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September 15, 2011

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Congressman Charles F. Bass (R-NH) today welcomed the Senate Appropriations Committee's approval of funding to open the federal prison in Berlin.

By a vote today of 29 to 1, the Committee approved a Fiscal Year 2012 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies spending bill which includes funding for the Berlin facility. The bill now moves to the full Senate for consideration. The House version of the appropriations bill also includes language urging the Bureau of Prisons to prioritize funding for activation of facilities where construction has already been completed.

"I am glad that this funding has been included in the Senate's 2012 spending plan, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the New Hampshire delegation to see that this badly needed facility finally opens," **Senator Shaheen** said. "Taxpayers have already paid to build this prison, it makes no sense for it to stand empty."

"Opening the Berlin prison is a top priority for me, and I've worked closely with Senator Shaheen and Congressman Bass to advance this urgent goal. It makes no sense to spend \$4 million per year to keep open an empty prison," said **Senator Ayotte**. "It will take all members of the delegation, in the Senate and House, working together to get Berlin open. This facility will ease over-crowding in America's prisons while providing jobs in the North Country, and I will continue to make the case for Berlin as the appropriations process continues."

Congressman Charles Bass (NH-02) said: "It is imperative that we get the Berlin prison open as soon as possible to help create jobs and revitalize the North Country economy. The members of the New Hampshire Congressional Delegation and I remain committed to ensuring Congress follows through on its commitment to the people of New Hampshire and the American taxpayers by ensuring the prison no longer sits vacant and is fully operational as soon as possible."

Senators Shaheen and Ayotte and Congressman Bass have worked collaboratively throughout the year to activate the Berlin prison, which has been vacant and unstaffed since it was completed in 2010. The Berlin facility is estimated to create more than 300 urgently needed jobs and inject \$40 million into the North Country economy, which has been hard hit by job losses and the economic downturn.

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