

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1806

May 10, 2024

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

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for bridge improvements to support traffic and flooding between East Baton Rouge and Ascension Parish. The entity to receive the funding is East Baton Rouge Parish located at 222 Saint Louis Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802. These funds will be used to raise an existing bridge above the 100-year flood level and ensure that local residents, emergency responders, and commercial drivers can safely access their jobs and homes, even after a high-water event.

This will be a valuable use of taxpayer dollars because it will ensure that this roadway remains open in one of the fastest-growing areas in the state. Louisiana is one of the most flood-prone states in the nation, and this bridge, in particular, is regularly subject to closures after severe rainstorms. Furthermore, because of siltation over time, the bayou that flows below the bridge has a retrograded slope, resulting in even longer times for flooding to dissipate. In the event of an inundation, it can take anywhere from several days to several weeks before Bayou Manchac can appropriately drain and even longer for the bridge to be inspected and confirmed as safe for drivers again. In the past, the parish has needed to close the bridge for more than one month after a high-water event. During this time, the bridge is impassable to emergency vehicles as well as residential and commercial motorists. What's more, the drivers that use Perkins Road must take circuitous routes to reach their destinations, causing traffic congestion on other roadways, restricting job access, and limiting the ability of emergency responders to access an area experiencing flood conditions.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 42 U.S.C. §5305(a)(2). The statute specifies that activities assisted may include “the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or installation of . . . public works, facilities . . . and site

or other improvements[.]” East Baton Rouge Parish will use these funds to improve an important public bridge crossing and thus it fits within the eligible uses of the statute.

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, appearing to read "Garret Graves", with a stylized, cursive script.

Garret Graves
Member of Congress