

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1501

April 28, 2022

The Honorable David Price
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, &
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, &
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

As you begin crafting the fiscal year 2023 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you include \$7,000,000 in community project funding for the Soy-Enabled Rural Road Reconstruction project, which will be administered by Fayette County, located at 114 N Vine Street, Suite 200, West Union, IA 52175, for roadways across Fayette and Clayton Counties.

These funds would be used to rehabilitate several miles of roads in rural and underserved areas by using innovative material sourced from soybean oil in replace of petroleum polymers. This new, sustainable construction material was developed by Iowa State University (ISU) researchers, who will also be on site to implement the construction project. This project supports Iowa's economy and advances innovation that could strengthen our national security and shore up the national economy. The project will rehabilitate approximately 24 miles of roads in Fayette County (8.6 miles of IA-150 between 210th and 190th Streets near West Union) and Clayton County (11 miles of B-45 between Monona and Marquette; 4.5 miles of X28 through the city of Farmersburg; 0.4 miles of Washington Street within the Town of Volga), servicing over 4,600 vehicles per day.

These severely dilapidated roads serve as the region's primary bus and emergency services transportation routes, as well as accessways to business districts in developmentally-stifled regions. These roads serve small communities along the River Bluffs Scenic Byway, which previously attracted substantial tourism to serve as a revenue stream. In 1999, a major flood devastated the area, and the communities are still caught in a position where they do not have the funds to pay for much-needed repairs, but they cannot generate the revenue because the state of disrepair deters tourism and residential relocation. Providing federal funds to restore these roads would help those rural and underserved communities break this cycle and reopen the pathway to economic growth.

The project supports the translation of innovative new technologies that facilitate the decarbonization of our economy while strengthening our infrastructure by using soy-based polymers developed at Iowa State University. Soybeans are one of the United States' most produced crops, and Iowa is a leader in soybean production. This project will showcase an innovative solution that can be adopted nationwide, increasing the demand for soybean oil and bolstering our vulnerable domestic agriculture economy.

ISU's biotechnology will replace cracked and uneven pavement while also extending pavement longevity, further reducing the small towns' financial burdens of maintaining these heavily trafficked roads. Additionally, this sustainable roadway will help reduce the impact of flooding, as the new material can absorb more water – a key feature to a region that is particularly flood-prone. Impressively, the soybean oil-based roads will be able to sustain heavier weights, which will prove useful in prolonging the lifespan of the roads given the rural communities' need to transport heavy truckloads agricultural commodities around the area.

Maintaining our transportation infrastructure is an extremely resource-intensive task that must be mitigated to achieve state and national carbon emissions goals while reducing our reliance on crude petroleum. ISU's recycled content drastically reduces the costs and environmental impacts associated with the project, saving nearly 50,000 barrels-of-oil equivalents for the entire project.

Restoring these roads would empower the rural communities to rebuild their struggling economies, provide safety for children and families that depend on these roads, and increase efficiency in transporting local products to market. I strongly urge the Committee to include this community project funding request in the FY23 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Ashley Hinson

Member of Congress

Committee on Appropriations