

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2006

# LIEBERMAN WARNS OF ACTIVE HURRICANE SEASON IN NORTHEAST

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Ranking Member Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., warned Thursday of an active 2006 hurricane season, not just for the Gulf Coast and the Carolinas, but also for the northeast, including Connecticut. In remarks delivered at a daylong homeland security summit organized by Senate Democrats, Lieberman also said that almost five years after September 11 and three years after the Homeland Security Department was established, the Bush Administration has failed to provide adequate leadership on homeland security or to fund critical security gaps including needed training and equipment for first responders.

“We’ve already had the National Weather Services tell us this is going to be another severe hurricane season,” Lieberman said, “and not just for the Carolinas and the Gulf Coast. It is going to come up the coast possibly to New York and Connecticut. “If the Bush Administration continues to do nothing about global warming, we can expect continued severe hurricane seasons,” he added. Since the inaugural budget of the Homeland Security Department, the men and women on the frontlines – either of a natural disaster or a terrorist attack – have not received the funding, training, or the equipment they need to do their jobs properly, Lieberman said. The Administration is also under funding port, rail and transit, and chemical security. “Hurricane Katrina exposed the serious flaws in our preparation, response, and recovery system,” Lieberman said. “And yet, the Administration offered a Fiscal Year 2007 Homeland Security Department budget that failed even to keep pace with inflation.” Lieberman and HSGAC Chairman Susan Collins investigated the failed preparations for and response to Hurricane Katrina for seven months and produced recommendations for

improvement earlier in May. Among their recommendations was a more powerful emergency response agency that would also be responsible for preparing for terrorist attacks or natural disasters. The head of the restructured agency would have to have relevant emergency management experience. Emergency management experts, medical responders, academics, police officers and fire fighters from across the country participated in a day of forums and workshops to discuss the right plans to protect our nation and to prepare for the next emergency. Among those attending from Connecticut were:

- Chief William Austin, Chairman, Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee
- Mr. Chris Cannon, System Director, Office of Emergency Preparedness, Yale New Haven Health Systems
- Mr. Matthew Cassavechia, Director, Emergency Medical Services Health Systems, Danbury Health Care Affiliates
- Mr. Roy Pietro, Executive Director, Homeland Security Education Center, University of Connecticut
- Dr. John Shaw, Medical Response Coordinator, Capitol Region Metropolitan Medical Response System
- Commander Glen Sulmasy, Director, Institute of Leadership, U.S. Coast Guard Academy
- Deputy Chief Robert Walsh, Hartford Fire Department