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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas
51st District, California

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTOR PROTECTION,
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CAPITAL MARKETS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING,
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INSURANCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
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AND MONETARY POLICY

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WESTERN HEMISPHERE, CIVILIAN SECURITY,
AND TRADE
MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA,
AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

April 28, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

I am requesting funding for the “UC Riverside Critical Mineral Analytical Training Center” project in fiscal year 2023, in the amount of \$2,500,000. The entity to receive the funding is University of California Riverside, located at 900 University Ave Riverside, CA 92521.

This project would help establish an analytical facility to meet the needs of the emerging lithium (Li) industry in the Salton Sea region of the Imperial Valley. This project is a good use of taxpayer funds because it will provide data essential to the initial development and day-to-day operations of Li extraction and train generations of students for the lithium-based workforce in the region. In addition, this one-of-kind facility will yield novel chemical and isotopic fingerprints for the sources and fates of harmful dust derived from the Salton Sea. With this unique data, UCR will be able for the first time to map the spatial reach of related health impacts in the surrounding region.

Lithium development will require an exceptional lab in the region for extraction method development and optimization, operations, and battery research and manufacturing, and will require a highly skilled staff. There is currently nothing similar in place or planned in the region. The three tiers of instrumentation will provide unprecedented training. The requested combination will cover topics spanning from the highest-end research questions to the most routine and frequent analyses of the most common and straightforward samples from the energy industry. The lab would provide an essential opportunity for training a workforce for the Li industry and, more generally, preparing students from the region for a wide range of high-end lab jobs.

The facility will also provide a bridge for students from regional community colleges who may seek to obtain four-year degrees. From that position, and with the training and mentoring, these students will be well positioned for high-level laboratory jobs as analysts and managers in diverse fields. Those opportunities in both the public and private sectors include the environmental sciences; mineral and energy resources, such as the Li industry; and positions in the health sciences.

This project has received written support from, Berkshire Hathaway Energy, Controlled Thermal Resources, California Indian Nations College, Energy Source Minerals, Cal State San Bernardino,

Salton Sea Action Committee, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla, Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce, City of Palm Springs, and One Future Coachella Valley.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Vargas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Juan" and the last name "Vargas" clearly legible.

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress