



# HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

## STATE OF MICHIGAN

### Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

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1. The sponsoring representative's first name:  
Luke
2. The sponsoring representative's last name:  
Meerman
3. The cosponsoring representatives' names. All cosponsors must be listed. If none, please type 'n/a.' A signed letter from the sponsor approving the co-sponsorship and a signed letter from the member wishing to co-sponsor are required. Attach letters at question #9 below.  
Representatives Curt VanderWall, Greg VanWoerkom, and Will Snyder
4. Name of the entity that the spending item is intended for:  
Muskegon County
5. Physical address of the entity that the spending item is intended for:  
1903 Marquette Avenue, Suite A111, Muskegon, MI 49442
6. If there is not a specific recipient, the intended location of the project or activity:  
Muskegon County
7. Name of the representative and the district number where the legislatively directed spending item is located:  
Luke Meerman, District 89
8. Purpose of the legislatively directed spending item. Please include how it provides a public benefit and why it is an appropriate use of taxpayer funding. Please also demonstrate that the item does not violate Article IV, S 30 of the Michigan Constitution. Funds appropriated to this project will support a critical infrastructure project that benefits both the Counties of Muskegon and Ottawa. This project has seen years of planning and in 2022, the project received \$60 million in SOAR funding to proceed. This project, the Southeast Regional Force Main, is a collaboration between Muskegon and Ottawa Counties, their economic development agencies, the City of Coopersville, local agricultural producers, and multiple local units of government. Ground was broken for this project in 2024 and as work began, final cost estimates increased past planned

amounts. These unexpected cost increases have been influenced by inflation and the prevailing wage and right now, Muskegon County is in a difficult position.

The purpose of this legislatively directed spending item is to fund the remainder of the Southeast Regional Force Main project, a key infrastructure project that will support economic growth in West Michigan and the agricultural producers in the region. The City of Coopersville operates a small wastewater treatment facility that has become overburdened by the demands of its growing community and regional agricultural producers. Expanding the wastewater treatment facility in Coopersville was not a viable solution, given the steep cost of expansion. Community leaders came together and proposed the Southeast Regional Force Main, a water line that would connect the City of Coopersville and local industry to the wastewater treatment facility operated by Muskegon County. This facility has the capacity to meet the demand not only for Muskegon County but also the City of Coopersville. This solution works for all involved and funds appropriated by SOAR have allowed this plan to come to fruition after years of planning.

Industry in this region is dominated by agriculture and in the City of Coopersville, two of the largest job providers are the dairy processors fairlife and Continental Dairy. After surpassing the wastewater capacity of the City's water infrastructure, these dairy facilities had to halt plans for expansion despite there being a strong desire for growth. Before funding was secured in 2022, these producers had begun to explore options for growth outside of the state however, key SOAR funding has kept jobs in the region and will increase dairy output. Their desire to remain in the region was so strong that they are bearing some of the cost for this project.

With any undertaking this large, unexpected costs are a given and unfortunately, inflation, labor costs, and shifts in the market have seen the cost of this project rise. Funding appropriated here will benefit the public as this project will support residential and industry growth. It will alleviate financial limitations on the City of Coopersville's infrastructure and this project will bring more jobs to the region. This need will support future economic development and ensure that incoming businesses and residences have the infrastructure they need to expand, and this does not violate Article IV, S 30 of the Michigan Constitution.

**9. Attach documents here if needed:**

Attachments added to the end of this file.

**10. The amount of state funding requested for the legislatively directed spending item.**

7151004

**11. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received any of the following types of funding? Check all that apply.**

["State", "Local", "Private"]

12. Please select one of the following groups that describes the entity requesting the legislatively directed spending item:

Local unit government

13. For a non-profit organization, has the organization been operating within Michigan for the preceding 36 months?

Not applicable

14. For a non-profit organization, has the entity had a physical office within Michigan for the preceding 12 months?

Not applicable

15. For a non-profit organization, does the organization have a board of directors?

Not applicable

16. For a non-profit organization, list all the active members on the organization's board of directors and any other officers. If this question is not applicable, please type 'n/a.'

N/A

17. "I certify that neither the sponsoring representative nor the sponsoring representative's staff or immediate family has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the legislatively directed spending item."

Yes, this is correct

18. Anticipated start and end dates for the legislatively directed spending item:

Project is ongoing and ground has already been broken with an anticipated completion date of 2026.

19. "I hereby certify that all information provided in this request is true and accurate."

Yes