says. Sens. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., and Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., led Republicans with requests each totaling more than \$180 million. Leading earmarkers in the House include Rep. Solomon Ortiz, D-Texas, Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii, Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., and Rep. Robin Hayes, D-N.C.

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