

CHARLES J. "CHUCK" FLEISCHMANN
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March 13, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-307 The Capitol
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1036 Longworth HOB
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting \$2,000,000 for Middle Ocoee First Responders Ramp in Fiscal Year 2027. The entity to receive funding for this project is the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), located at 5th Floor Davy Crockett Tower, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243. The funding would be used to restore the Middle Ocoee Recreation Area's Roger's Branch Put-In, which is the main access point to the middle section of the Ocoee River. The state recently identified significant erosion had damaged community recreation infrastructure, specifically Roger's Branch Put-In boat ramp. TDEC acted swiftly to mitigate further erosion damage and began the process of securing engineering and construction services. Due to the highly specialized nature of this high public use infrastructure, the estimated cost for the project is approximately three million dollars. TDEC has committed funding from its Tennessee State Park operations budget, as well as Appalachian Regional Commission funds, but this unexpected loss expense is diverting resources from critical maintenance projects across TN. The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because the infrastructure serves 250,000 to 300,000 locals and visitors annually. The middle section of the Ocoee River is a main economic driver for Polk County, Tennessee, generating \$43-\$45 million and supporting over 600 jobs in a rural community. It also provides primary access for swiftwater rescue teams, law enforcement, and park rangers to respond to emergencies.

This project has a federal nexus because it is for the purposes authorized in Section 306 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, 7 U.S. Code section 1926(a).

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

Sincerely,

Congressman Chuck Fleischmann
Member of Congress