

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

STACEY E. PLASKETT
VIRGIN ISLANDS

2059 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

March 31, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the Sargassum Research and Shoreline Restoration project in fiscal year 2024. The non-profit entity project sponsor for this project is the Coral World Ocean and Reef Initiative, Inc. (CWORI), located at 6450 Coki Point, St. Thomas, VI 00802. The anticipated locations of the project are Coki and Water Bay, Sapphire Bay, Great Bay, and Cowpet Bay, Virgin Islands, depending upon conditions related to sargassum inundations. The requested funding would be used by CWORI to investigate the effects of the influx and decomposition of sargassum as well as monitor nesting beaches for hatchling sea turtles trapped or distressed by sargassum. This project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds given the largely under-documented environmental and health impacts of sargassum. It is critical for the Virgin Islands and non-profit organizations associated with its coastal economy, like CWORI, to better understand the impact of sargassum on endangered, threatened, and near-threatened species in near-shore and marine ecosystems as well as the surrounding coastal waters of the Virgin Islands.

The project has a federal nexus because the project would help to protect, restore, and enhance the coastal resources of the U.S. Virgin Islands consistent with the policies and purposes identified in sections 1452 and 1453 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. §§1452-1453).

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

Sincerely,



Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress