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8TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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March 24, 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 \$1,440,000 in funding for the Indian River Lagoon – 200 Septic Upgrades to Advanced Treatment project in fiscal year 2024. The entity to receive funding for this project is Brevard County, located at 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way Building A - Suite 219, Viera, FL.

The funding would be used to upgrade septic systems to NSF-certified aerobic treatment units or “in-ground nitrogen reducing drainfields” approved for use in the State of Florida to reduce nitrogen pollution. Costs to install advanced septic systems and properly abandon conventional septic systems will be covered up to \$18,000 per participating home. When sea levels rise, the depth of water over seagrass increases. For light to penetrate to the increasing depth of the seagrass beds, water clarity must improve. Healthy seagrass beds make estuaries more resilient to storms, erosion, sewage overflows. Clean water and healthy seagrass beds are critical to subsistence, fishing, and for food.

Specifically, this project will upgrade 200 septic systems that pose the highest threat to Indian River Lagoon water quality in terms of excess nitrogen loading. The Indian River Lagoon has been designated as a National Estuary and is federally listed as impaired for excess nitrogen. Septic systems are currently responsible for approximately 20% of the nitrogen pollution load entering the lagoon. Excess nitrogen feeds harmful algal blooms. These blooms manufacture toxins and block light needed by seagrass to survive. Extensive loss of seagrass is responsible for the starvation of hundreds of manatees, an iconic and listed species, and impacts the health of other marine life, as well.

This project will also reduce nutrient pollution in the watershed of the Indian River Lagoon. Septic Upgrades are a cost-effective tool for retrofitting existing development to reduce pollution at the source. Septic upgrade grants are only offered to parcels where connection to the sewer is not feasible.


The community project funding would benefit a variety of households, including some low-income households. There are over 53,000 septic systems in Brevard County that release nutrients into the watershed of the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary. The load from each has been modelled and systems that are contributing the highest loading will be prioritized. The local match of 20% will come from a voter-approved half-cent sales tax dedicated to funding projects and programs identified in the Brevard County Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it will improve livelihoods, prevent harmful algal blooms that cause severe damage to the environment, and make the community more resilient.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by Title VI of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C 1381 et seq.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,



Bill Posey  
Member of Congress