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By Appointment



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

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April 25, 2022

The Honorable David E. Price  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Housing and Urban Development,  
and Related Agencies  
2108 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Housing and Urban Development,  
and Related Agencies  
374 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Borough of Eatontown NJ  
47 Broad St  
Eatontown, NJ 07724  
[eatontownnj.com](http://eatontownnj.com)

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

I write to respectfully request Community Project Funding for the Eatontown Community Flood Mitigation Project in Eatontown, New Jersey in my Congressional District.

This project, sponsored by the Borough of Eatontown, intends to increase housing and economic resiliency by mitigating catastrophic flooding in the historic district of this diverse community by:

1. increasing short-term storm water storage to reduce ponding/flooding and the damage it causes to housing, businesses, roads and transportation; and
2. perform dam/spillway repairs and improvements to enable the municipality to lower the water level of Wampum Lake in advance of a storm event, as well as bring the dam spillway into NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) compliance thus preventing cyclical damage to housing, businesses, roads and transportation.

By way of background, in 1670 that Thomas Eaton surveyed Wampum Lake and the land around determining that it provided exactly what he needed to build a grist mill which was used by local farmers. Near this mill, a small village evolved with a tannery and general store servicing travelers along what was called the Red Bank Turnpike. By 1850, the town consisted of forty homes. The Eatontown Steamboat Company constructed docks to ship the milled flour out of the Shrewsbury River to New York City. Eatontown served as a crossroads for farming

and trade. The town, aptly called named after Eaton grew around the trade which originated at Wampum Lake.

Currently, the total population of Eatontown is 13,597; 14.9% are persons 65 years old and older, 14.7% are Hispanic, 11.5% are Black or African American and 7.9% are Asian. Approximately 11.2% of the town is considered below poverty level; 8.6% are people with a disability; and 10.2% are persons without health insurance under the age of 65.

The residents in the Wampum Lake watershed region of Eatontown are predominantly apartment occupants and it is this area that experiences repetitive, significant flooding events due to a lack of short-term runoff storage available in the watershed. During high-intensity rainfall events, Wampum Lake runoff backs up into various properties, most notably, but not exclusively, onto the Eatoncrest Apartment Homes property.

The effects of the flooding are significant and dangerous for the residents of Eatoncrest – a 412-unit complex which houses a cross-section of income levels including several families on Section 8 assistance and those without significant financial means. A typical flooding event can cause significant apartment damages as well as vehicle damages for the residents.

The intensive flooding also undermines the roadways and support structures. And emergency response is delayed for these residents as traversing flooded streets is difficult and parking of heavy ambulances and fire trucks is not possible on soggy ground.

To restore resiliency and reduce economic losses to the local economy and residences, the Borough has engaged a professional engineering company to review the flooding and formulate a plan to mitigate this dangerous and burdensome hazard.

The engineering plan calls for adding stormwater basin storage within the watershed to help mitigate the flooding, including enlarging an existing stormwater basin upstream of the Eatoncrest Apartments that will provide additional storage and detention—and act as a buffer. They estimate that this portion of the project, including due diligence, design, permitting, and construction could cost \$2 million. This infrastructure improvement would help to protect area residents and businesses and make for more resilient and sustainable housing.

In addition, the engineering plan envisions improvements to the dam/spillway to mitigate flooding while also brining the structure into compliance with the dam safety standards such as modifying the primary spillway to ensure that it can safely handle the spillway design storm. This may require either spillway enlargement or overtopping protection and would also include rehabilitation or replacement of the inoperable sluice gates. The spillway area is one of the most visible features as you enter the Borough from the north along Route 35, just past the gateway to Fort Monmouth. It is also the borough's Veteran's Memorial Park and the property is on the Borough's Recreational and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) list. This aspect of the project, including due diligence, design, permitting, and construction could cost an additional \$2 million.

Based on the projected costs above, if the entire \$4 million for both phases could not be funded, the Borough would prioritize the funding request of \$2 million to complete the stormwater basin improvement project and help alleviate the most intense flooding. It is worth noting that projects of this nature are especially challenging for smaller municipalities since funding would likely supplant other capital projects such as roadway maintenance/improvements, sanitary sewer maintenance improvements, and storm drainage improvements.

This project is widely supported by the local community, including the local recreational department, NJ State Senator and Assembly Members, Monmouth County Commissioners, Eatontown police and first responders, and more.

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of my request for assistance for the Eatontown Community Flood Mitigation Project. Please feel free to reach out to me should you have any questions.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project. I appreciate the Committee's due consideration of this project.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress

Attached: pictures of flooding of apartment



Flash Flooding at Eatoncrest Apartments - Eatontown, NJ - July 2021