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

CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL EXECUTIVE  
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CHAIRMAN, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL  
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CO-CHAIRMAN, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

SENIOR MEMBER, HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

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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 Silver Lake Stormwater Management and Resource Protection Project located in New Jersey's Fourth Congressional District in Belmar, Monmouth County, New Jersey, 07715. The Borough of Belmar is the requestor of this project while the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection will administer the grant.

The purpose of this project is: to improve the stormwater management abilities of Belmar and the surrounding communities by repairing a flow pipe between Silver Lake and the Atlantic Ocean that runs under Ocean Ave, between 5<sup>th</sup> Ave and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave; to improve stormwater retention and drainage capacity; to establish effective flood mitigation measures by establishing a living shoreline; and to restore a healthy estuarine ecosystem to better mitigate the effects of extreme weather events.

The ability of Silver Lake to discharge floodwaters as the tide recedes is a critical component of Belmar - and the regions - stormwater management capacity and ability to withstand severe weather events, such as Superstorm Sandy.

Prior to Superstorm Sandy in 2012, the lake had a direct connection to the Atlantic Ocean via a buried pipe that allowed the ocean water to enter the lake at high tide and freshwater to exit the lake at low tide. As a result, the brackish lake had a regular flushing of new, clean water. However, due to intense storm events, this interconnection became blocked, and Silver Lake has been acting as a freshwater

impoundment since the blockage. This has resulted in eutrophication, a large population of geese, and nutrient loading from stormwater runoff. In 2023, there began a dangerous health advisory from harmful algal blooms (HABs)—that risk persists today and will continue until the lake is restored.

This project is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars as completion of the Silver Lake Stormwater Management and Resource Protection Project will enhance the resiliency of Belmar 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.

The cost of this project is \$5,500,000, and the Borough is committed to providing the 25% cost share of \$1,375,000.

Additionally, inclusion of this project will support local and state efforts to protect resources in the form of the estuarine ecosystem of Silver Lake and the Shark River tidal area and allow for more efficient and resilient stormwater management systems in Belmar and the surrounding communities.

The Borough of Belmar has enacted significant measures to mitigate flooding, promote ecosystem restoration, and maintain critical natural open spaces to better manage storm surge in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy.

The inclusion of this project in this bill would support locally undertaken measures to enhance stormwater management and create a more resilient coastal ecosystem.

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

Sincerely,

  
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress