

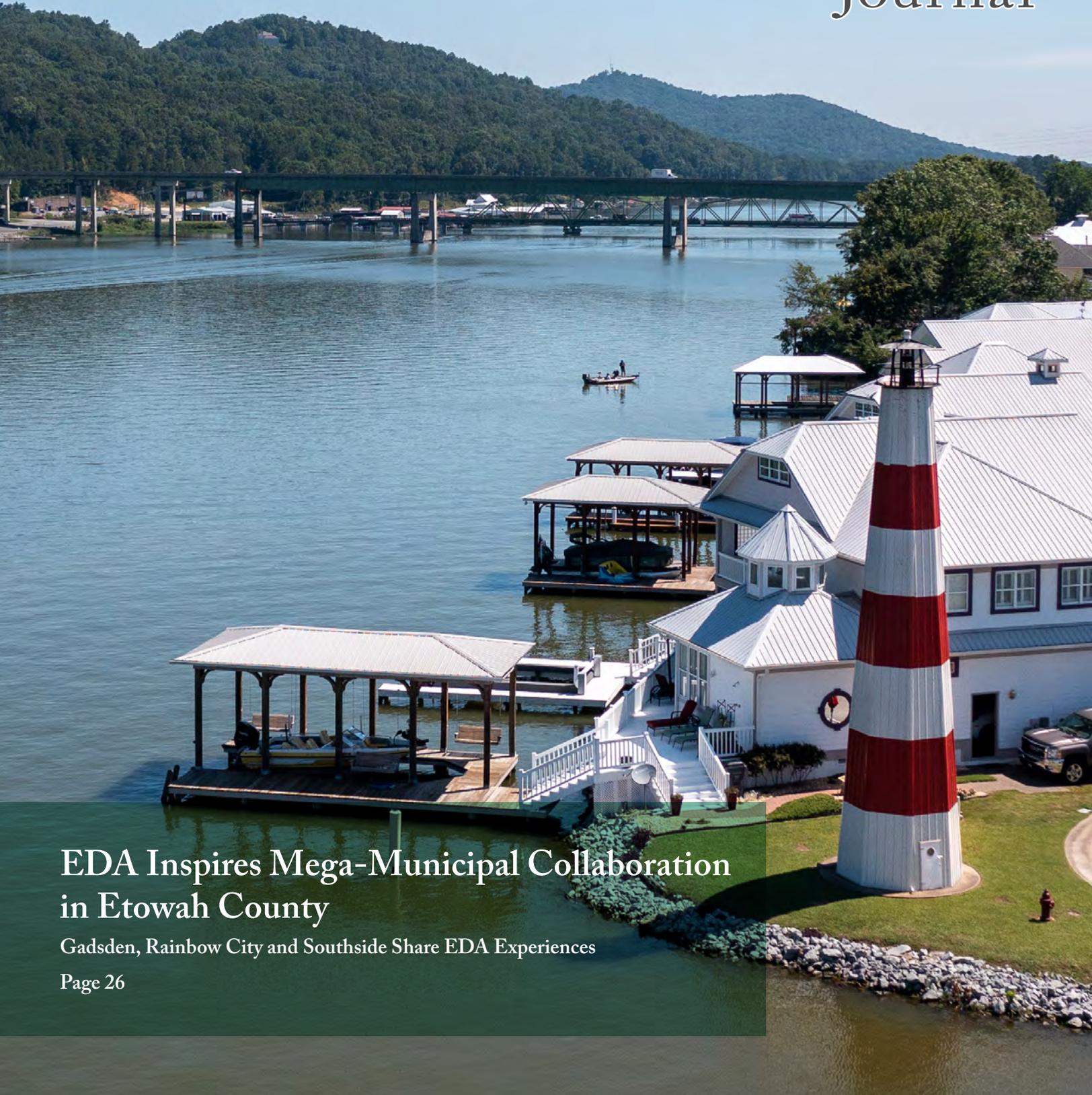
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EDA Inspires Mega-Municipal Collaboration in Etowah County

Gadsden, Rainbow City and Southside Share EDA Experiences

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POWER OF THE PURSE:

CONGRESSIONALLY-DIRECTED SPENDING IS BACK AND HOPEFULLY HERE TO STAY

UNDERSTANDING THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS AND WHAT MUNICIPALITIES CAN DO TO VOICE THEIR NEEDS

MICHAEL BERSON • PARTNER • ADAMS AND REESE

Federal congressionally-directed spending (CDS), also referred to as Community Project Funding, has returned and appears to have some staying power with Republicans in control of the House. GOP lawmakers have included nearly \$7.4 billion across 4,714 individual projects for Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bills. With a revived, more transparent process, members can again exercise their “power of the purse,” as provided under the U.S. Constitution, to fund critical projects and support constituents back in their districts.

Without CDS, the executive branch and career federal employees were able to freely decide from their desks in Washington, D.C. how, and more importantly, where Alabamians’ federal tax dollars should be spent. It makes sense to have the member of Congress, who knows their district and constituents’ needs best, making those decisions. Therefore, in a major win for their districts and upon passage of a final bill, House GOP stands to take home \$4.5 billion, or 61% of the available funding; Democrats will bring home \$2.7 billion; and \$107.9 million requested by bipartisan groups of lawmakers. However, the House is not alone in taking care of their constituents back home as the Senate reported \$7.7 billion in CDS, with nearly \$4 billion requested by Democrats, \$3 billion requested by Republicans, and \$772.5 million by bipartisan groups, according to *Bloomberg Government*.

Alabama Congressional Leaders Invest in Infrastructure, Military Bases, Waterways, Hospitals and Law Enforcement

Alabama ranks seventh among dollars secured for local projects in the 2024 appropriations process. U.S. Sen. Katie Britt, who sits on the influential Senate Committee on Appropriations, joined her colleagues in advancing the Fiscal Year 2024 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, which would appropriate more than \$72 million in direct investments across the state, including \$20.6 million for the revitalization and repair of the George W.

Andrews Lock and Dam on the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint rivers, in Columbia, Alabama, and \$18.4 million for dredging, maintenance and operations on the, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.

U.S. Sen. Tommy Tuberville, a member of the critical Senate Committee on Armed Services, submitted 110 requests for CDS funding impacting projects in 51 of Alabama’s 67 counties, including, but not limited to, \$20 million for Redstone Arsenal, \$4 million for the city of Arab for critical water system improvements, and over \$2.3 million for the city of Heflin to construct a police department headquarters.

U.S. Rep. Jerry Carl (AL-01), who sits on the influential House Committee on Appropriations, was able to include Community Project Funding for a number of critical projects, including, \$4 million for Mobile International Airport fire and rescue improvements, \$750,000 for D.W. McMillan Memorial Hospital in Brewton, and \$1.3 million for Washington County Hospital and Nursing Home to construct a new physician’s office building in Chatom.



U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers (AL-03), chairman of the influential House Committee on Armed Services, requested funding for key projects including, but not limited to, over \$80 million for the Anniston Army Depot, \$3.8 million for the Lee County Sheriff’s Office’s communications system upgrades, and \$6.7 million to fund the design and construction of a new emergency backup generator system and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) treatment system to treat groundwater in Auburn.

U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-07), member of the House Committee on Ways and Means and House Committee on Armed Services, was able to request funding for a wide variety of projects. This ranges from \$1.5 million for the West Alabama Food Bank and \$1.3 million for the engineering, design, and construction of a drone cage and testing facility at the Bessemer Airport to \$3.7 million for downtown revitalization efforts within a 12-block area of downtown Selma, and over \$2 million for the city of Demopolis for a new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) certified storm shelter to house individuals during inclement weather in this rural area.

U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt (AL-04), chairman of the influential House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Dale Strong (AL-05), member of the House Committee on Armed Services and Committee on Homeland Security, also hope to bring

home major wins for their constituents. This includes \$2.4 million for the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama for the Challenger Learning Center; over \$3.8 million for a new community center in Russellville; more than \$4.1 million for a new pump station and gravity main for the city of Priceville; and \$240,000 for five new police vehicles for the city of Scottsboro.

Transportation and Infrastructure Dominate Nationwide Congressionally-Directed Funding

Nationwide, transportation and infrastructure lead the way with House (and Senate) members including \$4 billion for 2,665 projects within the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill, compared with \$2.1 billion for 919 projects in the Senate.

Understanding the Appropriations Process

Under the U.S Constitution, Congress exercises the “power of the purse” including Section 9 of Article I, which states funds may be drawn from the U. S. Department of the Treasury only pursuant to appropriations made by law.

The appropriations process is the process by which Congress authorizes and provides funding for the federal government. An appropriation is best described as a statutory provision that provides budget authority, thus permitting Congress to incur obligations and make payments from the U.S. Treasury for specified purposes. CDS is a congressional directive or a provision inserted into a discretionary spending

Here are some of the other critical areas of need supported by members of the House and Senate, according to data from *Bloomberg Government*.

Energy and Water

- House - \$944.5M, 89 projects
- Senate - \$952.6M, 211 projects

Interior-Environment

- House - \$880.4M, 767 projects
- Senate - \$744M, 436 projects

Commerce-Justice-Science

- House - \$600M, 650 projects
- Senate - \$547.3M, 460 projects

Agriculture-FDA

- House - \$484.9M, 396 projects
- Senate - \$290M, 225 projects

Military Construction-VA

- House - \$294.6M, 24 projects
- Senate - \$1.3B, 125 projects

Homeland Security

- House - \$181.2M, 123 projects
- Senate - \$120M, 91 projects

Labor-HHS-Education

- House - None
- Senate - \$1.4B, 1,076 projects

Financial Services and General Government

- House - None
- Senate - \$188M, 196 projects

The following are the main steps of the appropriations process:

- The president submits a budget request to Congress each year, typically in February, outlining his or her spending priorities.
- Congress then considers a budget resolution, which sets overall spending limits for the federal government. The budget resolution is usually passed in April or May.
- The House and Senate appropriations committees then hold hearings, typically held in May and June, on the president’s budget request and other spending proposals.
- The House and Senate appropriations committees markup appropriations bills by making amendments.
- The House and Senate vote on the appropriations bills. If two chambers pass different versions of the same bill, a conference committee is appointed to reconcile the differences. The conference committee reports a compromise bill to the House and Senate. The House and Senate then vote on the compromise bill.
- Once this occurs, the president signs the appropriations bills into law.

appropriations bill that directs funds to a specific recipient while circumventing the merit-based or competitive funds allocation process.

Congress regularly considers three main types of appropriations measures: **regular annual appropriations** to provide budget authority to fund programs and agency activities for the next fiscal year; **supplemental appropriations** to provide additional budget authority during the current fiscal year, if the regular appropriation is insufficient or to finance activities not provided for in the regular appropriation; and **continuing appropriations** (or continuing resolutions) to provide interim (or sometimes full-year) funding to agencies for activities or programs not yet covered by a regular appropriation.

By custom, appropriations bills originate in the House but may be amended by the Senate, as with other legislation. The process can be influenced by a variety of factors, including the political climate, the state of the economy and the priorities of the president and Congress.

Best Practices for Municipalities to Voice Needs

Here are some of the best practices that municipalities can undertake to voice their needs for federal funding:

Ensure your funding request is aligned with appropriations committees’ priorities.

Write a compelling funding request that is clear, concise, and persuasive - explaining the project need, project benefits and project cost. Be prepared to answer any follow-up questions from the appropriations committees.

Gather support from other stakeholders, such as local businesses, community organizations, and labor unions, to demonstrate the project’s wide-ranging support.

Identify members of Congress who are most likely to support your CDS request. This could include your own representative and senators, as well as other members who have a strong interest in your industry or issue area.

Build relationships with your congressional champions - meet with them in person, stay in touch with them regularly and provide them with updates on your project.

Be patient and persistent. The federal funding process can be long and unpredictable, so it is important to remain patient and persistent in your efforts.

It is also important to note that the congressional spending process constantly evolves with the rules and regulations changing from year to year. It is important to stay up-to-date on the latest changes. Advocacy is also critical to your needs; therefore, it is important to consider partnering with legal representation that is familiar with the appropriations process and has connections to the legislative playmakers who make these critical, financial decisions every fiscal year. ■



Michael Berson is a partner in the Mobile office of Adams and Reese. He is experienced in government relations as well as economic development and city, county and local government law. He has represented businesses, municipalities, airport and port authorities, nonprofits, education and charter school clients, and other governmental entities including water and sewer authorities, utilities boards and industrial development boards. At the intersection of business and government, Michael develops and implements federal policy and legislative strategies for clients on Capitol Hill and within various governmental agencies. He formerly served as director of government affairs and associate general counsel of the National Small Business Association in Washington, D.C. Michael can be reached at michael.berson@arlaw.com.