

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

OCEAN

Visit: 33 Washington Street
Toms River, NJ 08754
Mail: PO Box 728
Toms River, NJ 08754
(732) 504-0567

MONMOUTH

1715 Highway 35 North
Suite 303
Middletown, NJ 07748
(732) 780-3035



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

March 31, 2023

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

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

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Granger, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member Quigley,

I write to respectfully request Community Project Funding in fiscal year 2024 to fund the *Seaside Heights Revitalization Project* in the Borough of Seaside Heights, New Jersey in my Congressional District (NJ-04).

The Seaside Heights Revitalization Project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds as it is in keeping with the stated goals of the Community Development Block Grant program, being a project with a clear economic development benefit. Tourism is the chief driver of the local economy, and immediate investments in much needed infrastructure would reinvigorate ocean front businesses and local merchants.

The project is currently shovel ready with architectural plans and bid specifications completed. The amount requested for this Community Project Funding is \$2 million. The project has overwhelming local support, including from the Seaside Heights Business Improvement District, which represents all businesses within the community and is a partner for this project, the Seaside Heights Property Owners Association, as well as from local, county and state officials. The project has a federal nexus funding provided is for purposes authorized by Chapter 42 U.S.C. Section 5305(a)(2).

Seaside Heights, a quaint, year-round community and summer destination, was devastated when in 2012, Superstorm Sandy made landfall in Ocean County. The Barnegat

Peninsula, on which Seaside Heights sits, was the most storm-ravaged part of the County. In Seaside Heights, the storm washed away sections of boardwalk, the intense waves collapsed the pier into the ocean, and Sandy devastated scores of businesses – almost every ride, attraction, and business was gone. Homes were smashed together, washed away and buried in sand. A year later the devastating South End Boardwalk fire claimed 50 businesses, many which had been recently rebuilt after Sandy.

The economic devastation was severe. Since 2016 Seaside Heights has received supplemental State funding through the Transitional Aid to Localities Program due to the direct and indirect impacts of Sandy and the South End Boardwalk Fire.

Seaside Heights is a unique Jersey Shore destination. Unlike some high-net-worth shore towns, Seaside Heights is a predominantly blue-collar, working-class town that has been designated as an overburdened community under the NJ Environmental Justice Law. At least 35% of households qualify as low-income and at least 40% of residents identify as a minority. An Equity Analysis of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority indicates that 62.4% of the Borough's population is low income, 24.7% minority, and 20.8% disabled. Economic development is a top priority for this community.

Now, 11 years later, there is still one glaring ruin which has yet to be rebuilt, the Hierung Avenue Bath House, the revitalization of which is expected to have a significant impact on the local economy. This construction project will provide greatly needed economic support to this classic American Boardwalk's post-pandemic economic renaissance. The project calls for redeveloping the Sandy-demolished structure with amenities that are essential for today's public beach access, including public restrooms, showers, lockers, changing rooms, elderly persons and disabled persons accessible viewing deck, and related storage.

The Borough of Seaside Heights has received previous HUD funding and, therefore, has prior experience with HUD programs (e.g., Community Development Block Grant Program).

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

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of my request for assistance for the *Seaside Heights Revitalization Project*. I appreciate the Committee's due consideration of the proposal.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress