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8TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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March 28, 2023

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

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

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting \$5,000,000 in funding for the Brevard Aquarium Dr. Duane De Freese Coastal Conservation Hub project in fiscal year 2024. The funding recipient for this project is East Coast Zoological Society of Florida, Inc.'s DBA Brevard Zoo, located at 8225 N Wickam Rd, Melbourne, FL 32940.

Funding for this request will be utilized in the development of the East Coast Zoological Society of Florida, Inc's (ECZS), first and largest building of its Aquarium, the three-story, 23,990 sq. ft. Dr. Duane De Freese Coastal Conservation Hub. Named in honor of the executive director of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Council and National Estuary Program—and, widely regarded as a leading expert and advocate for the conservation of the IRL—this building will serve as a center for coordinating and facilitating regional restoration, research, and education efforts across Central Florida.

This innovative building will include:

- A staffed, free-to-the-public Restoration Science Resource Center where residents can find answers to their coastal restoration questions and explore the latest research findings on lagoon restoration efforts;
- Three flexible classrooms for training the next generation of environmental stewards, with a focus on middle and high school students;
- A visiting research pod including temporary workspaces and two wet labs for fast processing of samples collected in the region;
- High-tech meeting and training rooms to host conservation networks, scientific and community meetings;
- A volunteer center for Aquarium and Lagoon restoration volunteers; and

- A new Coastal Policy Program focused on researching lagoon-friendly policy initiatives.

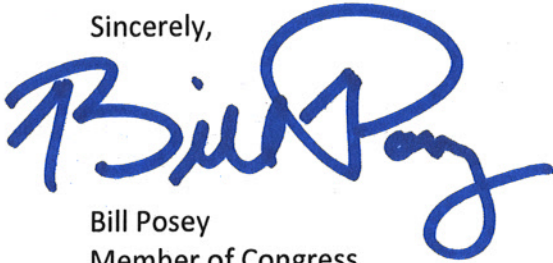
ECZS will break ground on the Aquarium by September 29, 2024, for a planned opening by December 31, 2026. However, remediation and engineering activities are already underway.

Today, the United States spends millions of dollars on coastal and wetlands projects at home and abroad. When the U.S. government protects wetlands, it is maintaining or restoring natural water purity, controlling for floods, and protecting the habitats of birds, fish, and other animals, as well as other vital biodiversity. Better understanding of the effects of climate changes and patterns, industrial development, and environmental ecosystem imbalances enhances the government's ability to sustain the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. The preservation and restoration of the Indian River Lagoon makes important national and regional economic development contributions.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized in the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. § 1451 et seq.).

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 "Bill Posey". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Bill Posey
Member of Congress