

ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD
1ST DISTRICT, ARKANSAS

CHAIRMAN, PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

VICE CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES,
RISK MANAGEMENT, AND CREDIT

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
2422 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

□ WASHINGTON, DC
2422 RAYBURN HOB
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: 202-225-4076

□ JONESBORO
2400 EAST HIGHLAND
SUITE 300
JONESBORO, AR 72401
PHONE: 870-203-0540
FAX: 870-203-0542

□ CABOT
112 SOUTH FIRST STREET
CABOT, AR 72023
PHONE: 501-843-3043
FAX: 501-843-4955

□ MOUNTAIN HOME
1001 HIGHWAY 62 EAST
SUITE 9
MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72653
PHONE: 870-424-2075
FAX: 870-424-3149

□ DUMAS
101 E. WATERMAN STREET
DUMAS, AR 71639
PHONE: 870-377-5571

WWW.CRAWFORD.HOUSE.GOV

March 26, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting funding for the Steel Manufacturing Virtual Reality (VR) Laboratory in Fiscal Year 2027. The entity to receive funding for this project is Arkansas Northeastern College located at 2501 South Division Street, Blytheville, Arkansas 72315. The funding would be used to establish a state-of-the-art simulation laboratory to replicate the extreme thermal environments of an Electric Arc Furnace to support the training of new steelworkers. The laboratory will ensure that trainees are exposed to the exact equipment and kinematic behaviors they will encounter in regional mills and reduce the "time-to-floor" for new hires while increasing workplace safety and proficiency. The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it supports the nation's largest steel-producing industrial cluster and the corresponding demand for labor that currently exceeds traditional training capacity.

This project has a federal nexus because it is for the purposes authorized in 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(2).

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

Sincerely,



Rep. Eric A. "Rick" Crawford (AR-01)
Member of Congress