

**BRIAN BABIN, D.D.S.**

36TH DISTRICT, TEXAS  
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COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,  
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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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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 Protecting Texas Rice from Devastating Rice Delphacid and Major Disease Pests in Fiscal Year 2027. The entity to receive funding for this project is the Texas A&M AgriLife Research located at 600 John Kimbrough Blvd, Suite 512, 2142 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843. The funding would be used to address an urgent threat to Texas rice production posed by the invasive rice delphacid and the hoja blanca virus it spreads. A primary objective is to understand how pests and diseases spread, how they damage rice crops, and to develop practical, affordable management tools, including conservation practices, that farmers can use quickly. The project focuses on delivering solutions that reduce crop losses, lower production costs, and protect farmer livelihoods.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because rice producers currently have limited tools to detect, monitor, or manage this pest-disease complex caused by rice delphacid. Current conditions in rice production are placing farm income, local employment, land management practices, and regional agricultural stability at significant risk. For the affected congressional districts, unchecked spread of rice delphacid and hoja blanca could result in millions of dollars in annual crop losses, reduced profitability for family farms, and negative downstream impacts on rice mills, input suppliers, and rural businesses that depend on a stable rice industry. Proactive management solutions with combined data collection will help protect grower livelihoods, sustain rural jobs, and maintain the economic vitality of these districts. At the state level, Texas rice contributes nearly \$500 million to the economy annually. Preventing losses safeguards this investment and ensures continued productivity in a key agricultural sector. Regionally, the pest threatens neighboring rice-producing states, including Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi, making coordinated efforts and response essential to prevent broader economic disruption across the southern rice industry. At the national level, rice is a critical U.S. food and export crop. This project supports national food security by protecting domestic rice supplies, reducing reliance on

imports, and strengthening the resilience of U.S. agriculture against emerging invasive pests and diseases. Federal investment will deliver science-based solutions that benefit producers, consumers, and the broader economy, ensuring long-term sustainability of rice production in Texas and across the United States. Texas Farm Bureau, The Rice Foundation, and the Texas Rice Council provided letters of support.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized under 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 "Brian Babin", is written over a vertical line that extends from the signature down to the typed name below.

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

