

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND  
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
FINANCIAL SERVICES AND  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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HOMELAND SECURITY

ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN WHIP



**JOHN CULBERSON**  
7TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
1514 LONGWORTH BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4307  
202.225.2571  
FAX 202.225.4381

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
10000 MEMORIAL DRIVE, SUITE 620  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77024-3490  
713.682.8828  
FAX: 713.680.8070

INTERNET:  
WWW.CULBERSON.HOUSE.GOV

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Simpson:

As you begin drafting the FY2010 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill, I respectfully request your support for the following projects in or near the 7th district of Texas. I have ranked these requests in priority order and attempted to limit the amount of each request to reflect the project's need and simplify your difficult task.

To simplify your task and to help control federal spending, I apply a rigorous filter to every spending request I receive. I tell everyone who asks me for federal funding that the starting answer is "no" and that "yes" is very hard to earn. I will not even consider a request from a private individual or a private company because I think it will unavoidably lead to problems. Then it must be an absolutely essential project of great public benefit that falls within the confines of the U. S. Constitution's grant of authority to Congress, and it must be in dire need of federal funding to assure the continuation of the work in question. Even if these conditions are met, I still filter out quite a few projects because of the dangerously large federal deficit and the unsustainable national debt. After all these filters are applied, I then try to limit the projects I consider to medical or scientific research at the Texas Medical Center or NASA, critical flood control or transportation projects, or defending our borders and our national security. I am especially supportive of nanotechnology research because it will totally transform our lives forever by helping us cure human diseases at the earliest stages when only a few cells are involved, by improving human productivity as well as the efficiency of every device that runs on electricity, and by helping to make America energy independent.

1. **Texas Medical Center:** \$1,000,000 for an electric utility and environmental infrastructure study for the Texas Medical Center in the U.S. Geological Survey's Surveys, Investigations & Research account.

The Texas Medical Center (TMC) has grown rapidly over the past several years. The 47 member institutions are located on more than 1,000 acres and house more than 140 buildings over several campuses just south of downtown Houston.

Between now and 2014, the TMC is expected to add an additional 12 million square feet of patient care, education and research space to the existing 28 million square feet it currently occupies. Over the next 20 years, the size of the TMC could double in response to the expected population growth in the Houston region of more than 2 million citizens.

The TMC master plan for future development indicates that this growth can be accommodated on our Mid and South Campuses. However, to move forward with infrastructure development in these emerging areas a major effort must be made to survey and research all existing utilities, easements and establish land ownership. TMC has developed a sophisticated GIS program for the TMC Main Campus and the system provides all this information in a digital and graphic presentation. This GIS system needs to be replicated on the other Campuses. The City of Houston will then be able to analyze the information on existing utilities and make projections for water, sanitary, and storm sewer lines to meet future demand loads. Design engineers, architects and master planners will have access to this digital information for planning purposes.

An electronic Geographic Information System (GIS) is needed to understand the special and temporal relationships between the business specific information and surrounding geography. Full implementation of a GIS system on all the campuses of the Texas Medical Center will enhance the effectiveness of most planning and operations functions within the various institutions and allow maintenance and growth to occur in a safe, cost effective manner. In addition, the data will aid city and private utility planning, upgrading and maintenance functions.

**2. Texas Medical Center:** \$400,000 for an engineering study to determine the scope of infrastructure needs regarding fresh water and wastewater supplies at the Texas Medical Center in the Environmental Protection Agency's Science & Technology account.

Responding to an expected population influx of more than 2 million additional people over the next two decades, the Texas Medical Center is expanding rapidly to meet the future needs of this growing community. Between now and 2014, the Texas Medical Center is expected to add an additional 12 million square feet of patient care, education and research space to the existing 28 million square feet it currently occupies. Much of that growth is centered on the TMC Mid and South Campuses, near the Texas Medical Center Main Campus just south of Houston's central business district.

Recent master planning work completed by the member institutions indicates the expected development capacity of the TMC Mid and South Campus is approximately 30 million square feet, or the increase of an additional 25 million square feet of building space in that area. Almost 30% of that growth will occur between now and the end of 2014.

A preliminary engineering study by Walter P. Moore indicated that the current public utility infrastructure in the TMC Mid and South Campus area is not adequate to support this planned growth, posing a threat to the ability of the Texas Medical Center to serve the increasing citizenry and aging "baby boom" population in the Houston region. For example, the existing water line on Old Spanish Trail adjacent to Texas Medical Center institutions was constructed in 1958 and 1969. This water line has reached or is nearing its useful life and needs to be replaced and increased in size. Several sections of major roadways in the greater Texas Medical Center area do not currently have water lines in them to serve the adjacent property. In addition, several sections in the area do not currently have wastewater lines that serve the properties.

To determine the scope of the infrastructure needs, a more detailed analysis of the region's public infrastructure needs must be completed for this area. Appropriate infrastructure is very critical for TMC institutions due to patient care and safety requirements. Problems with waste water or fresh water supplies can have a devastating impact for medical districts such as the Texas Medical Center.

3. **Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program:** \$7,000,000 for land acquisition from willing sellers to preserve the most endangered historic Civil War battle sites before they are lost to development in the National Park Service's Land Acquisition and State Assistance account.

The Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program (CWBPP) is a matching grants program that promotes preservation of the nation's most historically important Civil War battlegrounds. The program, financed through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, encourages partnerships between local governments and the private sector.

CWBPP matching grants are competitively awarded by the American Battlefield Protection Program, an arm of the National Park Service. CWBPP grants have been used to save more than 15,000 acres of hallowed ground in 14 states. Among the sites saved as a result of this program are high-priority historic lands at Antietam and South Mountain, Md.; Bentonville, N.C.; Champion Hill, Miss.; Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, and Manassas, Va.; Chattanooga and Fort Donelson, Tenn.; and Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

I am also requesting the following report language:

It has come to the Subcommittee's attention that the American military uniform collection within the National Museum of American History is currently stored in unsatisfactory conditions and requires proper conservation and protective storage. This need has been confirmed by experts at the Museum. Military uniforms are a physical representation of our country's struggles throughout history. Therefore, the Subcommittee encourages the Smithsonian Institution to ensure that preservation of this collection is made a high priority.

Should your office need any additional information, please contact Brittany Seabury at 5-2571.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Culberson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop on the "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Culberson  
Member of Congress