

Senate Appropriations Committee Advances Spending Bills With Illinois Priorities Secured By Durbin, Duckworth

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JOLIET – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) announced that the Senate Appropriations Committee advanced three Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bills this week for Energy and Water Development; State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs; and Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies. Durbin and Duckworth worked to secure various priorities for Illinois in these

appropriations bills, both through Congressionally Directed Spending requests and through the programmatic appropriations process.

“These bills make critical investments in Illinois. I’m glad the Senate Appropriations Committee was able to come together on a bipartisan basis to advance these bills, which will benefit families, communities, and the economy in Illinois,” Durbin said. “Senators and Representatives know their states and districts better than federal agency personnel in Washington, and I’m pleased we can deliver direct results through Congressionally Directed Spending. I will continue to work with my colleagues to see these priorities across the finish line.”

“Our state and our nation are stronger when we invest in our communities and families—and that’s what these bipartisan funding bills do,” Duckworth said. “I’m proud I was able to help secure critical support for projects all throughout our state that help provided much-needed improvements to infrastructure and strengthen our inland waterways to help grow our local economies.”

These funding bills include the following Illinois priorities secured by Congressionally Directed Spending requests:

Energy and Water Development

- ***Chicago Area Waterways System Restoration, Chicago Area:*** \$200,000 to the Army Corps of Engineers to begin a feasibility study on a comprehensive restoration plan for the Chicago River system in coordination with the City of Chicago, Cook County, and the Chicago Metropolitan Water Reclamation District.
- ***Flint Lake Dam Removal, Cook and Lake Counties:*** \$200,000 to the Army Corps of Engineers for a feasibility study to identify solutions for ecosystem restoration of Flint Creek.
- ***McCook and Thornton Reservoirs, Harvey, Blue Island, and South Holland:*** \$20 million to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago to alleviate flooding in Harvey, Blue Island and South Holland.
- ***Rock Island Small Boat Harbor, Rock Island:*** \$1 million to the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge Sunset Marina in Rock Island.
- ***Upper Mississippi River - Illinois WW System:*** \$120 million to the Army Corps of Engineers to continue progress on the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program, which will expand and modernize seven locks at the most congested lock locations along the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers as well as fund \$1.7 billion in ecosystem restoration.

Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

- ***74th Street Garage EV Bus Implementation Project, Chicago:*** \$1.5 million to the Chicago Transit Authority to redesign its 74th Street Bus Garage in Englewood for the electrical upgrades needed for expansion of its EV bus fleet.
- ***Bike/Ped Connector, Pontoon Beach:*** \$1 million to the Madison County Mass Transit District to construct a bike/pedestrian trail in the historically-disadvantaged community of Venice, to improve multimodal access to public transit and address long-standing pedestrian access issues.
- ***Bus Safety Improvements, McLean County:*** \$800,000 to Connect Transit to install collision avoidance technologies on its buses that will increase pedestrian and cyclist safety.
- ***Community Center, Galesburg:*** \$1 million to the City of Galesburg to renovate a former school into a new community center for Galesburg residents. The community lost its last remaining community center to a fire in 2016.
- ***Early Childhood Center Renovation, North Chicago:*** \$2 million to North Chicago Community Unit School District 187 for infrastructure renovations at Green Bay Early Childhood Center, which is North Chicago Community Unit School District 187's only preschool.
- ***Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Masterplan, Chicago:*** \$1 million to the City of Chicago for an EV infrastructure master plan for EV deployment at O'Hare Airport, including identification of necessary charging infrastructure for airport fleet vehicles, passenger vehicles, tenant vehicles, and service providers.
- ***EV Bus Procurement, Champaign County:*** \$2 million to the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District to purchase three new hybrid electric buses to replace existing diesel buses.
- ***Lincoln Library Youth Services Renovation, Springfield:*** \$1 million to the City of Springfield to renovate the Youth Services space at the Lincoln Library's downtown location.
- ***Marjorie Kovler Center ADA Upgrades, Chicago:*** \$1 million to the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights to make the 80-year-old Marjorie Kovler Center fully ADA-accessible, which will increase the reach of its services to the growing number of refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers arriving each year.
- ***Microtransit Pilot, Decatur:*** \$2.5 million to the City of Decatur to implement a Microtransit pilot program, using EVs to provide cost-efficient transit services to disadvantaged residents and fill geographical and schedule gaps in current transit service.
- ***Southwest Connector, Murphysboro:*** \$3 million to the City of Murphysboro to advance the Southwest Connector Project, which will build a 60-mile, four-lane rural expressway providing access from Southern Illinois to St. Louis, connecting Columbia, Waterloo, Red Bud, Sparta, Pinckneyville, Murphysboro, and Carbondale.
- ***Stepping Stones Expansion, Bloomington:*** \$850,000 to YMCA McLean County for capital improvements, including the renovation and the necessary expansion of

its space for the Stepping Stones program, McLean County's sexual assault crisis center.

- ***Terminal Apron Expansion, Mascoutah:*** \$2.5 million to the MidAmerica St. Louis Airport to expand the airport's apron to accommodate three new aircraft parking positions associated with the newly expanded passenger terminal.
- ***West Side Urban Agriculture Initiative, Chicago:*** \$1 million to the Puerto Rican Cultural Center to construct two greenhouses in Humboldt Park to increase food security and urban agriculture skills in a community impacted by poverty and disinvestment.
- ***Airport Improvements, Springfield:*** \$1,800,000 Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport for the extension of the terminal aircraft-parking ramp, allowing for additional aircraft parking areas while providing safe distances from taxiing aircraft on adjacent pavements.
- ***Airport Expansion and Pilot Training, Romeoville:*** \$1,327,000 to Joliet Regional Port District for the expansion of the aircraft staging and operating apron pavement area available for the growing pilot flight training schools at the Lewis University Airport.
- ***Airport Improvements, Murphysboro:*** \$2,100,000 to the Southern Illinois Airport Authority for the construction of additional parking for airline-size aircraft for maintenance, repair and overhaul work.
- ***Bus Shelter Weatherization, Marion:*** \$265,000 to the Illinois Department of Transportation to fund developments to weatherize and protect bus shelters and utilize solar power to provide interior lighting at 8 new bus shelters in Marion, Illinois.
- ***Multimodal Facility Development, Chicago:*** \$4,800,000 to the City of Chicago for the development of a covered and lit walkway, compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, from Metra's O'Hare Transfer Station to the entrance of the O'Hare Multi-modal Facility and Airport Transit System station.
- ***Affordable Housing, Cook County:*** \$1,544,000 to the Housing Authority of Cook County for critically needed capital improvements at the Housing Authority of Cook County's south suburban affordable housing properties.
- ***Urban Farming, Chicago:*** \$2,367,000 to Green Era Educational NFP for the establishment of the Green Era Renewable Energy and Urban Farm Campus, which is transforming 9-acres of brownfields in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood into a center for organics recycling, green energy and jobs, fresh produce and small business incubation.

These funding bills include additional Illinois priorities through the programmatic appropriations process:

Energy and Water Development

- ***Office of Science:*** \$8.43 billion.
- ***Utilities Upgrade Project at Argonne:*** \$8 million to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog at Argonne and upgrade key infrastructure like water systems and roads.
- ***Battery and Energy Storage Hub Program:*** \$25 million to support continued energy storage research at Argonne National Lab. Argonne has run the Joint Center for Energy Storage Research for many years and this funding will support the next phase of this work.
- ***Bioenergy Research Center:*** \$115 million to support the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Bioresearch Center.

Long-Baseline Neutrino Facility (LBNF)/Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment (DUNE): \$255 million to support the continued development of LBNF/DUNE, the world-leading particle physics experiment exploring neutrinos—the most abundant and least understood particles in the universe.

- ***PIP-II:*** \$125 million to support necessary upgrades to Fermilab's accelerator complex that will enable the operation of LBNF/DUNE.

Argonne's Leadership Computing Facility: \$219 million to support the continued development and operation of Argonne's supercomputing programs, include the Aurora Exascale Computing System. The bill includes Durbin's report language request directing DOE to brief Congress within 30 days on the Office of Science's plans for the future of advanced computing beyond exascale, including on the future of quantum and Artificial Intelligence.

Light Source Operations: \$704 million to support the operation of Argonne's Advanced Photon Source.

Vehicle Technologies Office: \$455 million to support the Department of Energy's continued research into cleaner, safer, and more efficient vehicles.

Methane Mitigation and Quantification: The bill includes report language encouraging more public/private partnerships when developing and integrating low-cost, advanced methane monitoring technologies.

Army Corps of Engineers: \$8.943 billion.

Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study: \$3 million. The bill includes Durbin's report language requiring the Chicago Shoreline to be a focus area of the Great Lakes Resiliency Study. This study is a first-of-its-kind effort to develop a coordinated strategy to manage and protect the Great Lakes' and their 5,200-mile coastline from threats associated with lake level fluctuations, erosion, flooding, nutrient runoff, and aging infrastructure.

Upper Mississippi River restoration Program, Quincy Bay: \$55 million. The bill includes Durbin's report language directing the Corps to expedite the feasibility study for the environmental restoration project in Quincy Bay. This project promotes projects that improve the viability and vitality of the Upper Mississippi River System's diverse and significant fish and wildlife resources. UMRR is currently funding the restoration of Quincy Bay.

Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS): \$200 million. This U. S. Army Corps of Engineers study plays a critical role in reviewing technologies aimed at preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Electric Dispersal Barrier: \$13.7 million. These electric barriers located on the Chicago Area Waterway System prevent the migration of aquatic invasive species between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins.

Cahokia Heights—Metro East Flood Hazard Analysis: Includes Durbin's language supporting the Corps' expansion of its ongoing study focusing on the Canal 1 Watershed to a broader area of Cahokia Heights and East St. Louis, which will provide valuable information regarding the root causes of flooding, as well as recommendations and cost estimates for improvements needed to alleviate flooding in the area.

Bubbly Creek: Includes Durbin's language urging the Corps and EPA to expedite interagency discussions on a project management structure that will limit the Corps' liabilities and allow the project to move to construction. The Bubbly Creek project would provide ecosystem restoration South Fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River.

Brandon Road: Includes all of Durbin's language requests to help move the Brandon Road project forward. The language requires the Corps to follow Illinois state laws for permitting, and directs the Corps to work with IL to address real estate and remediation issues on the project. The project will construct a new engineered channel at Joliet's Brandon Road Lock, which will be used to test and deploy new technologies preventing the spread of Asian Carp into the Great Lakes.

Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

- ***Capital Investment Grants (CIG):*** \$2.45 billion in nationwide funding for the extension and improvements of existing transit systems, which includes full funding the Chicago Transit Authority's Red Line Extension Project.
- ***Amtrak:*** \$2.45 billion in nationwide funding to support Amtrak operations.
- ***The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grants:*** \$800 million to fund innovative transportation projects that will create jobs and have a significant impact on the nation, a region, or a metropolitan area.
- ***Passenger Rail Grant Programs:*** These grant programs include funding for rail infrastructure and safety improvement projects.

- ***Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grants:*** \$572 million in nationwide funding to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of passenger and freight rail systems.
- ***Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail:*** \$100 million in nationwide funding to fund capital projects that reduce the state of good repair backlog, improve performance, or expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service.
- ***Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (RCEP) grants:*** \$600 million in nationwide funding to fund highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods.

Blocked Crossings Causes & Solutions Identification: Includes Durbin's report language directing the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to include in its annual report potential solutions and best practices to improve safety, mobility, and emergency response capabilities at highway-rail crossings. This would require the FRA to consider technology's potential role in detecting the highest risk areas and to explore what role train length plays in blocked crossings, among other measures.

Emergency Response Blocked Crossing Reports: Includes Durbin's report language urging the FRA to require states receiving track inspection funding to require first responders to report verified blocked crossing incidents to the FRA's blocked crossings portal, which Durbin established through Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations legislation. It also directs the FRA to continue working with stakeholders to identify root causes of blocked crossings and identify meaningful solutions.

Automated Track Inspections: Directs \$17 million to support the FRA's fleet of advanced inspection vehicles that accompany its field inspectors to validate the railroads' inspection programs and advance research priorities, with a special emphasis on routes transporting passengers and hazardous materials.

FRA Rail Research & Development Center of Excellence (COE): \$2.5 million for the FRA COE, which Durbin established in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (IIJA).

Digital Alert Technologies: Includes Durbin's report language urging the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to deploy digital alert technologies, with local law enforcement, that can provide up-to-date information about dynamic road conditions to drivers.

FAA: \$20.3 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). This includes funding that will allow the FAA to hire 1,800 additional air traffic controllers, replace outdated equipment, improve the aircraft certification process, and improve hazardous materials transport oversight, among other efforts.

Airport Improvement Program: \$300 million for airport infrastructure grants for planning and development.

Low-No Emission Bus Grants: \$50 million for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses as well as acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.

Buses and Bus Facilities Grants: \$161.9 million for transit agencies to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities.

Distracted Driving: Includes Durbin's report language, building off of his *Protecting Roadside First Responders Act* with Duckworth, enacted as part of IIJA, requiring NHTSA to brief the Committee on its efforts to ensure automatic emergency braking can detect passengers at night and at speeds above 37 miles per hour, the conditions under which 65-75 percent of pedestrian fatalities occur, respectively.

HEAL Initiative Pilot Program: Includes \$5 million to support efforts underway between HUD and HHS to provide direct technical assistance to communities leveraging programs like Medicaid to cover and provide housing-related supportive services and behavioral health care.

Lead Assessments in Federally Assisted Housing: Includes \$65 million to help Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) address lead-based paint and other residential health hazards in public housing units.

Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes: \$350 million.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA): \$505 million to help cities and states address the housing crisis facing people living with HIV/AIDS.

Homeless Assistance Grants: \$3.9 billion to provide funding to state and local governments for emergency shelters, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and other crisis response programs.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): \$3.3 billion to provide states and localities with resources to meet the needs of low-income communities, including housing rehabilitation, supportive services, public improvements, and economic development projects.

Section 8 Tenant-Based Rental Assistance: \$31.74 billion. This also includes \$445 million for new Tenant Protection Vouchers; \$30 million to expand the HUD-VASH program; and \$30 million for the Family Unification Program.

Choice Neighborhoods Program: \$150 million to provide funding for the transformation, rehabilitation, and replacement of distressed public and HUD-assisted housing, as well as support for communities working to revitalize neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.

Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (NeighborWorks): \$170 million to create opportunities for Americans to live in affordable and safe homes by providing community development organizations in all fifty states with financial resources and counseling services.