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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
ORGANIZATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRMAN, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

SENIOR MEMBER, HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

www.chrissmith.house.gov

May 2, 2024

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

The Honorable Mark Amodei
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
2006 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Henry Cuellar
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Amodei, and Ranking Member Cuellar,

I write to respectfully request Community Project Funding in fiscal year 2025 for the Borough of Seaside Park Bayfront Flooding Mitigation and Shoreline Restoration Project located in New Jersey's Fourth Congressional District in Seaside Park, Ocean County, New Jersey, 09752. The Borough of Seaside Park is the requestor of this project while the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection will administer the grant.

Seaside Park is a barrier peninsula community, situated between the Atlantic Ocean and Barnegat Bay. The Bayfront Flooding Mitigation and Shoreline Restoration Project is critical to sustain the bayside shoreline of Seaside Park, develop a resilient living shoreline to better manage stormwater overflow in Barnegat Bay during extreme weather events, and to restore the critical estuarine ecosystem to promote native aquaculture and a healthy population of wildlife.

This project is focused along N. Bayview Avenue in Seaside Park, between I Street and Island Ave. Superstorm Sandy significantly altered the composition of Barnegat Bay and led to long-term erosion of the barrier peninsula shoreline. This portion of Bayfront Avenue has continued to deteriorate, resulting in chronic flooding during significant weather events, and has resulted in the destruction of critical infrastructure including New Jersey Department of Transportation pump stations, stormwater outfalls, critical underground utilities including gas mains, watermains, and sanitary sewer mains.

Stabilization of this portion of the shoreline is critical to protecting infrastructure, including the emergency evacuation route located 1 block from the shoreline. This evacuation route serves all points south of Seaside Park and leads to the most direct evacuation route to the mainland. Emergency vehicles are regularly impeded due to flooding during significant weather events.

This project will mitigate future hazards, promote flood control solutions, safeguard critical infrastructure, and restore the shore ecosystem of Barnegat Bay. By reconstructing the stormwater outfall, installing drainage improvements including tide flex valves, establishing a living shoreline including a vegetated dune system and aquatic barriers composed of oysters to dissipate wave action, Seaside Park will be better prepared to face future extreme weather events and protect critical infrastructure.

This project is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars as completion of the Bayfront Flooding Mitigation and Shoreline Restoration Project will enhance the resiliency of Seaside Park – and the entire barrier peninsula – to withstand severe weather events, promote ecosystem restoration, enhance erosion control abilities of the local community. The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by section 203 of the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. 5133), as amended by Section 1234, National Public Infrastructure Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation, of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act (DRRA) of 2018.

This project has a total cost of \$2,638,600. The Township has committed to fulfilling its 25% cost share requirement.

In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, Ocean County has enacted significant measures to mitigate flooding, promote ecosystem restoration, and maintain critical natural open spaces to better manage storm surges and stormwater as the result of future extreme weather events. The inclusion of this project in this bill would support locally undertaken measures to enhance stormwater management and create a more resilient coastal ecosystem as this project enjoys the widespread, strong support of local, county and state elected officials, as well as Stockton University Coastal Research Center and the American Littoral Society.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,


CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress