

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), a member of the Joint Economic Committee, today released the following statement regarding Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) Special Inspector General (SIG) Neil Barofsky's report to Congress on the use of TARP funds. Hinchey successfully amended the TARP Reform and Accountability Act of 2009 to include language that required the TARP SIG to report to Congress on how the initial \$350 billion in bailout money has been spent. That measure passed the House, but was never taken up in the Senate.

"Special Inspector General Barofsky's report makes it abundantly clear that there remains an enormous lack of accountability over how TARP funds are being used. Much of the problem is rooted in the Treasury Department's refusal to attain the relevant information from the banks that receive TARP funds. Special Inspector General Barofsky's report refutes the Treasury Department's claim that such information is too difficult to attain.

"With hundreds of billions of dollars in taxpayer money being handed out to bailout banks that have proven themselves untrustworthy, the American people cannot afford to simply hope that these banks are using the TARP money responsibly. I strongly urge Treasury Secretary Geithner to use Special Inspector General Barofsky's report as an opportunity to improve oversight of the TARP funds. While there has been a lack of adequate accountability thus far, we can and must reverse course and begin to account for the TARP money. It's critical that we know the TARP program is working effectively and that we can account for how taxpayer money is being handled by the very entities whose recklessness and greed got us into this mess in the first place. I'm hopeful the administration, which inherited this faulty program from the Bush administration, will act in this regard, but if not then Congress must pass legislation to require such accountability."