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March 13, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, 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 Chambers County Regional Emergency Response and Interoperable Communications Project in Fiscal Year 2027. The entity to receive funding for this project is the Chambers County Sheriff's Office, located at 201 North Court, Anahuac, Texas 77514. The funding would be used to enhance regional emergency response, interoperable communications, and technological capabilities in Southeast Texas. Chambers County sits along the upper Texas Gulf Coast and is home to one of the most significant concentrations of petrochemical and energy infrastructure in the United States, including the Mont Belvieu energy hub, a major national and global distribution point for natural gas liquids. The concentration of critical energy infrastructure, combined with the region's vulnerability to hurricanes, flooding, industrial accidents, and potential threats, including terrorist attacks targeting critical infrastructure, creates a unique public safety environment that requires advanced technology, resilient communications systems, and specialized response assets to effectively protect the public and safeguard resources vital to the nation's energy supply.

To address these operational challenges, the Chambers County Sheriff's Office seeks to acquire specialized response assets designed to enhance disaster and terrorist response, improve interoperable communications, and expand the agency's ability to safely assess hazardous environments. Specifically, this project would support the acquisition of an armored mobile command and interoperable communications platform capable of supporting disaster response operations, including high-water rescue missions, an advanced remotely operated robotic system capable of reconnaissance in hazardous environments and identifying potential threats to critical infrastructure, and three high-water rescue vehicles strategically positioned in different areas of the county to support flood response and evacuation operations. Together, these capabilities would provide first responders with improved situational awareness, resilient communications,

and the ability to safely operate during natural disasters, industrial incidents, or other emergencies affecting critical infrastructure.

These capabilities would function as an integrated response system designed to support local, state, and federal partners during large-scale incidents. An armored mobile command platform would provide a secure communications hub equipped with interoperable radio systems and resilient connectivity, allowing multiple agencies to coordinate operations in real time even when traditional infrastructure is disrupted. Its armored design also allows personnel to safely access and operate near incident sites that may not yet be secured or cleared for traditional emergency response operations. The robotic platform would allow responders to remotely assess potential threats to critical infrastructure and hazardous or contaminated environments, reducing personnel risk while providing critical intelligence during incidents involving hazardous materials, industrial facilities, terrorist threats, or other high-risk situations. Three high-water rescue vehicles positioned across different regions of the county would allow responders to reach stranded residents more quickly and protect critical infrastructure during major flooding events common along the Gulf Coast.

These assets would also serve as regional resources available to support partner agencies throughout Southeast Texas. If awarded, the equipment would be shared with adjacent counties, municipal agencies, and federal law enforcement partners during major incidents or disasters requiring specialized capabilities. The ability to deploy these resources across jurisdictional boundaries would strengthen regional preparedness and improve coordination during large-scale emergencies, including natural disasters, industrial incidents, or terrorist threats involving critical infrastructure.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it addresses critical capability gaps in a region that plays a vital role in the nation's energy production and transportation network. Chambers County currently lacks a dedicated mobile command platform capable of operating in extreme or hazardous environments, as well as a robotic system that can remotely assess dangerous conditions without exposing personnel to unnecessary risk. In addition, the county's existing high-water rescue vehicles are more than twenty years old and increasingly unreliable during severe weather events common to the Gulf Coast. The proposed high-water rescue vehicles would be strategically positioned in separate areas of the county during extreme weather events to reduce response times and ensure rapid access to flooded communities.

While surrounding agencies possess certain specialized capabilities, such as armored vehicles and other specialized response equipment, response times from those agencies can exceed an hour to reach more rural areas of Chambers County, not including the time required to request, notify, and activate those regional resources. This delay can significantly impact response effectiveness during critical incidents.

These resources would directly enhance first responders' ability to protect residents, respond to hurricanes and flooding along the Gulf Coast, and support incidents involving petrochemical facilities, potential terrorist threats, and other critical infrastructure throughout the district. In addition to serving Chambers County, these capabilities would support mutual aid operations with surrounding jurisdictions, particularly those that may not possess similar specialized

resources, as well as regional task forces and state and federal partners during major incidents. By investing in interoperable communications, advanced response technology, and reliable disaster response vehicles, this project represents a responsible use of taxpayer dollars that strengthens public safety, improves disaster readiness, and protects infrastructure essential to both the regional and national economy.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by section 1701(b)(9) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. § 10381(b)(9)). I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress