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

CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL EXECUTIVE  
COMMISSION ON CHINA

CHAIRMAN, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL  
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL  
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CO-CHAIRMAN, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

SENIOR MEMBER, HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

[www.chrissmith.house.gov](http://www.chrissmith.house.gov)

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
2007 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

I write to you today to request funding in fiscal year 2024 for a greatly needed wastewater treatment improvement project needed by the Ocean County Utilities Authority (Authority) which owns and operates three wastewater treatment plants, including the Central Water Pollution Control Facilities (CWPCF) located at 501 Hickory Lane, Bayville, NJ 08721.

This project, **Demolition of Existing Cover and Installation of New Cover for Primary Digester No. 2 at the CWPCF**, is estimated to cost \$7,700,000. The Authority has stated in writing its commitment to match up to 20 percent of the cost of this project.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it promotes the goals of the Clean Water Act, including enhancing public health, safety, and welfare, and extending the remaining useful life of one of the CWPCF's critical wastewater treatment assets. Additionally, improving water quality of effluent that ultimately flows into the Atlantic Ocean, reducing air emissions, and lowering plant operational expenses by increasing onsite generation of electricity are worthwhile objectives of the project. The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by Title VI of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C 1381 et seq.

The CWPCF is a secondary wastewater treatment facility located in Berkeley Township, N.J., in my congressional district, commissioned in 1978 with a capacity of 32 million gallons per day. Primary Digester No. 2 is an 85-foot diameter concrete sludge digestion tank with a liquid capacity of 1.2 million gallons. Since being placed into operation in the 1970s, the digester has been subjected to corrosive and destructive elements associated with the treatment of wastewater.

The scope of project includes the rehabilitation of an important and aging treatment plant process unit. The digester tank cover, and the mechanical, structural, electrical and instrumentation systems have reached the end of their useful life and require demolition, replacement, and rehabilitation to ensure continued efficiencies and effective treatment of wastewater. The project will provide additional biogas storage volume that in turn would allow the Authority to decrease operational expense by producing additional electricity onsite via cogeneration, which will help the Authority stabilize rates for the public.

The Authority reports that current condition of the cover poses environmental compliance and safety concerns due to the potential release of partially treated sludge to the ground surface and potential for release of biogas (methane) to the atmosphere.

Please note this project is a collaborative effort by the Authority, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), and local stakeholders committed to improving the reliability of regional wastewater treatment assets serving over 260,000 residents and visitors to Ocean County. The Authority has asked the project be added to the NJDEP's Intended Use Plan (IUP), and fully expects it to be added for the 2024 IUP. Included are letters of support from several of the largest of 16 towns which will benefit by this important project.

With large tracts of undeveloped land in this area, a strong demand for new homes and businesses, the county is expecting more growth. In fact, the 2010 Census showed the population of the county to be 576,567. Only 10 years later the 2020 Census showed the county grew to 648,998, an increase of 60,662 people, or over a 10.5 percent increase. This growth demands that the Authority modernize its resources to serve the public.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project to improve water pollution control for this growing county.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Smith". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress