

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

May 2, 2025

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

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

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting funding for the Restorative Aquaculture Capacity Enhancements Project in Fiscal Year 2026. The entity to receive funding for this project is Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute, located at 4020 South, Hwy A1A, Melbourne Beach, FL 32951.

The requested funds will be used to support critical infrastructure enhancements at the Indian River Lagoon Restorative Aquaculture Station (IRLRAS) in Melbourne Beach, Florida. The IRLRAS is a multi-partner facility established to advance aquaculture-based restoration of seagrass, shellfish, and fish populations in the Indian River Lagoon – an estuary of national significance facing ecological collapse due to decades of nutrient pollution, habitat loss, and declining water quality. This funding request will support two primary objectives. First, it will complete repairs to essential shoreline infrastructure, including the Station's seawall, boat ramp, and access road. Second, the request will support construction of a climate-controlled nursery facility designed to expand the Station's capacity to propagate and develop restoration stock for seagrass, shellfish, and coral.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it supports a nationally significant estuary while leveraging prior federal and state funding to maximize impact.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized under 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,



Mike Haridopolos
Member of Congress