

UConn receives \$768K grant to continue studying crumbling foundations that have plagued eastern, north-central Connecticut

By Steven Goode, Hartford Courant

UConn has received a grant for \$768,000 to continue to study the state's crumbling foundation crisis that experts have said could ultimately impact tens of thousands of homes in eastern and north-central Connecticut.

The grant was announced Tuesday by congressmen Joe Courtney and John Larson, who secured the funding. The school received \$1.5 million last year as a result of the work of Courtney and Larson and the Connecticut delegation.

The funding is made available by the National Institute of Standards and Technology to conduct research on the effects of the mineral pyrrhotite on concrete aggregate. The new grant will support research that captures information on the premature degradation of concrete foundations that contain pyrrhotite, and seeks to build a risk assessment framework for identifying and evaluating potential mitigation strategies.

"It's good to see the funding we worked to secure for crumbling foundations research get turned around so quickly, and even better to see it put to use here with the experts at UConn in eastern Connecticut," Courtney said in a release Tuesday "UConn has already got valuable experience with this sort of work, and they've got research underway now. This new round of more than \$760,000 in federal funding will help to support that work and see it towards completion.

Courtney said there are thousands of people in eastern Connecticut and across New England who are dealing with crumbling foundations, and this research will help everyone gain a better understanding of the scope of the crisis, and a clearer understanding of the risks of pyrrhotite.

Larson said that the award highlights how the crumbling foundations crisis is an "all hands on deck situation."

"With federal resources, local leadership, and UCONN's expertise, this effort will further our understanding of how pyrrhotite actually affects building foundations," Larson said in the release.

The cost to replace a failing foundation averages about \$185,000, but can cost up to \$350,000. Insurance companies have refused to pay the claims, saying that the failure does not meet their definition of a structural collapse. The state launched a fund in 2019 to help homeowners pay to replace their foundations, levying a \$12 annual surcharge on homeowners insurance policies.

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