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May 23, 2025

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the Pawcatuck Village Community Park in fiscal year 2026. The entity to receive funding for this project is the Town of Stonington, located at 152 Elm Street, Stonington CT 06378.

The funding would be used for turning an underutilized and overgrown property into a community asset, turning it into a park that will provide public access to the water, ADA-accessible walking paths, shade structures, fishing areas, public restrooms, and parking. The current lot is a public safety concern and a place where litter gathers. A community park, within walking distance of residences and the downtown area, creates community wellness by providing a safe gathering space and an open area dedicated to public access to the river and recreational opportunities for youth and adults. The Town also plans to construct a low-impact stormwater drainage system. This significantly benefits the environment and local community by regenerating local groundwater sources and removing pollutants like nitrogen, phosphorus, and bacteria before they can reach surface waters like the Pawcatuck River. They will be rehabilitating the property with lighting and landscaping to improve visibility and public safety.

The project will serve as an example for how the Town can utilize and improve degraded property within a flood zone to create a valuable public amenity without displacing the flood storage capacity of the site. The proposed park would be a 0.2 mile walk from downtown Pawcatuck, a village and census-designated place within the Town of Stonington, and a 0.6 mile walk from the Edythe K. Richmond Homes, which are the Town of Stonington's housing authority property that is income-restricted for the elderly and disabled. The area is also within a census tract that is considered low- to moderate-income. Transforming and underutilized and overgrown property into a public park within walking distance of downtown Pawcatuck will enhance the quality of life for nearby residents and will enhance the downtown village's economic vitality.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 42 U.S. Code § 5305 (a)(1). HUD notes that public improvements include streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, parks, and flood and drainage improvements, among others. The project is a construction and capital improvement of a public facility.

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

Sincerely,

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress