

Budzinski Announces \$9.4 Million for Six Metro East Projects

by Philip Shelly
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Funding has been signed into law to support projects in Alton, Bethalto, East Alton, East St. Louis and Wood River

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski (IL-13) announced that six projects in the Metro East will be receiving a combined \$9,409,097 in federal funding. The funding was requested by Congresswoman Budzinski during the House of Representatives' Community Project Funding process and signed into law this weekend

in a bipartisan government funding bill. In total, Congresswoman Budzinski secured \$136.1 million for projects throughout Illinois' 13th Congressional District in the package.

“Last week, I was proud to join colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass a government funding deal that will provide critical federal resources to six projects in the Metro East,” said Congresswoman Budzinski. “With more than \$9.4 million headed to the region, I’m excited to see progress on efforts to support local youth, improve housing options and rebuild critical infrastructure across our communities. In the coming months, I look forward to visiting the sites of these projects and continuing my work to deliver results for the folks I serve in Central and Southern Illinois.”

The government funding package signed into law over the weekend included six of 12 appropriations bills that need to be passed by March 22nd in order to fully fund the federal government. Budzinski helped to pass the package in the House of Representatives last week.

The following six projects championed by Congresswoman Budzinski will be receiving direct federal investments from the bipartisan government funding bill:

\$5,000,000 for the East Alton Water Treatment Facility Upgrades

The funding, requested by Congresswoman Budzinski and Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth, will be used by the Village of East Alton to help bring the East Alton Water Treatment Plant up to current Environmental Protection Agency standards and increase its capacity from 3MGD to 4.5 MGD. This will help the city meet the demands of industrial and residential customers and ensure that microbiological contaminants stay out of the water.

“For too long, the Village of East Alton has grappled with the challenge of outdated water infrastructure, which has limited reliable access to clean water,” said Senator Durbin. “Today marks a turning point as we address this issue head-on, ensuring the plant meets the standards set forth by EPA and that every customer has the water supply they need.”

“Our state and our nation are stronger when we invest in our communities and families—and that’s one of the things Congressionally Directed Spending allows us to do,” said Senator Duckworth. “As co-founder of the Senate’s Environmental Justice Caucus and author of the Drinking Water Wastewater Infrastructure Act, I’m so proud I was able to help secure this critical support for East Alton’s water treatment facility. Underserved

communities across Illinois need and deserve the resources to update and improve their water infrastructure, and investing in our water systems—and in working families—is key to uplifting our state and building a better future.”

“The Village of East Alton would like to express our gratitude for the support from Congresswoman Budzinski, Senator Duckworth, and Senator Durbin. The CDS funding will make the water plant upgrades a reality that otherwise would have been financially unfeasible. The CDS funds will ensure that our village’s residential, commercial, and industrial customers have adequate and sustainable water supply. The financial assistance will make a huge impact on our community for years to come,” said Village of East Alton Treasurer Donnell Smith.

\$1,059,097 for Alton Workforce Housing

The funding will be used by Alton Forward to revitalize downtown Alton with the construction of the Lovejoy – the first new construction project downtown in over a generation. The project aims to help the city reposition itself for the 21st century and become a strong economic and residential hub in Southern Illinois.

“Our collective ability to attract and retain the next generation of Alton residents is essential to the revitalization of downtown Alton,” said AltonWorks CEO John Simmons. “The Lovejoy, which will be the first new construction project downtown in over a generation, will be high-quality housing which will attract people of diverse cultural, and economic backgrounds to Alton. This project will benefit the entire community and is an important step in the long-term prosperity of Alton.”

\$1,000,000 for East St. Louis’s Youth Workforce Development Training Center

The funding will be used by R3 Development to support the capital development needs and expansion of the R3 Development Youth Workforce Development Training Center to improve the delivery of services to East St. Louis. The center will allow underserved youth to access leadership development opportunities, learn skilled labor and access job training and placement services, all while serving as an economic boom for the larger community.

“We are thrilled to continue holding out hope and creating even more life-changing opportunities for the youth of East St. Louis. As the future leaders of our community and workforce, our youth deserve every opportunity possible, and we are humbled to have a front row seat as they take hold of their God-given gifts and become everything they were created to be,” said R3 Development NFP Executive Director Dave Kuntz.

\$1,000,000 for the Bethalto Boys and Girls Club Clubhouse

The funding will be used by the Boys and Girls Club of Bethalto to construct a new clubhouse located in Bethalto, Illinois. The new space will help more youth achieve their full potential in a community that is both rural and mostly low-moderate income. The space will also serve as a much-needed multi-use community space during non-member times for seniors, Head Start, community groups and families – and as the community has no licensed childcare for school-age children this will fill a much-needed gap.

“We are beyond excited about the funding we’re receiving to build a new Boys & Girls Club of Bethalto club house. We are out of space in our aging building and a new, state of the art facility will allow us to serve more youth, become 100% accessible, and provide dedicated areas for STEM, cooking, and career development. We will also fill a void in the community by providing space for adult recreation and meeting space for community groups and families,” said Senior Executive Director-Illinois Operations at the Boys & Girls Club of Bethalto Kathleen Wilson.

\$850,000 for Wood River’s 9th Street Detention Pond

The funding will be used by the City of Wood River to construct a detention pond, which will lower the base flood elevation in a populated area of the city, promoting property values and providing for future growth and expansion in an undeveloped area.

“The City is extremely grateful for Representative Budzinski’s continued partnership. Her efforts have proven to be successful again. The financial assistance she has been able to secure for the City in the construction of the 9th Street detention pond, which will remove approximately 300 homes from the flood plain, will be instrumental in seeing the project to completion. Her help is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to continuing to work with her. We want to thank her for her support in bringing these funds to the City of Wood River,” said Wood River Mayor Tom Stalcup and Wood River City Manager Steve Palin.

\$500,000 for East St. Louis’s Parsons Place Preservation Project

The funding will be used by Urban Strategies, Inc. for renovations of Parsons Place mixed income apartment complex located at 1608 N 18th Street East St. Louis, Illinois, with the goal of serving as a catalyst for future economic development and having a stabilizing influence on housing in East St. Louis.

“USI is pleased to learn of the Parsons Place Preservation funding made possible through Representative Budzinski’s support of the 2024 Community Project Funding

cycle. Our collaborative work with the community and local partners in support of equitable, affordable housing in East St. Louis ensures that children and families are stable and moving towards thriving,” said USI President Esther Shin.

In addition to the projects listed above, the legislation also included a bipartisan \$120 million Community Project Funding request from U.S. Representatives Nikki Budzinski (D-IL-13), Eric Sorensen (D-IL-17), Darin LaHood (R-IL-16), Sam Graves (R-MO-06) and Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO-03) to upgrade locks and dams along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Upgrading locks and dams will reduce traffic delays along waterways and increase shipping capacity by constructing new 1,200-foot locks — improving safety, efficiency and getting agricultural goods to the global market more quickly.

\$120,000,000 for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Project (NESP) on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers

The funding will be used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for several Mississippi River improvement efforts, including navigation improvements and aquatic ecosystem restoration, ensuring the economic and environmental sustainability of the waterway.

“IL Corn and the farmers we represent are elated to see \$120,000,000 allocated for Upper Mississippi River Basin waterways projects. Modernizing this infrastructure will make a significant difference for Illinois farmers competitiveness in a global marketplace and will invest in our downstate Illinois communities. This is important work for our state, and we are very grateful for Congresswoman Budzinski’s request to include this funding in the final appropriations bill,” said Dave Rylander, ICGA President and farmer from Victoria, IL.

“We’re very thankful to Rep. Budzinski for her leadership by achieving this funding. NESP will improve both the nation’s inland waterway supply chain and the environmental health of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers,” said Tracy Zea, President /CEO of Waterways Council, Inc.

“The Illinois Soybean Growers commend the further funding of the NESP program in the FY24 Energy and Water appropriations package. The continued support by Rep. Budzinski and members of the Illinois delegation highlight the importance of the NESP program to maintain a reliable and cost-effective transportation system for Illinois exports. The program also strikes an important note balancing the need to maintain navigation and protect ecosystems along the Illinois waterway. We look forward to continued advancement of the NESP program and progress toward the construction of new 1200-foot lock chambers on the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers,” said Director of Government Relations & Strategy for the Illinois Soybean Association Andrew Larson.

The legislation signed by President Biden also included a number of funding priorities Congresswoman Budzinski championed during the House of Representatives'

appropriations process:

Increased funding for veterans: The bipartisan government funding bill ensures that veterans receive the compensation and benefits that they have earned with increased investments in health care, including targeted investments that support caregivers and advance mental health care, homelessness assistance and improved access to care. By identifying and advocating for local veterans' needs during the appropriations process, Congresswoman Budzinski helped to secure the following resources:

- Full funding for the Toxic Exposures Fund (*Honoring Our PACT Act*) for fiscal year 2024 and fiscal year 2025.
- An additional \$2.3 billion for veterans' mental health care.
- An additional \$556 million for veterans' caregivers in line with the [*Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act*](#). Congresswoman Budzinski has cosponsored the legislation and voted for it to pass the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the full House of Representatives.
- An additional \$418 million for veteran homelessness prevention programs in line with the [*Healthy Foundations for Homeless Veterans Act*](#) and the [*Return Home to Housing Act*](#) which Congresswoman Budzinski has cosponsored.
- An additional \$60.6 million in funding requested by Congresswoman Budzinski for veterans' suicide prevention outreach initiatives.
- An additional \$17 million in funding requested by Congresswoman Budzinski for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Medical and Prosthetic Research Program.
- An additional \$5 million for rural health care in line with the [*Driver Reimbursement Increase for Veteran Equity \(DRIVE\) Act*](#) which Congresswoman Budzinski has cosponsored.

Increased funding for infrastructure, housing and rural development: The bipartisan government funding bill makes strong investments in programs that fund water system improvements, housing access, law enforcement and energy upgrades that greatly benefit communities in Illinois' 13th Congressional District. By identifying and advocating for local infrastructure, housing and rural development needs during the appropriations process, Congresswoman Budzinski helped to secure the following resources:

- An additional \$775.7 million in funding requested by Congresswoman Budzinski for the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), a federal-state partnership that provides low-cost financing to communities for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects.
- An additional \$342.9 million in funding requested by Congresswoman Budzinski for Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA), which seeks to identify, stimulate and support successful and innovative state approaches to providing integrated supportive housing for people with disabilities.
- An additional \$207.1 million in funding requested by Congresswoman Budzinski for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program. [In 2023, Springfield, Champaign, Belleville, Decatur, Alton and Edwardsville received a combined \\$322,977 from the program for equipment, training and technology.](#)
- An additional \$38 million in funding requested by Congresswoman Budzinski for the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). [In 2023, Budzinski announced a \\$450,000 EDA grant for the City of Springfield for economic development strategy planning. Budzinski also announced that the EDA has selected Richland Community College in Decatur as a finalist for a \\$20-50 million investment.](#)
- An additional \$30 million in funding requested by Congresswoman Budzinski for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). [Budzinski recently announced a combined \\$1.8 million in REAP grant funding for ten small businesses in Madison and Macoupin counties.](#)
- An additional \$13 million in funding requested by Congresswoman Budzinski for the Department of Energy Bioenergy Research Centers (BRC) Program, which supports a viable and sustainable domestic biofuels and bioproducts industry. The [Center for Advanced Bioenergy and Bioproducts Innovation](#) headquartered in Urbana, Illinois is funded through this program.
- An additional \$10.5 million in funding requested by Congresswoman Budzinski for the Office of Electricity's (OE) Energy Storage Program. An additional \$8.5 million increase in funding for the Rural Energy Savings Program's credit subsidy. [Budzinski has introduced the Rural Energy Savings Act of 2023 to reauthorize the Rural Energy Savings Program in the next Farm Bill.](#)
- \$41 million for the Economic Development Administration's Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Program (Tech Hubs). In 2023, Budzinski successfully helped to advocate for the [EDA's designation of the iFAB Tech Hub in Champaign, Illinois](#) as one of the 31 inaugural Tech Hubs in regions across the country that show potential for rapid growth in key technology sectors.
- Full funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Circuit Rider Program, which provides technical assistance to rural water systems that are experiencing day-to-day operational, financial or managerial issues.

- Full funding for the EPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), a financial assistance program to help water systems and states to achieve the health protection objectives of the *Safe Drinking Water Act*.
- Full funding for the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG), which manages the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's implementation of a number of broadband grant programs.

Increased funding for nutrition programs: The bipartisan government funding bill includes additional resources for nutrition programs that help to feed hungry families in Central and Southern Illinois and across the country. By identifying and advocating for the needs of local families during the appropriations process, Congresswoman Budzinski helped to secure the following resources:

- An additional \$1.3 billion for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program that served 6.6 million women, infants and children in fiscal year 2023. This increase in funding is in line with [a request](#) made by Congresswoman Budzinski and her colleagues for additional support.
- Full funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) which served more than 42 million people in 2023. Budzinski has [advocated extensively](#) for the program on the House Committee on Agriculture and through her [Farm Bill 101 initiative](#).
- An additional \$4.7 billion in funding for school meals for all K-12 students through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) within the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Budzinski advocated for additional school meal funding during the 2023 appropriations process.