

Courtney amendment offering concrete testing passes US House

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WASHINGTON — An amendment championed by U.S. Rep. Joseph D. Courtney that would provide millions of dollars to research crumbling foundations cleared a major hurdle this week when it was approved in the House as part of a package that includes five appropriations bills.

The amendment aims to research the mineral pyrrhotite,

which is causing foundations to deteriorate in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Courtney's amendment provides \$4 million for the National Institute of Standards and Technology, or NIST, to research the effects of pyrrhotite on concrete aggregate.

If signed by the president, the amendment requires NIST to create a risk-rating scale to help homeowners, business owners, and municipal leaders have a better understanding of how

much a danger pyrrhotite is to a foundation's structural integrity.

The five-bill package also includes \$3.6 billion for the Community Development Block Grant program, previous allocations of which are currently being used in Connecticut to test foundations for the presence of pyrrhotite.

An increase in federal CDBG funding could provide more homeowners with testing assistance, which can be as much as 100 percent up to \$5,000.

The spending package also includes \$72.26 million for the replacement of Pier 32 at Naval Submarine Base New London, an increase of more than \$1 million to the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers program, and \$501 million for initiatives to address the opioid epidemic.

"Our bill provides funding to boost a number of important programs here in eastern Connecticut," Courtney said. "The bill also contains an amendment I offered that will

provide NIST with the resources it needs to conduct important research on the crumbling foundations crisis facing many of our neighbors. I'm proud to have worked across the aisle throughout the appropriations process to push many of these initiatives across the finish line, and I'm looking forward to continuing to produce results for eastern Connecticut throughout this 116th Congress."