

HUD money available for testing crumbling foundations

U.S. Rep. Courtney announces approval of \$480,000 in grant funding for programs in 3 towns



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has approved block grants to support concrete foundation testing programs in Ellington, Stafford and Vernon. (JHartford Courant file photo)

BY KATHLEEN MCWILLIAMS

U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney announced Tuesday that the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development has approved nearly a half-million dollars in Community Development Block Grants that will support concrete foundation testing programs in Ellington, Stafford and Vernon.

The \$480,000 in grant funding was requested by the three towns in 2018. The towns filed a joint application as a part of Connecticut's small cities program run by the state Department of Housing, which allocates the federal block grants.

"Approval of this application is a big win for our region. From day one, I have worked to identify any possible sources of federal aid to help respond to the crumbling foundations crisis in eastern Connecticut," Courtney said.

Courtney first identified the funds as a possible source of revenue for towns affected by crumbling concrete foundations in 2016.

“Today’s announcement is a direct result of efforts by my office to confirm that existing federal CDBG funds that the state gets every year can be used for helping communities and homeowners grappling with the crisis and its impacts,” he said. “We cannot afford to leave any options off the table as we move forward and I will continue to work with local, state and federal officials to bring resources like these to our region.”

Ellington, Stafford and Vernon are the second group of towns to receive funding from the federal government through the state. The Connecticut Department of Housing previously awarded \$250,000 in block grants to a group of towns including Coventry, Ashford, Bolton, Columbia, Coventry, Tolland, Union and Willington.

Hundreds of homes in northeastern and north central Connecticut have failing foundations caused by the presence of a mineral, pyrrhotite, which oxidizes when exposed to oxygen and water. As many as 34,000 homes could be at risk for a failing foundation. The funds allow municipalities with testing programs to cover 100 percent of the cost to test a foundation for pyrrhotite, up to \$5,000.

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