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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2803

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES ON
ENERGY & WATER DEVELOPMENT,
& RELATED AGENCIES
DEFENSE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEES ON
ENERGY & MINERAL RESOURCES
FEDERAL LANDS

March 19, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting funding for Secure Nevada Research Drones in Fiscal Year 2027. The entity to receive funding for this project is the Desert Research Institute (DRI), located at 755 E. Flamingo Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89119. The funding would be used to enable the DRI to purchase NDAA-compliant unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and newly available sensors and platforms that will enhance DRI's UAS research capabilities. The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because DRI's UAS programs play a critical role in wildfire assessment, drought and water-resource monitoring, dust and erosion studies, geomorphology, archaeology, and other applied sciences. These funds are necessary to protect Nevada's UAS-based research capabilities, safeguard sensitive environmental data from potential foreign exploitation, and support U.S. manufacturing and supply chain security.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by section 272 of title 15, United States Code.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susie Lee".

Susie Lee
Member of Congress