



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-4302

March 18, 2026

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

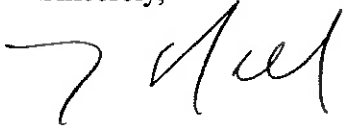
I am requesting funding for the Protecting Texas Rice from Devastating Rice Delphacid and Disease Pests by Improving Insect and Weed Management Strategies Project in Fiscal Year 2027. The entity to receive funding for this project is Texas A&M AgriLife Research, located at 600 John Kimbrough Blvd, Suite 512, College Station, Texas 77843. The funding would be used for addressing an urgent threat to Texas rice production caused by the invasive rice delphacid and the hoja blanca virus it spreads. Its primary objective is to understand how the pest and disease spread, how they damage rice crops, and to develop practical, affordable management tools that farmers can use quickly. The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it will contribute to the conservation and improvement of natural resources by enabling early detection and science-based management of rice delphacid and the hoja blanca virus, thereby reducing the need for repeated pesticide applications. Improved monitoring and predictive tools will allow rice producers to make targeted and timely management decisions, which can help reduce inputs and minimize off-target impacts on soil health and water quality.

At the state level, Texas rice contributes nearly \$500 million annually to the economy. Preventing losses conservatively estimated at over \$30 million per year safeguards this investment and ensures continued productivity in a key agricultural sector. This project ensures U.S. rice remains competitive and available for domestic and international markets. Outside of farming, a significant number of high value jobs are at risk regarding drying, milling, marketing, equipment sales, crop protection/fertilizer sales, banking, real estate, and several others that are dependent on rice farmers for survival.

This project has a federal nexus because it is for the purposes authorized by the Soil Conservation and Allotment Domestic Act of 1935, 16 U.S. Code sections 590a-590d and 590f-g.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Troy E. Nehls". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and "N".

Troy E. Nehls

Member of Congress