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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas

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COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

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May 23, 2025

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Womack and Ranking Member Clyburn,

I am requesting funding for the “Sustainable Infrastructure at Southwestern College” project in fiscal year 2026, in the amount of \$7,000,000. The entity to receive the funding is the Southwestern Community College District, located at 900 Otay Lakes Road, Bldg.12, Rm 100, Chula Vista CA 91910.

This project will fund sustainable infrastructure improvements at Southwestern Community College District (SCCD), including electrical transformer upgrades and upgrades to recycled water irrigation. In particular, the funds would allow SCCD to assess and replace outdated transformers with energy-efficient alternatives; implement smart grid technology for improved monitoring and management of electrical systems; and ensure compliance with safety standards and regulations to ensure reliable power supply. It would also fund the campus’s conversion to recycled water irrigation, including the installation of new irrigation infrastructure capable of utilizing recycled water; the integration of smart irrigation technology for optimized water usage; and collaboration with local water authorities to establish sustainable water sourcing and distribution.

The pressing need for infrastructure improvements at the 63-year-old institution cannot be overstated. Recently, the campus lost one day of instruction due to aging electrical infrastructure that caused power outages on the Chula Vista campus. In addition, many community uses, such as youth sports leagues, were disrupted due to the power outage.

This project is a good use of taxpayer resources because not only will this project enhance the quality of education and overall campus experience, it will also yield significant environmental and sustainability benefits. By investing in water-use-reduction strategies and electrical-system upgrades, the campus can substantially decrease its environmental footprint while simultaneously cutting operational costs. By implementing measures to reduce reliance on traditional utility sources, such as upgrading irrigation systems to use recycled water and improving electrical infrastructure, the campus will not only maintain valued, community outdoor spaces but it will also demonstrate responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Also, by reducing general fund expenditures on utilities through increased efficiency and sustainability measures, the campus will ensure that taxpayer funds are utilized in the most cost-effective manner possible.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(2).

This project has support from the Southwestern Community College Board of Trustees and the Deputy Mayor of the City of Chula Vista, Carolina Chavez.

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

Sincerely,



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress