

You Can Help Expand Access to Development Capital & Federal Funding to Advance Game-Changing Bioeconomy Projects ... and mitigate the climate crisis

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You can make a difference. You can raise your voice and make your voice heard ... you can help create a grant program within the federal government to provide development capital ... and you can help expand opportunities to advance game-changing projects which do not fit within the confines of current government funding programs.

The Alternative Fuels & Chemicals Coalition (AFCC) has drafted language to do this for inclusion in the fiscal year (FY) 2025 appropriations bills for seven federal agencies, which Congress is just now beginning to consider.

AFCC has, since it was founded in 2019, and with considerable success, made funding requests to maintain, when threatened, and increase funding for close to 50 federal government funding programs. This year, it also is making two additional requests:

1. AFCC has drafted language for inclusion in the FY2025 Department of Energy appropriation for its Title 17 Clean Energy Financing Loan Guarantee Program to establish a \$500 million 50/50 matching grant program to provide development capital.

There currently is no federal grant program that provides the funding necessary for innovative, game-changing projects to advance through their final Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) and front-end loaded (FEL) 1-3 and pre-construction steps so they can meet the application requirements for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Section 9003 Biorefinery, Renewable Chemicals, and Biobased Products Manufacturing Assistance Loan Guarantee Program and the Title 17 program so these projects can be built, placed in operation, and deployed.

2. AFCC also has drafted language for inclusion in the FY2025 appropriations for the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Interior, and Transportation and the Environment Protection Agency to increase emphasis on and expand funding opportunities for projects that are unable to fit within the limits of federal agency grant programs ... and, thus, are far too often left by the wayside.

The federal government requires that every federal agency accept unsolicited proposals for projects that do not fit within an agency's funding opportunity announcements.

The ability to obtain funding through an unsolicited proposal is not well known. There also are limitations on the submission of these proposals that preclude their use by many worthwhile projects.

The focus of this article is on the steps that you can take to support these two initiatives.

A second article describes AFCC's request for [creating a development capital grant program](#). A third article describes its initiative for [expanding access and funding through unsolicited proposals](#). A fourth article provides [talking points](#) that you can use in advocating for these initiatives.



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You can help AFCC move these initiatives forward. The FY2025 appropriation request process is just now beginning. The first step, from now through the middle or end of March is the submission of appropriation funding requests to Member offices in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate.

Most member offices have mid- to end-of-March deadlines for accepting appropriation requests for consideration.

This is the most important step in making an appropriation request.

AFCC has to convince as many offices as possible to include AFCC's requests among those that the offices select and submit to each of appropriations subcommittees.

This is where you can make a difference. A big difference.

As successful as AFCC has been in advancing its annual appropriations requests, nothing is as effective ... nor has as much impact ... as outpourings of support for specific requests from a Representative's and Senator's constituents.

AFCC, therefore, is asking for your support, to become involved, to raise your voice and make it heard, by reaching out to your Members of Congress.

Taking action in the next two weeks to support AFCC's initiatives will be extremely helpful. This is where you can have the greatest impact.

This the two accompanying articles contain the requests that AFCC is making for creation of a development capital grant program and expansion of access to and funding for unsolicited proposals, along with the rationale for making these requests, and the language AFCC has proposed for inclusion in the FY2025 appropriations bills.

The sidebars that accompany these articles provide lists of talking points that you can use in reaching out to your members of Congress.

10 ways in which you can help

1. Review the accompanying articles that describe AFCC's requests and the rationale for making these requests.

2. The articles and talking point sidebars will help give you enough familiarity with the two requests, so you are able to talk about them, and describe them in general terms on the phone, in an email, or in a meeting with a Member or Member's staff.
3. It is extremely helpful if you can add a personal experience or, even better, anecdotes, to support the request and underscore its importance.

The more that your outreach is personal and unique, using AFCC's talking points solely as a starting place, the greater the amount of attention it will receive.

This is because Congressional offices tend to discount canned, look-alike communications that parrot what a lobbying group has asked people to say.

4. Member offices only will consider appropriations requests from constituents, industry organizations (such as AFCC) representing constituents, or companies with offices (or, better yet, facilities that provide jobs and economic stimulus for the communities in which constituents live).
5. Most offices post a link on their websites to their appropriations request forms. Other offices will provide their appropriations form upon request by email. Details on accessing these forms on Member websites and requesting the forms by email are included in the talking points sidebar.
6. The first, easiest step in making an appropriations request is to call your Member offices and, in 10 or 15, words express your support for the request (see the first set of bullet points in the two sidebars).

With phone calls, please ignore #3 above. The more succinct the call, and the more each call received repeats another, the better.

The balance of the talking points can be used to give more detail on a phone call, if asked, as well as in emails, letters of support and, if appropriate, in Zoom calls and office visits per #10 below.

You likely will be asked to submit the request via the contact form on the Member's website.

Don't let that deter you from making calls. The more phone calls that a Member's office receives, the more it heightens awareness about the request and draws attention to the request forms that have been submitted by AFCC and other constituents. With enough phone calls, a Member will take it more seriously and is more likely to make it one of his or her priority requests.

That is the power of peppering an office with phone calls.

Once an office begins getting a large number of phone calls for or against an issue, they begin tracking how many pro and con phone calls are received, information that is passed on to the Member and taken into consideration when the Member is deciding which appropriations to submit to the Appropriations Committees.

7. Even if you send a message supporting AFCC's requests via the contact form on a Member's website, you can follow up with an email as well. The advantage of emails (which should be short and succinct) is they can include attachments (which most contact forms do not accommodate), such as a letter of support that you have written, using your own words and describing your personal experiences.

An email, followed by a phone call and short message submitted on a Member's website contact form, is the next notch up in expending effort to support AFCC's requests.

Letters of support should be addressed to the Member. Emails should be sent to the staff person who is handling the offices' appropriation requests. You can get that person's name and email address by calling the office.

8. The more letters of support that you can gather or, alternatively, the larger the number of signatures (and, if appropriate, company logos) that you can include in a letter of support, the better.
9. The next level of effort is to fill out the Member's appropriations request form, which usually can be found on the Member's website. Some of these forms are relatively simple and straightforward. Others are more detailed.

As with phone calls, emails, and letters of support, the more appropriation request forms that an office receives, the more the request is going to get attention and be taken into consideration by the Member.

10. The final level of support is to request a meeting or Zoom call with one of the Member's staff (for the capital development grant program, you will want to speak with the legislative aide, or LA, for energy; for the unsolicited proposal, you will want to speak with the LA for appropriations).

There is no point in doing this; in fact, it will be counterproductive, if you only are going to repeat the talking points from the sidebars or what can be stated in an email or letter of support.

It is advisable to take this step only if:

- you know a Member or staff person personally, or
- are a senior executive (or owner) of a company that is known to the Member

- the is located where the people who vote for Member live, and
- you are able to describe the impact that one or both of issues have on the company.

If you have a personal connection with a Member or Member's staff, it is best to first approach this person on a personal level, based on the connection that you have, then use this to segue into discussing the AFCC appropriations requests.

The appropriations requests should be touched on only briefly, just enough to add to the requests that the Member and his or her staff are (hopefully) already receiving.

If the Member or Member's staff asks a question about the appropriations request, then you can go into more detail.

You can, in most cases, request a meeting with the Member or the Member's staff, via the online contact form. You also can call the office and ask to speak with the office's scheduler.

Some points to keep in mind

- The most effective approaches, always, are those that demonstrate how a Member and his or her constituents will benefit.

The most compelling benefits, whether the Member is a Republican or Democrat, are jobs, good wages, increases in economic stimulus and tax revenues for local communities and, perhaps most important of all, allowing the Member look good and, at the top of the list, helping him or her get re-elected.

- A major key in being effective is to remember that each Member is different, with different motivations, backgrounds, and objectives.

You need to be aware of these differences and your communications need to be flexible and adaptable enough to tie in and speak to these interests.

You can learn a lot about a Member by visiting his or her website, which will include the Member's bio, voting record, committee assignments, the legislation he or she has sponsored or co-sponsored, along with links to press releases and news articles about the Member's accomplishments and activities.

It is advisable to review this information before posting a message on the Member's contact form, sending an email or letter of support, filling out an appropriations request form, or requesting a meeting of Zoom call.

How to contact your Member offices

- To find the Members of Congress who represent you, along with their office phone numbers, email addresses, Washington DC mailing address, and links to their websites, go to <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member> and enter your address in the field provided.
- Clicking the “Contact” link once you see the Member’s name will take you to a contact form that allows you to send a message to the Member, where you will fill in your address again, to ensure you are a constituent, after which you can send a message to the Member’s office.
- All Congressional offices will be submitting appropriations requests, so every office is an important part of this advocacy effort.
- The most important Members of Congress for advancing AFCC’s efforts, once Member offices have submitted their appropriations requests, are the appropriators who serve on the House and Senate appropriations committees.

You can see if your Representative or Senators serve on these committees by viewing the list of appropriation committee members on the House and Senate websites: <https://appropriations.house.gov/membership-118th-congress> and <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/about/members>.

- You also can click the “Subcommittees” tabs on both websites to see if your Representative or Senators serve on the *Energy and Water appropriations subcommittees*.

These are the Members who will be considering AFCC’s development capital grant program request once Member office appropriations requests are received.

- AFCC’s unsolicited proposal request is targeted to the appropriations for seven agencies. These appropriations requests will be considered by the members of the *Agriculture and Rural Development, Energy and Water, Defense, Interior and Environment, and Transportation Housing and Urban Development* appropriations subcommittees.