

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 22, 2025

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting \$2,500,000 in funding for the FY 2026 Texas A&M AgriLife Research National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NOAA Coastal Zone Management Oyster Research Project in Matagorda County, Texas. The funds requested will develop a long-term breeding program to support the new and rapidly growing Texas oyster aquaculture industry. Specific objectives include the following:

- 1) Establishing a breeding population to support long-term genetic improvement of growth, survival, meat yield, & nutritional traits.
- 2) Utilizing cutting-edge genomic techniques to optimize genetic improvement strategies for oysters & other aquatic species. The availability of genetically improved germplasm is a critical factor in maintaining profitability and sustainability for farmers. Expansion of shellfish aquaculture is a high-leverage activity for increasing food production because increased production does not involve a trade-off with existing terrestrial agricultural resources, and, as a completely undomesticated species, there is considerable potential to rapidly improve production by selective breeding. With access to robust, fast-growing oyster seed, this would drive industry growth and reduce risk of loss.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. § 1451 et seq.). Further, I also certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,



Troy E. Nehls  
Member of Congress