

PROPOSALS FOR A WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2024: MEMBERS' DAY HEARING

(118-41)

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JANUARY 11, 2024

Printed for the use of the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure



Available online at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/committee/house-transportation?path=/browsecommittee/chamber/house/committee/transportation>

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55-094 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2024

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Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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JANUARY 5, 2024

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment
FROM: Staff, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment
RE: Subcommittee Hearing on “*Proposals for a Water Resources Development Act of 2024: Members’ Day Hearing*”

I. PURPOSE

The Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will meet on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. ET in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building to receive Member testimony at a hearing entitled, “*Proposals for a Water Resources Development Act of 2024: Members’ Day Hearing*.” The purpose of this hearing is to provide Members of the House of Representatives with an opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee on their priorities related to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Testimony will help to inform the drafting of a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) for 2024, which the Committee expects to approve this year.

II. BACKGROUND

The Corps is the Federal Government’s largest water resources development and management agency.¹ The Corps’ primary civil works missions are riverine and coastal navigation, the reduction of flood damage risks along inland and coastal waters, and projects to restore and protect the aquatic ecosystems.² Additionally, the Corps provides outdoor recreation opportunities, offers water supply storage to state and local partners, assists in emergency response, participates in the construction of environmental infrastructure projects, and is a leading producer of hydro-power in the United States.³ To achieve its mission, the Corps plans, designs, and constructs water resources development projects, which are authorized through WRDAs, enacted biennially by Congress since 2014.⁴

WRDA is the authorizing vehicle for Corps’ policy, studies, and construction of projects. To date, the Committee is in receipt of three Reports from the Chief of Engineers for the authorization of completed feasibility studies. The Committee also

¹CORPS, *Mission Overview*, (last accessed Dec. 21, 2023), available at <https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions>.

²See generally ANNA NORMAN & NICOLE CARTER, CONG. RSCH. SERV. (IF113322), WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACTS: PRIMER, (updated Mar. 14, 2023), available at <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/IF113322/IF113322.pdf>.

³CORPS, *Value to the Nation*, (last accessed Dec. 21, 2023), available at <https://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Value-to-the-Nation>.

⁴See e.g. James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, Pub. L. 117–263, Div. H, Title LXXXI, 136 Stat. 3691.

received the Section 7001 Annual Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development (Section 7001 Report) for 2023. The Committee has not received the Section 7001 Report for 2024, which is due in February 2024. Access to these materials, along with more information for WRDA 2024 considerations, can be found on the Committee's website: <https://transportation.house.gov/wrda-2024/>.⁵

⁵ COMM. ON TRANSP. AND INFRASTRUCTURE, Water Resources Development Act of 2024, *available at* <https://transportation.house.gov/wrda-2024>.

PROPOSALS FOR A WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2024: MEMBERS' DAY HEARING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m. in room 2167 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. David Rouzer (Chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. ROUZER. The Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that the chairman be authorized to declare a recess at any time during today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

I also ask unanimous consent that Members not on the subcommittee be permitted to sit with the subcommittee at today's hearing and ask questions.

Without objection, so ordered.

As a reminder, if Members wish to insert a document into the record, please also email it to DocumentsTI@mail.house.gov. Again, that's DocumentsTI@mail.house.gov.

I now recognize myself for the purposes of an opening statement for 5 minutes.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID ROUZER OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Mr. ROUZER. Today's hearing marks the third in a series this subcommittee is holding in preparation for the Water Resources Development Act, or WRDA, as we call it, of 2024. In December, we heard from representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers and national stakeholders in our first two WRDA hearings.

As one of our witnesses stated in our last hearing, WRDA is the most important piece of legislation, they said, that most Americans have never heard of. And how true that probably is.

On the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, we are proud to work hard and draft a WRDA regularly. In fact, since 2014, Congress has passed a WRDA bill every 2 years in bipartisan fashion.

In addition to being on a dependable and predictable schedule, these bills have been bipartisan and consensus-based, ensuring consistency and certainty, which provides greater benefit for stakeholders and communities across the country. I look forward to continuing this tradition and working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass another WRDA bill this year.

WRDA is a critical legislative vehicle, ensuring communities' water resources needs are met nationwide. Navigation, flood control, beach nourishment, ecosystem restoration, hydropower, water supply, and recreation at Corps facilities are all important issues we will address in this year's WRDA. In other words, our Nation needs WRDAs to keep our communities safe and functional.

Today, I look forward to hearing directly from my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on the priorities important to them and their constituents and how they will benefit communities across our country. I thank each and every one of them for taking time out of their busy schedule to be with us today.

[Mr. Rouzer's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. David Rouzer, a Representative in Congress from the State of North Carolina, and Chairman, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

Today's hearing marks the third in a series this subcommittee is holding in preparation for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024. Last month, we heard from representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers and national stakeholders in our first two WRDA hearings.

As one of our witnesses wisely said in our last hearing, WRDA is the most important piece of legislation that most Americans have never heard of. On the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, we are proud to work hard and draft a WRDA regularly. In fact, since 2014, Congress has passed a WRDA bill every two years.

In addition to being on a dependable and predictable schedule, these bills have been bipartisan and consensus-based, making life a little easier for stakeholders and communities across the country. I look forward to continuing this tradition and working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass another WRDA bill this year.

WRDA is a critical legislative vehicle, ensuring communities' water resources needs are met nationwide. Navigation, flood control, beach nourishment, ecosystem restoration, hydropower, water supply, and recreation at Corps facilities are all important issues we will address in this year's WRDA. In other words, our nation needs WRDAs to keep our communities safe and functional.

I look forward to hearing directly from my Congressional colleagues on the priorities important to them and their constituents and how they will benefit communities across our country. I thank each and every one of them for taking time out of their busy schedule to be with us today.

Mr. ROUZER. And with that, I now recognize Ranking Member Napolitano for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO OF CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this third hearing in a series of our informed development of a new WRDA for 2024.

The Army Corps of Engineers are our largest water managers in the Nation and our resident experts on everything from flood prevention to water supply to aquatic ecosystem restoration. We have

so far heard excellent testimony from Assistant Secretary of Army for Civil Works Michael Connor, as well as Lieutenant General Scott Spellmon, Chief of Engineers at the Corps.

We also have heard from highly engaged stakeholders who shared helpful insight into the impacts and policies of the Corps' work. Truly, every different perspective is helpful to our work here.

Today, we welcome our Members of Congress to present their priorities for consideration in WRDA 2024. The Corps operates nationwide with impacts on just about every single district in the country.

With a reach so far and wide, we need to make sure we recognize the specific issues facing our communities. These will be totally different on the east coast versus the west, and even different within a particular State.

The testimony we receive today will help to inform us on what matters most to our colleagues as we move forward with drafting legislation. This local perspective is key to helping our communities achieve their desired outcomes and ensuring the Corps' expertise is accessible to all those who seek it.

As we start developing our sixth consecutive, bipartisan WRDA bill, we are seeing that the legislation has become a product of its own success. Our constituency demands and now expects that we move forward in developing this legislation every Congress. This consistency and predictability is essential to the Corps itself and stakeholders across the country.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to a continued partnership with you in addressing the unique needs of Members on both sides of the aisle. The success of this committee on WRDAs has come from recognizing that collaboration and compromise are the tools to success in hyper-partisan times. That was true under the leadership of former Chairman Shuster and Chair DeFazio, and I look forward to a similar path under your leadership and the leadership of Chairman Graves.

Thank you to all Members who have made time to come before the committee today. I look forward to your testimony and working with you to write another successful WRDA and continue the important work of the Corps for water resources projects nationwide.

[Mrs. Napolitano's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Grace F. Napolitano, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this third hearing in a series to inform our development of a new Water Resources Development Act for 2024. The Army Corps of Engineers are our largest water managers in the nation, and our resident experts on everything from flood prevention, to water supply, to aquatic ecosystem restoration.

We have so far heard excellent testimony from Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Michael Connor, as well as Lieutenant General Scott Spellmon, Chief of Engineers at the Corps.

We've also heard from highly engaged stakeholders, who shared helpful insight into the impacts and policies of the Corps' work. Truly, every different perspective is helpful to our work here.

Today, we welcome Members of the House to present their priorities for consideration in WRDA 2024. The Corps operates nationwide, with impacts on just about every single district in the country.

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Thank you to all Members who have made time to come before the Committee today.

I look forward to your testimony and working with you to write another successful WRDA bill and continue the important work of the Corps for water resources projects nationwide.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentlelady. I now recognize the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. Larsen, for up to 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICK LARSEN OF WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I want to welcome everyone to our Member Day hearing, which is an opportunity for our House colleagues to share with this committee their needs and priorities that are most pressing for their constituents.

Close to 40 Members have signed up to testify today, and this committee is now working together on solving local water resources challenges and creating economic opportunity for the people we represent. That history of success is evidenced by the five bipartisan and bicameral WRDAs enacted since 2014, a tradition we expect to carry forward with passage of this sixth WRDA in a row.

The enthusiasm of Members seeking to testify today is not surprising. This hearing is happening at a very important time. After years of neglect, we are now seeing real and sustained investments in our Nation's water-related infrastructure, including ports and harbors, flood risk reduction for communities, and restoration of the natural environment.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, or BIL, is delivering tangible results for communities all across the country. The BIL provided a massive downpayment, a total of about \$17 billion, for studying and implementing critical WRDA projects. Ensuring that we continue to build on that success is essential, and the testimony that our colleagues deliver today will aid us in that effort.

WRDA 2024 is also an opportunity to continue to advance the policy achievements of the last few WRDAs, including supporting America's competitive edge by investing in harbor and inland waterway navigation; making investments that create jobs and oppor-

tunities for everyone; building climate-resilient communities; increasing equity across Corps projects, especially to advance the needs of economically disadvantaged and Tribal communities; and addressing local water and wastewater infrastructure needs.

So, thank you, Mr. Chair, for your commitment and working in a bipartisan manner to see this legislation over the finish line. Including a diverse range of perspectives is essential to ensuring the work of this committee meets the needs of people from across the country. Making sure our Members can directly advocate for their districts is an essential part of this process.

So, I want to thank all the Members who have made time to come to the committee today. I am eager to hear your testimony. [Mr. Larsen of Washington's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Rick Larsen, a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington, and Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

I'd like to welcome everyone to our Member Day Hearing, which is an opportunity for our House colleagues to share with the T&I Committee the water resources needs and priorities that are most pressing for their constituents. Close to forty members have signed up to testify today.

This Committee is now working together on solving local water resources challenges and creating economic opportunity for the people we represent.

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WRDA 2024 is also an opportunity to continue to advance the policy achievements of the last few WRDAs, including:

- Supporting America's competitive edge by investing in harbor and inland waterway navigation;
- Making investments that create jobs and opportunities for everyone;
- Building climate-resilient communities;
- Increasing equity across Corps projects, especially to advance the needs of economically disadvantaged and tribal communities; and
- Addressing local water and wastewater infrastructure needs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your commitment to working in a bipartisan manner to see this legislation over the finish line.

Including a diverse range of perspectives is essential to ensuring the work of this Committee meets the needs of people from across the country. Making sure our Members can directly advocate for their districts is an essential part of this process.

Thank you to all Members who have made time to come before the Committee today. I am eager to hear your testimony.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. With that, I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman. I would now like to welcome all of our witnesses and thank each of you for being here today.

I will not go over the light system. I think you all know that pretty well. I will just add we are not the United States Senate, so, keep your comments short.

I ask unanimous consent that the witnesses' full statements be included in the record.

Without objection, so ordered.

I also ask unanimous consent that the record of today's hearing remain open until such time as our witnesses have provided answers to any questions that may be submitted to them in writing.

Without objection, so ordered.

I also ask unanimous consent that the record remain open for 15 days for any additional comments and information submitted by Members or witnesses to be included in the record of today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

As your written testimony has been made part of the record, the subcommittee asks that you limit your oral remarks to 5 minutes.

Further, given the number of Members appearing before the subcommittee today, and out of consideration for our colleagues' time, I ask unanimous consent that members of the subcommittee be given 2 minutes to question each Member witness if they so choose following their statements.

Without objection, so ordered.

With that, we will start with our great friend and colleague, Mrs. Carol Miller from West Virginia.

You are recognized for up to 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. CAROL D. MILLER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA**

Mrs. MILLER OF WEST VIRGINIA. Good morning, Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Larsen. Thank you for allowing me to be here today to testify on behalf of my Water Resources Development Act request. I really appreciate—

Mr. ROUZER [interrupting]. Bring that microphone a little closer to you.

Mrs. MILLER OF WEST VIRGINIA. I appreciate your time and your attention. I have requested a feasibility study at the R.D. Bailey watershed in Mingo and Wyoming Counties of West Virginia.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started an environmental impact and feasibility study within the watershed at the cost of a private company in 2020. In 2022, without providing an explanation, the Corps terminated the study prematurely after already spending part of the private funding. In other words, they stopped mid-stream. Not only was this a waste of money, it was a huge waste of time, and it didn't end in any information being released about the watershed.

Therefore, I would like to request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers be mandated to complete a feasibility study at the R.D. Bailey watershed so that we can better complete and understand the area and how certain activities might impact the R.D. Bailey Dam.

Thank you very much for having me before your committee and considering my request.

[Mrs. Miller of West Virginia's prepared statement follows:]



**Prepared Statement of Hon. Carol D. Miller, a Representative in Congress
From the State of West Virginia**

Good morning, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, and thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of my Water Resources Development Act request. I appreciate your time and attention.

I have requested a feasibility study at the R.D. Bailey Watershed in Mingo and Wyoming Counties in West Virginia. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started an environmental impact and feasibility study within the watershed, at cost to a private company, in 2020. In 2022, without providing explanation, the Corps terminated the study prematurely after already spending part of the private funding. Not only is this a waste of money, it's a huge waste of time—and it didn't end in any information being released about the watershed.

Therefore, I'd like to request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers be mandated to complete a feasibility study at the R.D. Bailey Watershed, so that we can better understand the area and how certain activities might impact the R.D. Bailey Dam.

Mr. ROUZER. We thank the gentlelady.
Ms. Meng.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. GRACE MENG, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

Ms. MENG. Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, Ranking Member Larsen, and distinguished members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am honored to share with you all my priorities as the committee considers reauthorization of WRDA of 2024 that will support the safety and well-being of my constituents in Queens, New York.

Two years ago, I testified in front of this committee about the horrifying impacts that Hurricane Ida had on New York City. The storm, sadly, took the lives of 13 New Yorkers, many of whom were my constituents. I told the committee about how New York's 100-plus-year-old stormwater system is unable to keep up with increasingly powerful and frequent storms that cause deadly flooding and economic damage to Queens. And now I sit before you in 2024, which will mark the 3-year anniversary of Ida, to inform you that Queens is still at risk from these storms.

In Queens, we view terms like "100-" or "500-year floods" with skepticism, because we know from experience that these storms are occurring with greater frequency. A year after Ida, many of my constituents who were still recovering from storm damage were again hit by horrific flooding. During that storm, the city of New York sent out an emergency alert advising people who live in basement apartments, for example, to move to higher floors. And even in the 2 weeks before Ida, Tropical Storm Henri broke the existing record for rainfall in the city.

I can go on, but the evidence is clear: these storms are occurring with greater frequency, and New York City is not prepared.

In the Water Resources Development Act of 2022, I was proud to secure a \$119 million authorization for Queens, and now I am asking for that authorization to please be increased to \$250 million in the 2024 reauthorization. This would authorize the Army Corps of Engineers to spend up to \$250 million to work with the city of New York in upgrading environmental infrastructure in Queens. This could fund projects that directly address the devastating flooding that my constituents face, and to help save lives.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of this matter. I ask that the chairman and ranking member consider my request for inclusion in this year's WRDA reauthorization to protect the people of Queens. Thank you.

[Ms. Meng's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Grace Meng, a Representative in Congress
From the State of New York**

Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, and distinguished Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

I am honored to share with you all my priorities as the Committee considers reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024, that will support the safety and wellbeing of my constituents in Queens, New York.

Two years ago, I testified in front of this Committee about the horrifying impacts that Hurricane Ida had on New York City. The storm sadly took the lives of 13 New Yorkers, 6 of whom were my constituents. I told the Committee about how New York's 100+ year-old stormwater system is unable to keep up with increasingly powerful and frequent storms that cause deadly flooding and economic damage to Queens. And now I sit before you in 2024, which will mark the 3-year anniversary of Ida, to inform you that Queens is still at risk from these storms.

In Queens, we view terms like "100" or "500-year flood" with skepticism because we know from experience that these storms are occurring with greater frequency. A year after Ida, many of my constituents who were still recovering from storm damage were again hit by horrific flooding. During the storm, the City of New York sent out an emergency alert advising people who live in basement apartments to move to higher floors. And even in the two weeks before Ida, Tropical Storm Henri broke the existing record for rainfall in the city. I can go on, but the evidence is clear: these storms are occurring with greater frequency and New York City is not prepared.

In the Water Resources Development Act of 2022, I was proud to secure a \$119 million authorization for Queens. And now, I'm asking for that authorization to be increased to \$250 million in the 2024 Reauthorization. This would authorize the Army Corps of Engineers to spend up to \$250 million to work with the City of New York in upgrading environmental infrastructure in Queens. This could fund projects that directly address the devastating flooding my constituents face.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of this matter. I ask that the Chairman and Ranking Member consider my request for inclusion in this year's WRDA reauthorization to protect the people of Queens.

Mr. ROUZER. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Steil, you are recognized.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. BRYAN STEIL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN**

Mr. STEIL. Thank you very much, Chairman Rouzer, and thank you to the members of the committee for joining us today.

Mr. ROUZER. Bring that microphone closer to you.

Mr. STEIL. Let me see if I can get it—is that better for you? Thank you very much.

In January 2020, storms dramatically impacted many communities on the Great Lakes. We have had high water levels, we have had challenges to breakwaters. Under current law, what we see is a real difficulty of smaller communities accessing Federal funds, and the answer here is to make sure that we are revising WRDA in a manner that actually allows smaller communities, and particularly those along the Great Lakes, to be able to access Federal funds that already exist to make important repairs in both harbors and breakwaters.

If the repairs aren't made to some of the aging and damaged breakwaters, flooding and storms can threaten many of our communities, communities like Racine or Kenosha, Wisconsin, in my district, but communities all across the Great Lakes. And so, for that reason, I am here today to advocate for my proposal to add to the 2024 Water Resources Development Act.

My proposed language would provide another avenue for publicly owned, underserved community harbors, particularly ones in the Great Lakes, to obtain Federal funding for certain water infrastructure projects. Should the language be included in the finalized 2024 WRDA bill, more communities struggling to generate the necessary capital to complete critical water infrastructure and harbor maintenance projects would qualify for that assistance.

It would also remove one of the barriers to expeditiously complete dredging projects, which is really essential for many of our Great Lakes harbors.

I appreciate the subcommittee's engagement with my staff on this issue, and I look forward to our offices' continued collaboration.

[Mr. Steil's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Bryan Steil, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Wisconsin**

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee, for hosting this hearing. In January 2020, winter storms and high water levels caused significant damage to many Great Lakes communities' water infrastructure, such as the Racine harbor breakwater in my district.

If repairs are not made to the aging and damaged breakwater, flooding and storms will threaten Racine's historic downtown and urban Root River revitalization plans.

For that reason, I am here today to advocate for my proposed addition to the 2024 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

My proposed language would provide an additional avenue for publicly owned, underserved community harbors, particularly ones in the Great Lakes, to receive federal assistance for certain water infrastructure projects.

Should this language be included in a finalized 2024 WRDA bill, more communities struggling to generate the necessary capital to complete important water infrastructure projects and harbor maintenance would qualify for funding.

It would also remove one of the barriers in the way of the expeditious completion of dredging projects.

I appreciate the subcommittee's engagement with my staff on this issue and look forward to our office's continued collaboration, Mr. Chair.

Mr. STEIL. I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Case, you are recognized.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. ED CASE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF HAWAII**

Mr. CASE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Ranking Member, members of the committee, and thank you very much for allowing me to testify today on our 2024 Water Resources Development Act. A special mahalo to Mr. Larsen for visiting Honolulu to look at some of our critical projects last week. I certainly invite the committee members to do the same.

I have policy requests, related requests for your consideration, but today I want to highlight two critical U.S. Army Corps of Engi-

neers projects that must be addressed in WRDA this year. These projects are located in my district of Honolulu proper, but both of them are also critical to the basic functioning of Hawaii statewide.

The first is the Ala Wai Flood Risk Management Project, which was first conceived back in 1999 and was authorized and funded by Congress for design and construction in our 2018 WRDA. This project will address severe flood risk across the Ala Wai watershed, which is in Honolulu proper, running from the top of the mountains down to the ocean in central Honolulu. This endangers the life, property, and livelihood of about 200,000 residents of this watershed.

But equally important, Waikiki, which is the engine of our tourist economy, our number-one economy in Hawaii, lies at the ocean edge of this particular watershed, and a flood of any magnitude would cause untold damage to our overall economy.

The Corps worked over the last couple of years since 2018 to revise its original plan authorized in the prior WRDA in an effort to meet community concerns, and ultimately paused the project in June of 2021 while those concerns were addressed. The Corps has recently come back with a proposed revised plan at a cost of \$1 billion-plus, and that plan is currently out for comment on a draft EIS with an expected finalization in mid-year. The continuation of this critical project will require further WRDA authorization.

Also in central Honolulu, Honolulu Harbor, the State of Hawaii's primary harbor is way overdue for extensive modifications to assure our current and next generation maritime needs. Honolulu Harbor, which in its modern configuration was completed in 1952, is the linchpin to life in Hawaii. As an isolated island State, about 80 percent of our goods and materials are imported, and 95 percent of these imported goods and materials comes through Honolulu Harbor. So, the harbor is not only the harbor that serves the island of Oahu, which we have our principal population center on, but is also the transshipment point for virtually all shipping out to the other islands of Hawaii. And by the way, it is also the shipping point focus for the exports from Oahu and the rest of the State.

As I said, the harbor is way overdue for just basic navigational and operational upgrades, which are required for continued functioning for both civilian use and elements of our military communities. And Congress recognized as much by authorizing and funding a full Army Corps study of modifications through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. That investigation is already well underway, but the Corps believes that the study authorization must be updated to reflect the expanded complexity, scope, and funding needs.

Additionally, in the course of this initial investigation, our local partner, the Hawaii State Department of Transportation, has strongly expressed the necessity of expanding the study scope to include elements of coastal storm risk management and resiliency. Providing this additional refined and expanded authorization will ensure that our critical harbor is designed for resilience, and that this literal lifeline for Hawaii remains operational in the face of natural disaster and weather modification contingencies.

Thank you again so much for allowing me to testify in support of these critical projects, and I look forward to working with the

committee to advance these authorizations in our current WRDA cycle.

[Mr. Case's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Ed Case, a Representative in Congress From
the State of Hawaii**

Chair Graves, Ranking Member Larsen and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for allowing me to testify today on critical priorities for Hawai'i ahead of the Committee's consideration of the 2024 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Mahalo again to you, Ranking Member Larsen, for visiting Honolulu last week to examine our WRDA needs and other infrastructure priorities in person.

While I will also be submitting policy-related requests for your consideration, I want to highlight two critical current U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects that must be addressed in WRDA this year. Without further action by Congress, both the ongoing Honolulu Harbor Modifications and Ala Wai Flood Risk Management projects could face long-term delays with significant consequences. While located in my district of Honolulu proper and of direct relevance to hundreds of thousands of my constituents, both projects are also crucial to the basic functioning of Hawai'i statewide.

The Ala Wai Flood Risk Management Project began in 1999 and was authorized and funded by Congress for design and construction in the 2018 WRDA. The project will address severe flood risks across the Ala Wai watershed, running from the top of the Ko'olau mountains through much of central Honolulu to the ocean. That endangers the property, livelihoods and lives of some 200,000 residents in Honolulu. Waikiki, the engine of our top economy, also lies exclusively within this watershed, and an unmitigated flood of any magnitude would cause untold damage to our overall economy. The Corps estimates that a major flood in the watershed would cause more than \$1.1 billion to structures alone; that is likely conservative and does not include overall economic damage.

The Corps has worked to revise its original plan, authorized in the prior WRDA, in an effort to meet community concerns, and ultimately paused the project in June 2021 while those concerns were addressed. The Corps has recently released a proposed revised plan at a cost of \$1 billion-plus; that plan is currently out for comment with an expected finalization in April–June of this year. The continuation of this critical project will require further WRDA authorization.

Also in central Honolulu, Honolulu Harbor, the State of Hawaii's primary harbor is overdue for extensive modifications to assure our current and next-generation maritime needs. The Harbor, which in its modern configuration was completed in 1952, is the lynchpin to life in Hawai'i. As an isolated island state, about 80 percent of Hawaii's goods and materials are imported, 95 percent of which arrive by ship through Honolulu Harbor. The Harbor serves not only the Island of O'ahu, but also is the transshipment point for virtually all shipping imports to the other islands of Hawai'i. It is further the shipping point for exports from O'ahu and the rest of the state.

The Harbor is way overdue for basic navigational and operational upgrades which are required for continued functioning for both civilian use and elements of our military communities. Congress recognized as much by authorizing and funding a full Army Corps study of modifications through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. While that investigation is already well underway, the Corps believes that the study authorization must be updated to reflect expanded complexity, scope and funding needs.

Additionally, in the course of the initial investigation, the local partner, the Hawai'i State Department of Transportation, has strongly expressed the necessity of expanding the study scope to include elements of coastal storm risk management. Providing this additional refined and expanded authorization will ensure our critical harbor is designed for resilience and that this literal lifeline for Hawai'i remains operational in the face of natural disaster and weather modification contingencies.

Mahalo again for allowing me to testify in support of these two critical projects. I look forward to working with the Committee to advance these updated authorizations in the current WRDA cycle.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman. Mr. Higgins, you are now recognized.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. CLAY HIGGINS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF LOUISIANA**

Mr. HIGGINS OF LOUISIANA. Mr. Chairman, Madam Ranking Member, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to address you today.

Louisiana is home to many of the Nation's largest ports and most trafficked waterways, some of the largest flood mitigation and coastal restoration projects. Each of these assets relies on WRDA's policy guidance and funding support through the workplan for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

I would like to particularly stress the importance of dredging the Calcasieu Ship Channel. This is a 64-mile channel originally intended to be 400 feet wide and 40 feet deep. It extends into the Gulf of Mexico, and it provides access to the epicenter of LNG export for the entire country. We are seeking authorization to deepen the channel by up to 5 feet. This is very important. Doing so would provide under keel clearance for larger vessels, increasing the safety of oceangoing vessels transiting the channel and generating new economic opportunities for the region and the country.

The ships are getting bigger. This is the single most important ship channel, arguably, in the country as it relates to our delivery of clean, affordable energy across the world. The Calcasieu Ship Channel delivers over 60 percent of the LNG sent to our allies overseas, so, the performance of the Calcasieu Ship Channel impacts the world.

Further, rock jetties that were congressionally authorized for the Calcasieu River and Pass Project to protect the 400-foot-wide inside channel require extension in the Gulf of Mexico, about 1½ miles. Rock jetties are a simple formula that work very well, but we require the appropriate funding and authorization to extend those jetties. This is supported by the Army Corps of Engineers, as well.

Regarding money, the Calcasieu River and Pass Project and the Port of Lake Charles generate \$39.1 billion in economic activity and \$2.6 billion in Federal revenue annually. It supports 108,700 direct and indirect jobs in Louisiana, and about 160,000 jobs nationwide. It is estimated that once these new investments are realized, an additional \$74.5 billion will be contributed to the national economy and an additional \$5.24 billion annually in Federal tax revenue.

Additionally, my office has submitted several requests aimed at advancing coastal restoration projects along the gulf coast and improving flood mitigation in water management strategies. These efforts are critical for coastal and inland communities across south Louisiana and protecting the LNG industrial sector.

I appreciate the time we were granted today to address the committee, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[Mr. Higgins of Louisiana's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Clay Higgins, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Louisiana**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, subcommittee Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the importance of this year's Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Over the past

iterations of WRDA, Louisiana has been able to obtain critical wins that protect the environment, bolster more resilient communities, and support long-term maintenance activities.

Successful WRDA implementation is important to the country, and it is a vital and critical piece of legislation for South Louisiana. My state is home to many of the nation's largest ports, most trafficked waterways, and major hurricane protection and coastal restoration projects. Each of these assets relies on WRDA's policy guidance and funding support through the work plan for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

I wish to inform the committee of a few critical projects and opportunities for this year's WRDA.

First, I would like to discuss the importance of continued funding for dredging the Calcasieu Ship Channel. We have made major strides in securing funds to maintain the channel, and we are now seeking new authorizations to deepen the channel by up to 5 feet. Doing so would provide safe under-keel clearance for larger vessels, increasing the safety of ocean-going vessels transiting the channel and generating new economic opportunities for the region.

Further, rock jetties that were congressionally authorized on the Calcasieu River and Pass Project to protect the 400-foot-wide "inside" channel require extension in the Gulf of Mexico. Extending the jetty by 1.5 miles is necessary to increase navigational safety, protect the lives of vessels' crews, and ultimately protect the environment.

The Calcasieu River and Pass Project and the Port of Lake Charles generates \$39.1 billion in economic activity and \$2.6 billion in federal revenue annually. It supports 108,773 direct and indirect jobs in Louisiana, as well as 158,485 jobs nationwide. It is estimated that once these new investments are realized, an additional \$74.6 billion will be contributed to the national economy and an additional \$5.24 billion annually in federal tax revenue.

The original investment has turned the Port of Lake Charles into the 13th busiest port in the nation and serves not only as a major economic driver for Louisiana, but for the United States as a whole.

Additionally, my office has submitted several requests aimed at advancing coastal restoration projects along the Gulf Coast and improving flood mitigation and water management strategies. These efforts are critical for coastal and inland communities across South Louisiana. We must continue to prioritize pre-disaster mitigation and make smart investments in projects that strengthen the resiliency of our communities.

As the committee reviews requests for WRDA, I implore you to consider critical projects for Southwest Louisiana. I appreciate the time given to Members to speak before the committee to discuss the importance of the Corps and water resource projects today.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman. Ms. Kaptur, you are now recognized.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MARCY KAPTUR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Ms. KAPTUR. Thank you, Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, ranking member of the full committee Mr. Larsen, and Congressman Garamendi. Thank you for you and your staff for doing all the work to put this hearing together and to develop the Water Resources Development Act of 2024. And I must call out the special qualities of Ranking Member Napolitano. I know this is her last year of service in the Congress.

But I wish to say that, Congresswoman, your dignity, your acumen, and your perseverance elevate the reputation of this House. Thank you so much for your service.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the important water resource development needs of the communities in Ohio's Ninth Congressional District across northern Ohio, the Lake Erie Islands, as well as the Great Lakes region as a whole. I hold the privilege of representing the largest watershed in the entire Great Lakes re-

gion. It drains increasing rainfall and water flows across segments of three States through our district into Lake Erie, the southernmost of the Great Lakes.

Our bountiful region agriculturally also is the most tiled region in our Nation, having been installed to drain what is known as the Great Black Swamp. We live in a mud puddle. With increasing rainfall, challenges to subwatershed functional equilibrium are increasing. The Corps could aid our efforts to manage these changing circumstances by producing a detailed subwatershed topographical and directional flow map that can serve to detail subwatersheds and their interrelationship, so our region can better handle the rising amounts of rainfall for proper land and freshwater stewardship, storage, reservoirs, filtration, necessary tree and vegetation plantings, and windbreaks.

Another significant challenge is the need to advance the Corps' critical work maintaining and improving the harbors and waterways on Great Lakes in a manner that improves water quality in the largest fresh surface water system on Earth. In Lake Erie, which borders my district, meeting that goal will require the Corps and its non-Federal partners to maximize the beneficial use of dredged material from federally authorized harbors, even partnering—imagine that—with the U.S. Department of Agriculture on regenerative soil complements as our Nation prepares the new farm bill.

Thanks to your committee's inclusion of section 8130(b) in the WRDA 2022, the Corps is now making progress on dredged material management plans for the Lake Erie harbors that will not involve open lake disposal. However, Corps financial assistance for the design and implementation of dredged material placement facilities in the State of Ohio continues to fall short of what is authorized by law.

The State of Ohio and the individual Lake Erie port authorities have made tremendous investments in beneficial use placement sites and confined disposal facilities over many years. It is time for the Corps to step up and cost share these improvements in accordance with standing authorities. I urge the committee to direct the Corps to expedite the completion of cost sharing agreements for the beneficial use placement sites and confined disposal facilities on Lake Erie that are currently being planned and designed by non-Federal partners at their own expense.

Protecting our freshwater kingdom of the Great Lakes also requires completion of the interbasin invasive species barrier at Brandon Road Lock and Dam. Located on the Des Plaines River near Joliet, Illinois, Brandon Road is the central connection point through which invasive carp species can move between the Illinois Waterway system into Lake Michigan and the four other Great Lakes, severely harming native fish species. Two-hundred twenty-six million dollars from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will fund the construction and deployment of state-of-the-art technologies and innovative programs that interrupt movement, but local cooperation requirements remain a challenge to implementation.

Thanks to your committee's work on the WRDA 2022, construction of the interbasin invasive species barrier now requires a 90-

percent Federal contribution, and the committee can further ensure implementation by modifying the cost sharing for operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation of the measures.

I want to thank the committee for its continued focus on another ecological problem we face in the Great Lakes, harmful algal blooms, and I urge the committee to continue supporting the ongoing work of the Corps for HAB detection, control, and prevention. I want to urge the committee to expand the scope of the HAB demonstration program authorized in WRDA 2020 to address not only HABs associated with water resource projects, but also HABs that adversely impact large bodies of water of regional, national, or international significance. That will ensure that demonstration projects designed to address HABs in western Lake Erie, some of the most frequent and severe in the Nation, will be eligible for funding under the Corps' program.

My time is expired, but I strongly urge the committee to emphasize the importance of demonstration projects designed to develop and deploy advanced monitoring tools and networks to address the nutrient loading that is the root cause of HAB at the source of the problem.

Thank you so very much, and I hope the Corps can help us in the coming year to find a second water intake location to serve the large Toledo, Ohio, regional area so our water is never shut off again for 3 days because of invasive HABs in our water system. Thank you all so very much.

[Ms. Kaptur's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Marcy Kaptur, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Ohio**

Thank you Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, and your respective staff for the hard work you have put in to developing the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA). On a bipartisan basis, your Committee has now completed work on five consecutive WRDAs since 2014—advancing significant progress to meet our nation's needs.

The Committee's authorization of new U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects, studies, and policies supports local, regional, and national priorities that have a lasting impact. As Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee that oversees the Corps' budget, it is an honor to partner with you in this mission.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you here today the important water resources development needs of the communities in my district and the Great Lakes Region as a whole. Chief among them is the need to advance the Corps' critical work maintaining and improving the harbors and waterways on Great Lakes in a manner that improves water quality in the largest fresh surface water system on earth. In Lake Erie, which borders my district, meeting that goal will require the Corps and its non-federal partners to maximize the beneficial use of dredged material from federally authorized harbors.

Thanks to your Committee's inclusion of section 8130(b) in the WRDA 2022, the Corps is now making progress on dredged material management plans for the Lake Erie harbors that will not involve open lake disposal. However, Corps financial assistance for the design and implementation of dredged material placement facilities in the State of Ohio continues to fall short of what is authorized by law. The State of Ohio and the individual Lake Erie port authorities have made tremendous investments in beneficial use placement sites and confined disposal facilities over many years, and it is time for the Corps to step up and cost-share these improvements in accordance with standing authorities. I urge the Committee to direct the Corps to expedite the completion of cost-sharing agreements for the beneficial use placement sites and confined disposal facilities on Lake Erie that are currently being planned and designed by non-federal partners at their own expense.

Protecting our freshwater kingdom of the Great Lakes also requires completion of the interbasin invasive species barrier at Brandon Road Lock and Dam. Located on the Des Plaines River near Joliet, Illinois, Brandon Road is a central connection point through which invasive Carp species frequently move between the Illinois Waterway system into Lake Michigan and the four other Great Lakes, severely harming native fish species. \$225.8 million from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will fund the construction and deployment of state-of-the-art technologies and innovative programs that interrupt the movement, but local cooperation requirements remain a challenge to implementation. Thanks to your Committee's work on the WRDA 2022, construction of the interbasin invasive species barrier now requires a 90 percent Federal contribution. The Committee can further ensure implementation by modifying the cost sharing for operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation of the measures.

I would also like to thank the Committee for its continued focus on another ecological problem that we face in the Great Lakes region: harmful algal blooms (HABs). The expertise of Corps scientists and engineers is invaluable in the fight against the devastation wrought by HABs. The Corps provides resource management, water flow design, and engineering solutions for HAB prevention, mitigation, and control. I urge the Committee to continue supporting the ongoing work of the Corps for testing HAB controls and encouraging continued interagency cooperation.

In particular, I urge the Committee to expand the scope of the Harmful Algal Bloom Demonstration program authorized in the WRDA 2020 to address not only HAB associated with water resources development projects but also HAB that adversely impact large bodies of water of regional, national, or international significance. This will ensure that demonstration projects designed to address HAB in Western Lake Erie, some of the most frequent and severe in the nation, will be eligible for funding under the Corps' program. Additionally, I urge the Committee to emphasize the importance of demonstration projects designed to develop and deploy advanced monitoring tools and networks and to address the nutrient loading that is the root cause of HAB at the source of the problem.

Finally, I ask the Committee to consider authorizing a new Environmental Infrastructure program for the City of Toledo. In 2014, the City's drinking water service was interrupted due to contamination from a HAB. While the City has invested vast amounts of funding since then to mitigate the risk of contamination in the future, a secondary water source will ultimately be required to ensure that the 2014 crisis is not repeated.

Thank you again for your dedication to pursuing another WRDA on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentlelady for her testimony.

Are there any questions for any of the panelists up to now?

Looking and seeing none, you all are free to leave. And those who have come in, just make your way to your seat.

[Pause.]

VOICE. One down, six to go.

[Pause.]

Mr. ROUZER. So, we will start with Ms. Gluesenkamp Perez.

When you are ready, you will have up to 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MARIE GLUESENKAMP PEREZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you, Chairman Rouzer, and thank you, Ranking Member Larsen.

I have here a typewritten letter from 40 years ago requesting conveyance of a parcel of land held by the Army Corps of Engineers in my home county of Skamania County. My county is over 1 million acres of land. Less than one-half of 1 percent of that is commercially developable. So, this 1.6-acre lot may seem very small to the committee and small potatoes, but where I live, this is the kind of thing that can make an incredible difference in empowering my community to have real economic opportunity to develop and sup-

port themselves. It is a result of Federal, State, and land trust ownership that we are so reduced, and so, I ask this body to be different than the 40 years preceding it.

This letter was written before I was born, 2½ years before I was born, so, this has been a long time in the making, and I ask for your urgency in considering this. The Port of Skamania requested this, and it has been—we have been in agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers, and so, I appreciate any urgency we can bring to this.

Secondly, I would like to bring up Wahkiakum County, also an economically disadvantaged area in my district located on the Columbia River. It is requesting support from the Army Corps for a study to address flooding problems in Rosburg and Grays River. The area regularly experiences flooding. As a result, fine sediment accumulates at the confluence of the rivers of Grays and Columbia, and over the past 30 years, the floods have only gotten worse.

When flooding occurs in the Grays River, it cuts off access to approximately 500 people living in these rural communities, often for more than 2 days at a time. Within a matter of hours, the flooding limits vital emergency services, business operations, and school transportation, and leaves behind sediment that can be dangerous and time consuming to remove. That is why I supported the county's request for the Army Corps to assess the causes of the fine sediment accumulation and help determine solutions to mitigate risks for addressing this.

These are two important projects in my district, but they are just a snapshot of the provisions I look forward to supporting in this year's WRDA. My district is home to 15 ports that are critical economic drivers that are very dependent on the Army Corps and the work authorized in this legislation. I have been told that I have more ports than any Member of Congress west of the Mississippi.

These are priorities that are supported by a broad range of stakeholders in my district, and I look forward to working with this committee to get them over the finish line. Thank you.

[Ms. Perez's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, a Representative in Congress From the State of Washington

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen for the opportunity to testify today.

I'd like to highlight several WRDA priorities for my district in Southwest Washington, including one that has been in the works since 1986.

GRAYS RIVER DREDGING PROJECT

Up first: Wahkiakum County, an economically disadvantaged area in my district, located on the Columbia River, is requesting assistance from the Army Corps for a study to address the flooding problems in Rosburg and Grays River.

This area regularly experiences flooding, and as a result, fine sediment accumulation at the confluence of the Grays and Columbia Rivers. Over the past 30 years, the floods have only gotten worse. When flooding occurs on the Grays River, it cuts off access to approximately 500 people living in these rural communities, often for two days or more at a time. Within a matter of hours, this flooding limits vital emergency services, business operations, and school transportation, and leaves behind sediment that can be dangerous and time consuming to remove.

That's why I support the County's request for the Army Corps to assess the causes of the fine sediment accumulation and help determine solutions to mitigate risks for the area moving forward.

NORTH BONNEVILLE CONVEYANCE

Secondly, I'd like to highlight an important conveyance request that has been nearly 40 years in the making in my home county of Skamania.

As a result of federal, state, and trust land ownership, and the added development restrictions from the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, very little land in Skamania County is developable for commercial or industrial purposes.

In 1986, the Port of Skamania initiated a request to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to acquire industrial property and a building in North Bonneville for the purposes of economic development.

Now, almost 40 years later, the Port is still working to acquire the 1.6 acre parcel of land and building for economic development. I support the inclusion of this conveyance in the bill.

These are two projects important to my district, but they are just a snapshot of the provisions I look forward to supporting in this year's WRDA.

My district is home to 15 ports that are critical economic drivers that are very dependent on the Army Corps and the work authorized in this legislation.

These priorities are supported by a broad set of stakeholders in my district and I look forward to working with this committee to get them over the finish line.

Ms. PEREZ. And I also request to submit this historic piece of evidence [indicating typewritten letter], the longevity of this request, to the committee.

Mr. ROUZER. Without objection, so ordered.
[The information follows:]

Letter of September 17, 1986, to Mr. Rose, Real Estate Division, Portland District, Army Corps of Engineers, from Elmer Stacy, Port Manager, Port of Skamania County, Washington, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez

PORT OF SKAMANIA COUNTY,
P.O. Box 413,
STEVENSON, WASHINGTON 98648,
PHONE 509-427-5484,
September 17, 1986.

Mr. ROSE,
*Real Estate Division,
Portland District, Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 2946, Portland, OR 97208-2946.*

DEAR MR. ROSE,

The Port of Skamania County is interested in the Industrial Property owned by the Corps of Engineers, located in the relocated town of North Bonneville. Section 19, Township 2N, Range 7 E.W.M. Lot I-2.

Is the Corps interested in leasing or selling this piece of property? If so, please contact me at 509-427-5484.

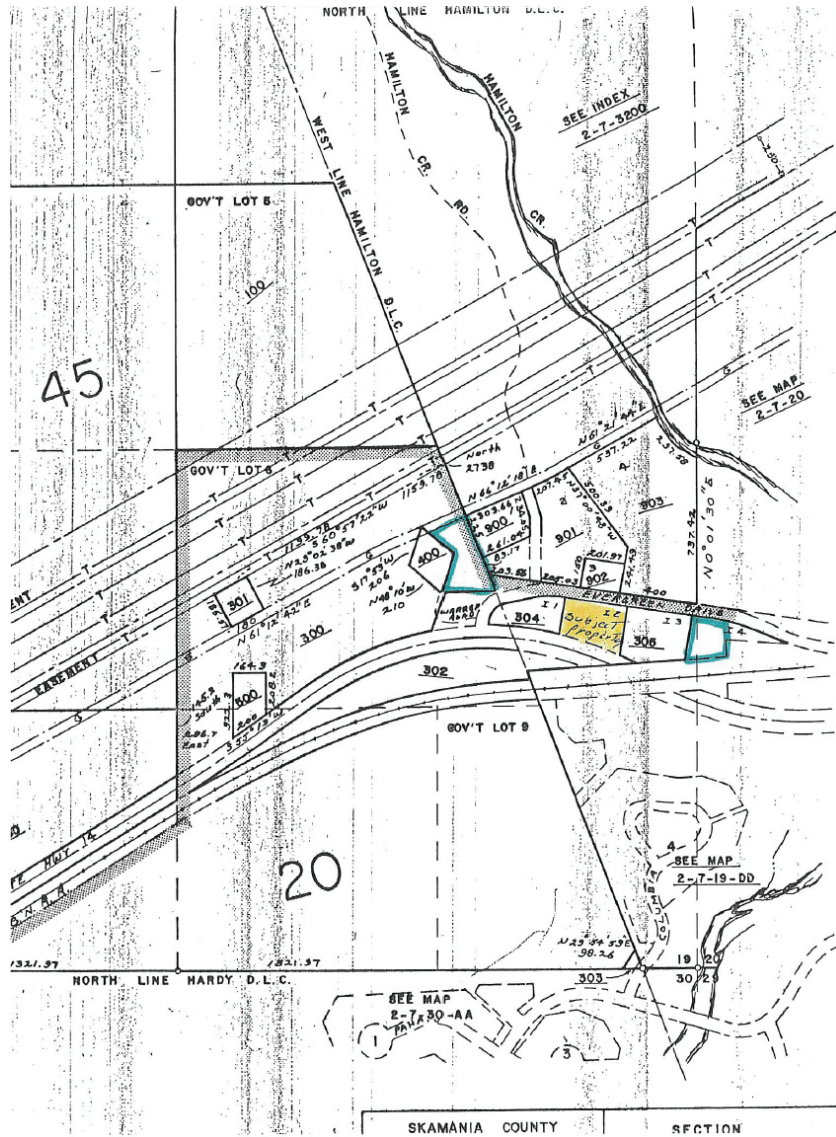
Thank you.

Sincerely,

ELMER STACY,
Port Manager.

Enc.

ENCLOSURE



Ms. PEREZ. Thank you.
Mr. ROUZER. And I thank the gentlelady.
Mr. Fry.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. RUSSELL FRY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

Mr. FRY. I am here today to join my colleagues in underscoring the critical role of the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 for not only my State, but my district, and convey these specific priorities. I applaud the leadership of this committee—Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, subcommittee Chairman Rouzer, and Ranking Member Napolitano—for this opportunity.

I am proud to represent the Seventh Congressional District of the State of South Carolina, which is about half of the coastline, the northern half of the coastline, and extends westward into the interior, into an area known as the Pee Dee. I have submitted several priorities to this committee on behalf of my constituents, and I want to highlight some of those for you today.

In the Pee Dee region of South Carolina, in the city of Florence, they are taking some necessary steps to address growth and increasing needs of the citizens and community by providing significant water, wastewater, stormwater, and environmental restoration. With new industry in the city, a \$1½ billion economic project that was announced just this year, plus growth, approximately 4,300 residential units will increase the capacity needed for water distribution.

Additionally, this will require expansion of wastewater management and a more efficient sanitary sewer collection system. I have requested authorization through the Army Corps' Environmental Infrastructure Program for the city of Florence to help in this effort.

Unfortunately, the city residents of Florence face water challenges daily. For example, their drinking water is often red. If you look at their toilets, there are red rings around them. If they wash their clothes, they are brown or stained yellow. I am grateful for the opportunity to hopefully find solutions to this problem that my constituents face regularly.

North of Florence, Mr. Chairman, lies a town on the border of North Carolina called Cheraw, South Carolina, which also faces significant water, wastewater, stormwater, and environmental restoration needs. I have requested authorization through the Army Corps' Environmental Infrastructure Program to enable access to funding for these issues.

The town is taking an aggressive approach in updating its water infrastructure to improve that quality, upgrade its critical facilities, and expand capacity to accommodate future growth. In fact, Mr. Chairman, they cannot grow any more without this expansion. They are at their limit. Cheraw needs to construct a new water treatment plant and a wastewater treatment expansion and implement a stormwater master plan over the next decade. Without construction of a new water treatment plant, they are at risk of losing safe access to reliable drinking water.

This request also aids in the efforts to reduce the impact of increased localized flooding, while increasing the capacity in existing stormwater and drainage systems.

Similarly, in the town next to Cheraw, in Chesterfield, South Carolina, in 2018, Hurricane Florence destroyed a sewer line crossing the Thompson Creek near the Buchanan Bridge, allowing raw

sewage to spill into the Thompson Creek. The town of Chesterfield has rented a pump. They have rented a pump through 2023 to pump around the destroyed sewer line, but the town has been trying to get the necessary funding, Mr. Chairman, for a permanent solution since 2018 to replace the temporary sewer line, install the pump station, and attach the sewer line to the bridge. Utilizing the Army Corps' Environmental Infrastructure Authority, the town of Chesterfield could experience significant relief and aid in its ongoing recovery efforts from Hurricane Florence, which occurred over 5 years ago.

And lastly for the committee, I have submitted requests on behalf of our State's ports. The health and prosperity of South Carolina's economy and our people are intricately linked to our State's ports and waterways.

In our State, major infrastructure and investment initiatives are managed or spearheaded by the South Carolina Ports Authority, which owns and operates public marine terminals in the Port of Charleston and two separate inland ports in Greer, South Carolina, and in my district, Dillon. Over 70 percent of all cargo exported through the South Carolina ports originates from companies within the State. In a region projected to experience significant population growth, South Carolina is vitally important to the broader economy of the Nation.

These projects rely on the investments and resources made possible through the Water Resources Development Act. Specifically, in this year's bill, I am advocating for three priorities.

First, to adjust the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund donor port designation requirements to more effectively capture and recognize the scale of the port's impact within the State and region, such as that of the South Carolina Ports Authority and, more specifically, the Port of Charleston.

Second, to align the cost share for maintenance of harbors with modernized harbor depths by increasing eligible depths up to 55 feet, as Charleston and other major east coast ports have invested heavily in deepening their harbors beyond 50 feet to meet both commercial demand and the increasing size of vessels calling on the U.S. ports.

Third and lastly, Mr. Chairman, to authorize a feasibility study for the Army Corps of Engineers Charleston District to equalize the Federal navigation channel segment of the North Charleston Terminal to 52 feet.

I am proud to submit these priorities to the committee, and I thank you for your time. And with that, I yield back.

[Mr. Fry's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Russell Fry, a Representative in Congress
From the State of South Carolina**

I am here today to join my colleagues in underscoring the critical role of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024 for my state and district and to convey my specific priorities on behalf of my district and the state of South Carolina.

I applaud the leadership of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and wish to thank Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, Subcommittee Chairman Rouzer, and Ranking Member Napolitano for this opportunity.

I am proud to represent the Seventh Congressional District of South Carolina, which ranges from the upper half of the South Carolina coast, known as the Grand Strand, and the inland rural community of the northwest corridor of the state, known as the Pee Dee.

I have submitted several priorities to the Committee on behalf of my constituents. Today, I want to highlight some water infrastructure investment projects in South Carolina's Seventh Congressional District.

In the Pee Dee region, the City of Florence is taking the necessary steps to address the growth and increasing needs of the citizens and community by providing significant water, wastewater, stormwater, and environmental restoration.

The ability to provide safe, reliable drinking water and necessary water and sewer infrastructure upgrades is only attainable through expansion and upgrades to their water system.

With new industry in the city, approximately 4,300 residential units will increase the capacity needed for water distribution. Additionally, this will require expansion of wastewater management and a more efficient sanitary sewer collection system.

I have requested authorization through the Army Corps' Environmental Infrastructure program for the City of Florence to help in this effort.

These projects would authorize a sanitary sewer collection system expansion, a wastewater management facility expansion, and a water distribution expansion and upgrades needed for increased water quality.

Unfortunately, residents in the Florence area face water challenges daily. For example, their drinking water will turn red and leave a dusty ring around their toilets, and sometimes laundry turns brown or yellow due to the discolored water.

I am grateful for this opportunity to hopefully find solutions to this problem that my constituents across the Pee Dee face regularly.

North of Florence lies the Town of Cheraw, which faces significant water, wastewater, stormwater, and environmental restoration needs.

I have requested authorization through the Army Corps' Environmental Infrastructure program to enable access to funding for water, wastewater, and other environmental infrastructure through this program.

The Town is taking an aggressive approach to updating its water infrastructure to improve water quality, upgrade critical facilities, and expand capacity to accommodate future growth.

Cheraw needs to construct a new water treatment plant and a wastewater treatment expansion and implement a stormwater master plan over the next decade.

Without the construction of a new water treatment plant, the residents of Cheraw are at risk of losing access to safe and reliable drinking water supplies.

This request also aids in the effort to reduce the impact of increased localized flooding while increasing capacity in existing stormwater and drainage systems.

This authorization is crucial for the Town of Cheraw to grow and provide a place for South Carolinians to live and work.

Similarly, I have requested authorization under the Army Corps' Environmental Infrastructure program for the Town of Chesterfield, located in the Pee Dee region of South Carolina.

In September 2018, Hurricane Florence destroyed a sewer line crossing Thompson Creek near Buchanan Bridge, allowing raw sewage to spill into Thompson Creek.

The Town of Chesterfield rented a pump until 2023 to pump around the destroyed sewer line.

Due to the increasing cost of renting a pump and insufficient grant funds to complete the project, the Town purchased a pump and hoses as a temporary solution.

The Town has been trying to get the necessary funding for a permanent solution since 2018 to replace the temporary sewer line and pump, install a pump station, and attach the sewer line to the bridge.

Utilizing the Army Corps' Environmental Infrastructure Authority, the Town of Chesterfield could experience significant relief and aid in its ongoing recovery efforts from Hurricane Florence, which occurred over five years ago.

Lastly, I have submitted requests in support of our state's ports.

The health and prosperity of South Carolina's economy—and our people—are intricately linked to our state's ports and waterways.

In our state, major infrastructure and investment initiatives are managed or spearheaded by the South Carolina Ports Authority, which owns and operates public marine terminals at the Port of Charleston and two separate Inland Ports in Greer and in my district, Dillon.

The South Carolina Ports Authority is an economic driver, not only for our state but for the Southeastern region and the U.S. as a whole.

A recent study conducted by the University of South Carolina Moore School of Business found that the total economic impact of our state's ports system is over \$86 billion annually.

This translates to supporting over 260,000 jobs related to the maritime industry alone—and one in nine jobs in the state—and an annual statewide economic impact of \$87 billion. That is nearly \$18 billion in annual labor income.

The commerce afforded by our ports system directly supports state companies and businesses as our state continues to grow as a major global competitor for advanced manufacturing and other leading export-oriented industries.

Over 70 percent of all cargo exported through S.C. Ports originates from companies located in the state. In a region projected to experience significant population growth, South Carolina is vitally important to the broader economy.

This growth directly results from state, federal, and private partnership investments in our port infrastructure, including the deepened Charleston harbor and increased cargo capacities.

These projects rely on the investments and resources made possible through the Water Resources Development Act.

Specifically, I am advocating for three priorities in this year's bill.

First, to adjust the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Donor Port designation requirements to more effectively capture and recognize the scale of a port's impact within a state and region—such as that of South Carolina Ports Authority and the Port of Charleston.

Second, to align cost-share for maintenance of harbors with modernized harbor depths by increasing eligible depths to 55 feet, as Charleston and other major East Coast ports have invested in deepening their harbors beyond 50 feet to meet both commercial demand and the increasing size of vessels calling on the U.S. ports.

Third, and lastly, to authorize a Feasibility Study for the Army Corps' Charleston District to equalize the federal navigation channel segment of the North Charleston Terminal to 52 feet.

I am proud to submit my priorities for South Carolina to the Committee for consideration as you craft a responsible and effective Water Resources Development Act for 2024.

Thank you again for your consideration, and I look forward to working with you on behalf of my state and district.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman.
Mr. Kilmer.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. DEREK KILMER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

Mr. KILMER. Thank you, Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano and ranking member of the full committee, Mr. Larsen. Thanks for holding this Member Day hearing and for providing an opportunity to share two of my priorities for the upcoming Water Resources Development Act.

First, I want to draw your attention to the Ediz Hook Beach Erosion Control Project near Port Angeles, Washington, where I grew up. Originally authorized in WRDA 1974, this project supports our national security goals by helping to maintain access to the U.S. Coast Guard Station at Port Angeles, while also protecting Port Angeles Harbor from erosion.

I was pleased that last year the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law actually provided funding for Ediz Hook. Through \$1.5 million provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for revetment repair, this funding ensures that facilities at Ediz Hook, including the U.S. Coast Guard Base, can benefit.

So, while this funding was good news, we have learned that this project is the only navigation project overseen by the Seattle District without a 100-percent Federal cost share for these purposes. Given the relative economic distress of that community, given the significant national security importance of this project and the

needed support it would bring to the city of Port Angeles, my priority request would bring the Federal cost share for Ediz Hook into line with other O&M navigation projects.

I also want to highlight the Duckabush Estuary Restoration Project. This project was identified as part of the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project, which was authorized in WRDA 2016. I am proud that the first project to be put into action from that initiative is in my district.

The Duckabush Estuary Restoration Project will remove a large amount of fill that was placed in the river flood plain to support U.S. Highway 101 and replace it with an estuary-spanning 1,400-foot-long bridge reconnecting the Duckabush River to the neighboring wetlands and distributary channels. Not only will this project improve the habitat of fish and wildlife including, Endangered Species Act-listed Hood Canal summer chum, but it will also enhance the lives of constituents through reduced seasonal flood risk, safer roads, and job creation. That is a WRDA success story.

However, restoring the Duckabush Estuary will change how local Tribes and the public can access tidelands and the shellfish resources that they support. One positive but unintended consequence of the original highway at Duckabush was that it created direct foot access to shellfish tidelands and stable conditions favorable for shellfish growth. The Duckabush tidelands are important to several local Tribes and to the public, and when the restoration project is completed and the river flows freely, access to the tidelands will be more limited.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and their partners are committed to ensuring tideland access opportunities for Tribes and for the public, making sure that they remain available on Hood Canal. They are considering other locations nearby that can provide a similar experience for local Tribes and other users, and I am requesting Federal language to provide the flexibility needed to allow for creative solutions as part of the partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on aquatic ecosystem restoration.

Again, I appreciate your leadership and your consideration of these requests, and I am happy to provide any additional information as you review them. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the committee today.

[Mr. Kilmer's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Derek Kilmer, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Washington**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee, thank you for hosting today's Member Day hearing and for the opportunity to share a few of my priorities related to the forthcoming Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

First, I would like to draw attention to the Ediz Hook Beach Erosion Control Project near Port Angeles, where I grew up. Originally authorized in WRDA 1974, this project supports our national security goals by helping to maintain access to the U.S. Coast Guard Station at Port Angeles, while also protecting Port Angeles Harbor from erosion. I was pleased that, last year, historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding was delivered in my region for Ediz Hook. Through \$1.5 million provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for revetment repair, this funding will ensure that facilities on Ediz Hook, including the U.S. Coast Guard base, can ben-

efit. While this funding development is exciting, we've learned that this project is the only navigation project overseen by the Seattle District without a 100% federal cost-share for these purposes. Given the significant national security importance of this project, and the needed support it would bring to the City of Port Angeles, my priority request would bring the federal cost share for Ediz Hook into line with other O&M navigation projects.

I'd also like to highlight the Duckabush Estuary Restoration project. This project was identified as a part of the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project, which was authorized in WRDA 2016. I'm proud that the first project to be put into action from this initiative is in my district! The Duckabush Estuary Restoration Project will remove a large amount of fill that was placed in the river floodplain to support U.S. Highway 101 and replace it with an estuary-spanning 1,600-ft-long bridge, reconnecting the Duckabush River to the neighboring wetlands and distributary channels. Not only will this project improve the habitats of fish and wildlife, including ESA-listed Hood Canal Summer Chum, but it will also enhance the lives of constituents through reduced seasonal flood risk, safer roads, and job creation. This is a WRDA success story.

However, restoring the Duckabush Estuary will change how local Tribes and the public can access tidelands and the shellfish resources they support. One positive but unintended consequence of the original highway at Duckabush is that it created direct foot access to shellfish tidelands and stable conditions favorable for shellfish growth. The Duckabush tidelands are important to several local Tribes and the public. When the restoration project is completed and the river flows freely, access to the tidelands will be more limited. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and their partners are committed to ensuring tideland access opportunities for Tribes and the public are available within Hood Canal. They are considering other locations nearby that can provide a similar experience for local Tribes and other users, and I am requesting federal language to provide the flexibility needed to allow for creative solutions as part of their partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration.

I appreciate your leadership and consideration of these requests, and I am happy to provide additional information as you review them. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the Committee today.

Mr. KILMER. And I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman.

Ms. Tlaib.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. RASHIDA TLAIB, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN**

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much, Chairman, Ranking Member. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to help bring the voices of my constituents and my residents and neighbors regarding water and the various issues that they are faced with every single year.

I am here once again, obviously, to talk about how we can protect our neighbors from flooding and contamination in the water. Not just lead, beyond even lead. Our communities, as you all know, are on the front lines of the climate crisis, and these floods are only continuing to get worse and worse every single year. At the same time, we have aging infrastructure that subjects them to various health dangers. Mostly, again, for my communities, it is exposure to contaminated drinking water.

And you hear from many of our colleagues, we need to move with urgency. I know our neighborhoods in the 12th Congressional District have experienced 1,000-year rainfalls, and some homes have flooded repeatedly. In one neighborhood in my district, three times in one spring and summer, and these are working class, many retirees, autoworkers who cannot afford, again, the damage that continues to happen to their homes.

In some of our communities, raw sewage flows through the streets. Some of our residents still have water standing in their

basements. I still remember knocking on the door of one of my senior residents in her mid-seventies with FEMA as we went door to door to confirm some of the damage, and she had the sewage water in her basement literally freeze over. She didn't have the resources nor know-all of how, again, to address it.

We know that, meanwhile, millions of people across southeastern Michigan right now, Chairman, and the country, are still getting their water from lead pipes. And we haven't dedicated close enough money or mobilized resources to address this threat as quickly as we need to. Our local communities can't do it on their own. They continue to tell me that over and over again. They are required in Michigan to continue to test, and they confirm again contamination. But the State and the Federal Government hasn't been able to do enough to fund the remediation that is needed.

I note our flood maps and projections our communities rely on still don't account for our rapidly warming planet and are simply out of date. And the water infrastructure in these communities is unacceptably outdated, inadequate for extreme weather events we now face. As the weather events again get worse and worse, our communities need the tools. And this is where you all can come in. This year's WRDA presents an opportunity to equip our communities with improved planning and modern, resilient infrastructure in WRDA.

First, I encourage the committee to offer support to Detroit's division of the Army Corps of Engineers for a flood study of Rouge River. Rouge River, Mr. Chairman, is a watershed in my district, and it impacts a number of communities within the largest populated county in Michigan. And the Rouge touches communities throughout 12th district, but also the 11th and others, as you will hear, as well as the 6th district and the 13th. So, we need to better understand how to mitigate the flooding issues that come from the Rouge River.

Second, I urge the committee to adopt language that streamlines the real estate requirements for replacing lead service lines on private property. This is critical. We learned a lot from Flint, and that was one of the issues that continued to come up so we can finish the job and replace lead service lines all the way up to the resident's home.

Third, I am submitting a number of requests in support of the Great Lakes Water Authority's efforts to prevent and mitigate flooding in both specific neighborhoods in my district experiencing repeated flooding events, but also across southeastern Michigan. And these requests are critical to the resiliency of our region. As you know, it is very critical to our country, and investments cannot come soon enough.

Fourth, I am also submitting requests in support of the Army Corps' priorities for improving the navigation across the Great Lakes, Mr. Chair, which supports billions—billions—of dollars in economic activity and recreation for our communities across the country, really.

And I appreciate the opportunity, again, for all the Members that are here, to share the priorities of my constituents and residents, and respectfully request their inclusion in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act. Thank you.

[Ms. Tlaib's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Rashida Tlaib, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Michigan**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today and share WRDA priorities that are critical for the communities I represent.

I am here once again to talk about what we need to do to protect my residents from flooding and lead in their water.

Our communities are on the front lines of the climate crisis, and these floods are only going to continue to get worse and more frequent. At the same time, our aging infrastructure subjects them to health dangers like lead.

We have to move with urgency.

Our neighborhoods have experienced *1,000-year* rainfalls, and some homes have flood repeatedly. In some of these communities, raw sewage flowed through the streets. Some of our residents still have water standing in their basements from floods that took place months and even years ago.

Meanwhile, millions of people across Southeast Michigan—and the country—are still getting their water from lead pipes, and we haven't dedicated close to enough money or mobilized resources to address this threat as quickly as we need.

Our residents deserve better. They deserve action. They need these investments we're here to talk about today.

The flood maps and projections our communities rely on still don't account for our rapidly warming planet and are simply out of date. And the water infrastructure in these communities is unacceptably outdated and inadequate for the extreme weather events we now face.

I refuse to accept this as our new normal.

As these catastrophic weather events get stronger and more frequent, our communities need the tools to be prepared. This year's WRDA presents an opportunity to equip our communities with improved planning and modern, resilient infrastructure.

First, I encourage the Committee to offer support to the Detroit Division of the Army Corps of Engineers for a flood study of the Rouge River watershed in my district. The Rouge touches so many of our communities in the 12th District, and we need to better understand how to mitigate its flooding issues.

Second, I urge the Committee to adopt language that streamlines the real estate requirements for replacing lead service lines on private property, so that we can finish the job and replace lead service lines all the way up to a resident's home.

Third, I am submitting a number of requests in support of the Great Lakes Water Authority's efforts to prevent and mitigate flooding in both specific neighborhoods in my district experiencing repeated flooding events and across all of Southeast Michigan. These requests are critical to the resiliency of our region, and the investments cannot come soon enough.

Fourth, I am also submitting requests in support of the Army Corps' priorities for improving navigation across our Great Lakes, which support billions of dollars in economic activity and recreation.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my priorities before this Committee, and respectfully request their inclusion in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act. Thank you.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentlelady.
Mrs. Houchin.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. ERIN HOUCHIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA**

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Thank you, Chairman Rouzer and to Ranking Member Larsen. Thank you for hosting Member Day and allowing me to address this committee. I am here today to discuss an issue that has impacted my constituents since long before I came to Congress: the erosion of the Clarksville shoreline.

Since 1963, when the Army Corps of Engineers finished the lock and dam system in the Ohio River, it started redirecting water to-

ward the Indiana shoreline at Clarksville. The resulting erosion has caused the shoreline to recede 100 yards to date. Indiana is quite literally losing pieces of our State and our heritage to the river every single day due to the man-made causes brought on by this Army Corps project.

The erosion threatens local businesses, roads, parks, and historical sites, including the George Rogers Clark Homesite, which marks the spot where Lewis and Clark first met and formed the group that would begin their westward expedition.

While this problem has been brought to the attention of the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Corps agrees and recognizes it is a problem, it hasn't given it the attention that it desperately needs. That is why, for this year's Water Resources Development Act, I am requesting that the Army Corps of Engineers prioritize completing the Clarksville Shoreline Stabilization Project. Any further delay to this project risks greater losses to our State, the local community, our infrastructure, and our heritage.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to speak on this issue. I look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff on stabilizing this shoreline and protecting this important and historic area to the State of Indiana.

[Mrs. Houchin's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Erin Houchin, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Indiana**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for hosting this Member Day, and thank you for allowing me time to address you and the Committee.

I'm here today to discuss an issue that has impacted my constituents since long before I came to Congress—the erosion of the Clarksville shoreline.

Since 1963—when current water flow practices started—the redirection of the river has caused the shoreline to recede about 100 yards.

This erosion threatens local businesses, roads, projects, and historical sites, including the George Rogers Clark Homesite, which marks the spot where Lewis and Clark first met and formed the group that would begin their westward expedition.

While this problem has been brought to the attention of the Army Corps of Engineers, it hasn't received the attention it desperately needs.

That is why for this year's Water Resources Development Act, I am requesting that the Army Corps of Engineers focus on prioritizing and completing the Clarksville shoreline stabilization project.

Any further delay to this project risks greater losses not only to our state, the local community, and infrastructure—but also to our heritage.

Thank you, again, for allowing me the opportunity to speak on this issue today. I look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff on stabilizing this shoreline and protecting this important historical area.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Newhouse.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. DAN NEWHOUSE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Members Napolitano and Larsen, thank you for providing me the opportunity to participate in today's hearing. I am here today to discuss critical water resource issues impacting central Washington which I believe

should be addressed in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

The policies, studies, and projects authorized by WRDA and executed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers affect the daily life of my neighbors and constituents in central Washington. This includes locks and dams that enable navigation and boost recreation; hydropower facilities that generate clean, reliable, and efficient power; and levees that reduce the impact of storms on our communities. Today I am going to discuss urban canals of concern, the Othello Water Supply Project, and the Lower Snake River Dams.

Back in November, I introduced the Urban Canal Modernization Act. If enacted, this legislation would allow the Bureau of Reclamation to authorize a 35-percent nonreimbursable cost share to aid in repairing and rehabilitating urban canals of concern, which are canals that run through urban areas that could, upon failure, cause significant property damage or loss of life. The arduous task of maintaining and modernizing our outdated urban canal systems is necessary for the safety of our local communities. I urge the committee to include the language from this bill within WRDA.

Turning to the Othello Water Supply Project, in central Washington, there is an increasing demand for water with a corresponding limited supply. To address this issue, we must diversify our water supply to alleviate environmental challenges and stabilize water supplies that are vulnerable to drought. The Othello Water Supply Project will do this by creating an aquifer storage and recovery water treatment plant aimed at conveying water underground, storing it, and then recovering it for conventional use. I respectfully request the committee support the authorization of new resources necessary for the development of this project to ensure central Washington has a reliable, long-term, clean water supply.

And lastly, most importantly, I want to turn to the Columbia River System Operations, or the CRSO, and the Lower Snake River Dams. Over the last several years, the Biden administration, alongside dam-breaching advocates and several indigenous sovereign nations, have engaged in litigation and mediation over the CRSO. In December of 2023, this culminated in a final package of actions and commitments from the administration which, if implemented, will, in my opinion, operationally and functionally breach the Lower Snake River Dams, spur exorbitant ratepayer increases, and cause harm to the salmon population.

The overall CRSO and especially the Lower Snake River Dams provide immeasurable benefits to millions of Americans across the Pacific Northwest, providing flood control and irrigation, transportation of agricultural goods to our ports, baseload renewable power, and much more. Recreationists, farmers, river-dependent ports and communities, transportation stakeholders, and electricity customers would be irreparably damaged if the Lower Snake River Dams are breached. As such, I staunchly oppose the inclusion of any language in WRDA which would operationally or physically breach the Lower Snake River Dams, as well as any aid for Federal agencies in implementing the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative.

In the coming days, I will be submitting my formal request to the committee, and as you craft the base text for this legislation in the months ahead, I encourage you to take these vital interests into consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Newhouse's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Dan Newhouse, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Washington**

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for providing me the opportunity to participate in today's hearing.

I am here today to discuss critically important water resource issues impacting Central Washington which I hope will be addressed in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

The policies, studies, and projects authorized by WRDA and carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers affect the daily life of my neighbors and constituents in Central Washington. This includes locks and dams that enable navigation and boost recreation, hydropower facilities that generate clean, reliable, and efficient power, and levees that reduce the impact of storms on our communities.

Today, I am going to discuss "urban canals of concern", the Othello Water Supply Project, and the Lower Snake River Dams.

Back in November, I introduced the Urban Canal Modernization Act. If enacted, this legislation would allow the Bureau of Reclamation to authorize a 35 percent non-reimbursable cost-share to aid in repairing and rehabilitating "urban canals of concern" which are canals through urban areas that could cause significant property damage or loss of life.

The arduous task of maintaining and modernizing our outdated urban canal systems is necessary for the safety of our local communities. I urge the Committee to include the language from this bill within WRDA.

Now, I would like to turn to the Othello Water Supply Project. In Central Washington, there is an increasing demand for water with a corresponding limited supply. To address this issue, we must diversify our water supply to alleviate environmental challenges and stabilize water supplies vulnerable to drought.

The Othello Water Supply Project will do this by creating an aquifer storage and recovery water treatment plant aimed at conveying water underground, storing it, and then recovering it for beneficial use.

I respectfully request the Committee support the authorization of new resources necessary to enable the development of the Othello Water Treatment Plant to ensure Central Washington has a reliable, long-term, clean water supply.

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to turn to the Columbia River System Operations, or CRSO, and the Lower Snake River Dams.

Over the last several years, the Biden Administration alongside dam breaching advocates and several indigenous sovereign states have engaged in litigation and mediation over the CRSO.

In December 2023, this culminated in a final package of actions and commitments from the Biden Administration which, if implemented will, in my opinion, operationally breach the Lower Snake River Dams, spur exorbitant ratepayer increases, and cause harm to the salmon population.

The overall CRSO, especially the Lower Snake River Dams, provide immeasurable benefits to millions of Americans across the Pacific Northwest. From flood control and irrigation to the transportation of agricultural goods to our ports, and more.

Recreationists, farmers, river-dependent ports and communities, transportation stakeholders, and electricity customers would be irreparably damaged if the Lower Snake River Dams are breached.

As such, I staunchly oppose the inclusion of any language in WRDA which would operationally or physically breach the Lower Snake River Dams as well as aid any federal agency in implementing the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative.

In the coming days I will be submitting my formal requests to the committee. And, as you craft the base text for this legislation in the months ahead, I encourage you to take these vital interests into consideration.

I yield back.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. And I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman. Are there any questions so far for the panelists we have heard from?

Seeing none, you are free to leave. We will certainly keep all your testimony in mind.

Mr. Sorensen, you have up to 5 minutes when you are ready.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ERIC SORENSEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. SORENSEN. Thank you. I want to begin by thanking Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano for convening this hearing and welcoming Member testimony today as you craft the important legislation, the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

For every American, WRDA represents one of the best Federal opportunities to respond to disasters, to protect our waterways, and support clean water and healthy ecosystems.

I am proud to represent the 17th Congressional District of Illinois. My district sits along the great Mississippi River, and is home to dozens of agricultural communities that depend on the Mississippi to move their goods to market. The Army Corps of Engineers and local communities along the river work hand in hand to maintain and upgrade river water infrastructure.

Last year, I joined Chairman Graves in submitting a funding request for the Navigational Ecosystem Sustainability Program, or NESP, to the Appropriations Committee. I was proud to see this program funded at \$75 million in the House-drafted energy and water appropriations bill. I thank Chairman Graves for working with me on that request, and look forward to the program receiving this round of funding, which would go toward construction of lock and dam No. 25 on the upper Mississippi.

Part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was intended to fund the construction of lock and dam 25 and 6 other projects to completion. However, this funding is not sufficient to cover the full cost. Without additional clarification from Congress, completion of these projects will be delayed as local funding sources cannot cover the gap. I urge the committee to include language in WRDA 2024 to clarify that all seven of these projects be fully federally funded, as intended under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Many members of the committees we represent might not know that WRDA offers more local support than funding for infrastructure along the Mississippi River. Now, my district is home to dozens of drinking water and wastewater agencies that serve the people of central and northwestern Illinois. These agencies are in need of funding to support necessary upgrades and repairs to their systems to protect the communities and the people that we serve. For this reason, I am pleased that the committee will accept environmental infrastructure requests for WRDA 2024.

The need for these authorizations is clear. For example, a very small town, German Valley, Illinois, in my district, pays \$2,000 a month for chemical treatments to address contamination in their wastewater lagoon because they can't afford a larger infrastructure investment needed to address the problem head on.

Now, the town of Savanna, Illinois, a community that is underneath the bluffs of the Mississippi River, has an aging drinking

water pipe that is running underneath a very heavy and old retaining wall. Now, should the wall crumble, or if the pipe were to fail, half of the community of Savanna, Illinois, would be without drinking water.

So, I look forward to submitting these and other worthy projects for your consideration. So, thank you again to the committee for the important opportunity to testify on these important issues.

[Mr. Sorensen's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Eric Sorensen, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Illinois**

I want to begin by thanking Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen for convening this hearing and for welcoming member testimony as you craft this important legislation, the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

I am proud to represent the 17th district of Illinois. My district sits along the upper Mississippi River and is home to dozens of agricultural communities that depend on the Mississippi to move their goods to market. The Army Corps of Engineers and local communities along the Mississippi River work hand in hand to maintain and upgrade river water infrastructure.

As part of this work, the Army Corps requires that the non-federal sponsor, usually the state or local government, sign a project partnership agreement, many of which include provisions requiring the non-federal sponsor to take full responsibility for the operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation (OMRR&R) for the infrastructure asset the Corps are constructing on the behalf of the non-federal sponsor. I support a change to this standard practice change that would allow the Corps and non-federal sponsor to enter into agreements where the obligation of OMRR&R expires at a set date.

Staying with PPAs, the standard PPA the Corps stipulates that the non-federal sponsor indemnify the federal government of any costs associated with a catastrophe involving the infrastructure asset constructed by the Corps. I support a modification to the current blanket indemnification in favor of a shared approach to liability costs.

As you all know, the authorization for the National Levee Safety Program has expired. I support language to reauthorize this program in WRDA 24.

I am supportive of the funding appropriated for the Inland Waterways Construction Projects in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which will fund the construction of seven water infrastructure assets throughout the country. One of these projects is Lock and Dam 25 on the Mississippi River.

The intent of the BIL funding was to fund these seven projects to completion all using federal funds. Unfortunately, the costs for the projects have increased and the appropriated funding is no longer sufficient. I support the inclusion of language in WRDA to stipulate that all seven projects have a 100% federal cost share.

Additionally, like many other members, my district is home to dozens of drinking water and wastewater agencies that support the people of Illinois' 17th Congressional district. One way WRDA supports local communities is through Environmental Infrastructure authorizations. I am pleased that the Committee will accept EI requests for WRDA 24 and look forward to advocating for projects to support infrastructure projects in the communities I represent.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify on these important issues.

Mr. SORENSEN. And I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman. Are there any questions for Mr. Sorensen?

Seeing none, I appreciate your testimony. You are free to leave.

Mr. SORENSEN. Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. ROUZER. Mrs. Fletcher, you are recognized for up to 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. LIZZIE FLETCHER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mrs. FLETCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As a former member of this committee, I am proud of and excited about the work that we have done together and the things that we have accomplished in the previous Water Resources Development Acts, and I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today and testify about my community's priorities for water infrastructure investment in Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

I have submitted to the committee several priorities, including project-specific policy changes and authorizations, and those with broader implications for how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates. There are two main drivers of our priorities, and I know they are priorities of this committee and of this Congress: one, to make our communities safer and more resilient through infrastructure investment; and two, to support economic growth through infrastructure investment.

In that first category, I have asked for language to ensure the Corps' continued focus on completing the Buffalo Bayou and Tributaries Resiliency Study. Congress authorized this study after Hurricane Harvey hit the gulf coast in 2017, killing at least 68 people and causing more than \$125 billion in damages. The study focuses on the viability of different flood control projects along Buffalo Bayou in my district, and the surrounding Addicks and Barker Reservoirs.

Last Congress, I advocated for an extension of the study so that the Corps would have time to be able to consider all possible solutions fully. With financial support from Harris County and the Corps, and with an extension granted, the study continued. Now, as we face the need for an additional extension, I urge the Corps to continue its focus and complete this study so it can move forward with a project that aligns with community objectives, minimizes adverse environmental and community impacts, and prioritizes resilience.

Hurricane Harvey made landfall nearly 7 years ago. It is crucial that we utilize the full expertise and resources of the Corps to complete this study before our next Water Resources Development Act in 2026.

The Buffalo Bayou and Tributaries Resiliency Study has been possible because of the ongoing collaboration between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Harris County Flood Control District, and local and Federal leaders, as well as the public. I look forward to continuing this collaboration and finding resilient water conveyance solutions for Houston, Harris County, Fort Bend County, and all of our region.

In the second category of priorities, I have asked for study authorization for the Houston Ship Channel's Project 12 and policy modifications so that ports and waterways can maintain necessary depths and remain competitive in a global marketplace.

As many on the committee may remember, I advocated for the authorization of the Houston Ship Channel's Project 11 in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020. This project widens and deepens the Houston Ship Channel, promoting global trade at the

busiest port in the country by total tonnage. This project is expected to be completed ahead of schedule next year.

While this is a cause for celebration, we must begin to look ahead and look to the future and other deepening projects to meet the growing size and depth of vessels using the port. In order to begin the process, I have asked the committee to authorize a study on project 12. Starting this process now will ensure that our Federal investments are proactive and timely. This critical project will impact not just the Houston region, but the entire country.

I have submitted several other requests to the committee, and I appreciate your consideration of these important requests. I look forward to working with the committee on these projects and much more, and to answering any questions that you may have.

[Mrs. Fletcher's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Lizzie Fletcher, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Texas**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As a former member of this Committee, I am proud of and excited about the work we have accomplished in previous Water Resources Development Acts, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify today about my community's priorities for water infrastructure investment in Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

I have submitted to the Committee several priorities, including project-specific policy changes and authorizations and those with broader implications for how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates.

There are two main drivers for our priorities, and I know they are priorities of this Committee and of this Congress: (1) to make our communities safer and more resilient through infrastructure investment and (2) to support economic growth through infrastructure investment.

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This critical project will impact not just the Houston region but the entire country.

I have submitted several other requests to the Committee, and I appreciate your consideration of these important requests. I look forward to working with the Committee on these projects and much more, and to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentlelady from Texas for her testimony. Are there any questions?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Mrs. FLETCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROUZER. The committee will stand in a brief recess.

[Recess.]

Mr. ROUZER. The committee will come back to order.

Mr. Carter, our great colleague from Georgia, you have up to 5 minutes to present your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for this opportunity to address this committee. I appreciate it very much. This is extremely important. Thank you, and thank you for considering my testimony as the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure continues its work this Congress, especially with WRDA.

As the Representative of the entire coast of Georgia, over 100 miles of pristine coastline, WRDA is an extremely important piece of legislation for my constituents. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects throughout our district have allowed us to grow and prosper over the years.

The most significant project, of course, has been the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project, SHEP, which has been an extraordinary success story for our State and region. Completed in March of 2022, SHEP deepened the Savannah Harbor to 47 feet to allow larger ships from all around the globe to access the Port of Savannah. This has allowed the Port of Savannah to be the single largest and fastest growing container terminal in America, in addition to being the second largest port on the east coast by volume. In fiscal year 2022, it moved 5.8 million 20-foot-equivalent container units in throughput, an increase of 8.1 percent when compared to the previous year.

None of this would have been possible without the work done here on the T&I Committee and the authorizations for SHEP through WRDA. I thank the committee for its continued support for a project that is bringing true benefits to our country. According to a Corps of Engineers study, the project is expected to net more than \$291 million in annual benefits to the Nation, or approximately \$7.70 for every dollar invested in the project.

Georgia's deepwater ports and inland barge terminals support nearly 561,000 jobs throughout the State annually and contribute \$33 billion in income, \$140 billion in sales, and \$3.8 billion in State and local taxes to Georgia's economy.

However, for all the benefits this project has already brought, the world is changing rapidly and ships continue to only get bigger and bigger. That is why I am asking for the committee to include authorization for a new feasibility study or modification to an existing study authorization to examine the benefit of both widening and deepening the harbor of the Port of Savannah to better accommodate today's commercial demands and to prepare for meeting tomorrow's trade needs.

The recently completed dredging under SHEP was designed for vessels with an 8,200 TEU capacity, and the Port of Savannah is currently accommodating ships holding more than 16,000 TEUs on a tightly restricted basis. With the Georgia Department of Transportation raising the height of the Talmadge Bridge, the Port of Savannah's air draft capacity increases significantly, opening the door to serve even larger vessels and increase its significant positive impact on America's economy.

My next request for the committee is for Tybee Island, which sits down the river from the Port of Savannah and is an important barrier island for our coast. While the growth of the Port of Savannah has been welcome, the Federal channel has directly contributed to the erosion on the island and is in persistent need of renourishment. That is why I am requesting authorization for a new feasibility study incorporating the results of the channel impact study that would lead to the development of a project to adequately solve or mitigate the erosion of Tybee Island's beaches.

Next, I would like to request that the committee consider the authorization of a GAO study on the benefits of digital project delivery for the U.S. Army Corps. With the savings that digital infrastructure tools provide and the hundreds of different projects that the Corps engages in each year around the country, digital infrastructure technologies are cloud-based, open-data computer platforms that integrate digital technology throughout the life cycle of an infrastructure asset.

These technologies are proven and utilized around the world for infrastructure projects to reduce project costs, accelerate project delivery, and build more innovative, resilient, and sustainable assets, including water infrastructure projects. Such a study should hopefully demonstrate the savings that digital infrastructure tools can provide to the hundreds of different studies and projects that the Corps engages in each year around the country.

Lastly, I ask the committee to provide Environmental Infrastructure Assistance Authority for the coastal Georgia counties of Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, and McIntosh. Under WRDA, the U.S. Army Corps is authorized to provide assistance with design and construction of infrastructure in specific municipalities, counties, and States. This assistance supports publicly owned and operated facilities such as water distribution works, stormwater collection, and environmental restoration, among others. Adding authority for these counties would provide an opportunity to help these communities with some of their drinking, stormwater, wastewater, and other flooding problems.

Thank you again for your time and your consideration of these important issues for my district, the State, and the country. I look forward to continuing to work with the committee to ensure the in-

clusion of these requests that will bring significant benefits to our communities and to our country.

[Mr. Carter of Georgia's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Earl L. "Buddy" Carter, a Representative in Congress From the State of Georgia

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

Thank you both for considering my testimony as the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure continues its work this Congress, especially with the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

As the representative of the entire coast of Georgia, WRDA is extremely important piece of legislation for my constituents. U.S. Army Corps of Engineer projects throughout our district have allowed us to grow and prosper over the years.

The most significant project, of course, has been the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (SHEP), which has been an extraordinary success story for our state and region. Completed in March of 2022, SHEP deepened the Savannah Harbor to 47 feet to allow larger ships from all around the globe to access the Port of Savannah.

This has allowed the Port of Savannah to be the single largest and fastest-growing container terminal in America in addition to being the second largest port on the East Coast by volume.

In FY2022 it moved 5.8 million TEUs (Twenty Foot Equivalent Container Units) in throughput, an increase of 8.1% when compared to the previous year.

None of this would be possible without the work done here on the T&I Committee and the authorizations for SHEP through WRDA.

I thank the Committee for its continued support for a project that is bringing true benefits to our country.

According to a Corps of Engineers study, the project is expected to net more than \$291 million in annual benefits to the nation, or approximately \$7.70 for every dollar invested in the project.

Georgia's deep water ports and inland barge terminals support nearly 561,000 jobs throughout the state annually and contributes \$33 billion in income, \$140 billion in sales, and \$3.8 billion in state and local taxes to Georgia's economy.

However, for all the benefits this project has already brought, the world is changing rapidly, and ships continue to only get bigger and bigger.

That is why I am asking for the Committee to include authorization for a new feasibility study or modification to an existing study authorization to authorization to examine the benefit of both widening and deepening the harbor at the Port of Savannah to better accommodate today's commercial demands and to prepare for meetings tomorrow's trade needs.

The recently completed dredging under SHEP was designed for vessels with an 8,200-TEU capacity and the Port of Savannah is currently accommodating ships holding more than 16,000 TEUs on a tidally-restricted basis.

With the Georgia DOT raising the height of the Talmadge Bridge, the Port of Savannah's air draft capacity increases significantly—opening the door to serve even larger vessels and increase its significant positive impact on America's economy.

My next request for the Committee is for Tybee Island, which sits down river from the Port of Savannah and is an important barrier island for our coast. While the growth of the Port of Savannah has been welcome, the federal channel has directly contributed to erosion on the island and are in persistent need of renourishment.

That is why I am requesting authorization for a new feasibility study, incorporating the results of the Channel Impact Study, that would lead to the development of a project to adequately solve or mitigate the erosion of Tybee Island's beaches.

Next, I would like to request that the Committee consider the authorization of a GAO on the benefits of digital project delivery for the US Army Corps. With the savings that digital infrastructure tools provide and the hundreds of different studies and projects that the Corps engages in each year around the country.

Digital infrastructure technologies are cloud based, open data, computer platforms that integrate digital technology throughout the lifecycle of an infrastructure asset.

These technologies are proven and utilized around the world for infrastructure projects to reduce project costs, accelerate project delivery, and build more innovative, resilient, and sustainable assets, including water infrastructure projects.

Today, digital infrastructure technologies are used by all 50 state Departments of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and owner-operators of critical infrastructure throughout the country.

Such a study should hopefully demonstrate the savings that digital infrastructure tools can provide to the hundreds of different studies and projects that the Corps engages in each year around the country.

Lastly, I ask that the Committee to provide Environmental Infrastructure Assistance authority for the coastal Georgia counties of Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, and McIntosh.

Under WRDA, the US Army Corps is authorized to provide assistance with design and construction of infrastructure in specified municipalities, counties, and states. This assistance supports publicly owned and operated facilities, such as water distribution works, stormwater collection, surface water protection projects, and environmental restoration, among others.

This environmental infrastructure is becoming increasingly important in our district as we experience significant growth from the activity at the Ports that I've already mentioned and new manufacturing coming to the area.

Adding authority for Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, and McIntosh would provide an opportunity to help these communities with some of their drinking, stormwater, wastewater, and other flooding problems.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these important issues for my district, state, and the country.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to ensure the inclusion of these requests that will bring significant benefits to our communities and country.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman for his testimony. Are there any questions?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Mr. Donalds, great to see you here. I look forward to your testimony. You have up to 5 minutes when you are ready.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. BYRON DONALDS, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you, Chairman Rouzer, Vice Chair Napolitano. Thank you for being here. Thank you for allowing me to be here. I want to discuss three topics with you today: number one, water quality; number two, transportation; and number three, nuclear energy.

I represent Florida's 19th Congressional District, which covers Lee County and Collier County of southwest Florida. My district is full of environmental treasures such as white sandy beaches, lakes, rivers, streams, creeks, not to mention a wide variety of unique aquatic specimens that call these water bodies home. The quality of the water impacts my constituents and the local economy on a daily basis, hence why water is my office's number-one priority.

I want to make the committee aware of a few bills that I am leading to improve water quality in my district and across the United States of America.

First, I introduced the Water Quality and Environmental Innovation Act on a bipartisan basis with Representative Gottheimer of New Jersey. This bill takes unused funding that lacks a designated purpose from the EPA's Motor Vehicle and Engine Compliance Program for the purpose of issuing grants and contracts to fund projects that seek to use emerging technologies to combat water quality and other related challenges. Innovative technologies may include artificial intelligence, robotics, distributed ledger technology, eDNA, quantum, et cetera.

This bill takes an outside-the-box approach to remedy potential water quality concerns such as harmful algal blooms, sea level rise, acidification, accumulation of trash and plastics, et cetera.

Next, I previously introduced another bipartisan bill called the Combat Harmful Algal Blooms Act. This bill is simple. It adds harmful algal blooms to be eligible for major disaster funding under the Stafford Act. To illustrate the importance of this to Lee County's economy, Lee County's fishing industry has a value of \$618 million. An economic loss from harmful algal blooms can equate to \$195 million. Lee County's coastal economic output is \$11.1 billion. Harmful algal blooms can cost my area \$3 billion. Lee County's property values near the coast is roughly \$19.1 billion. Economic losses from harmful algal blooms can equate to \$3.8 billion.

I would also note that I am introducing a bill in the near future called the Convert Harmful Algal Blooms to Fuels Act, which is another bill that takes a unique approach to combating Florida's water quality challenges. Briefly, this bill builds upon the Army Corps HABITATS Program to take aquatic algal biomass and convert such algae into alternative fuels or biofuels. As a Floridian, I welcome an opportunity to turn oranges into orange juice, and this bipartisan bill actually would incorporate a similar train of thought.

Next, I would urge the committee to consider another bipartisan bill I introduced called the Short Line Railroad Relief Act. There are approximately 600 short line freight railroads in the United States, most being owned and operated by small businesses. The Seminole Gulf Railway is the one that is in southwest Florida, in Congressional District 19. This was actually subject to damage from Hurricane Ian, so, time is of the essence to try to repair that railway line so that our local economy can get back on track as quickly as possible.

Finally, I have introduced several bills related to nuclear energy in this Congress. A few of them have been referred to your committee chairman. Nuclear is the cleanest option in America's energy arsenal. Nuclear is a bipartisan issue. I know a lot of our colleagues up here on Capitol Hill have a desire to release or eliminate carbon emissions; nuclear power is the engine to make that a reality and take it from the talking points to something that is tangible for all Americans.

Specifically, I introduced a bill that will require the development of a national strategy to deploy nuclear microreactors after natural disasters hit.

Finally, I would like to leave the committee with this innovative thought. Across the street from this hearing room is the U.S. Capitol Power Plant. The facility provides chilled water and high-temperature steam to the Capitol complex. Today, we are seeing many of these coal facilities being retired, and unfortunately, there is currently a huge opportunity to revitalize retired coal facilities with advanced nuclear technology due to the compatibility of such energy infrastructure.

Now imagine the statement Congress could make to the nuclear industry, American communities, and the world if we look at utilizing advanced nuclear power reactors to power the United States

Capitol. I think it would send an amazing message of what Congress is prepared to do, and how we can lead the United States and the world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Donalds' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Byron Donalds, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Florida**

- Thanks for the invitation to testify
- Three topics that I want to discuss today
 1. Water Quality
 2. Transportation
 3. Nuclear Energy
- 1. I represent Florida's 19th District which covers Lee and Collier County, in Southwest Florida.
 - My district is full of environmental treasures—such as white sandy beaches, lakes, rivers, streams, creeks—not to mention the wide variety of unique aquatic specimens that call these water bodies home.
 - The quality of water impacts my constituents and our local economy on a daily basis
 - Hence why water is my office's *number one* priority
- I want to make the Committee aware of a few bills that I'm leading to improve water quality in my district and around the United States
- 1.a. First, I introduced the Water Quality & Environmental Innovation Act on a bipartisan basis with Rep. Gottheimer from New Jersey.
 - This bill takes unused funding that lacks a designated purpose from EPA's Motor Vehicle and Engine Compliance Program for the purpose of issuing grants and contracts to fund projects that seek to use emerging technologies to combat water quality related-challenges.
 - *Innovative technologies may include:* artificial intelligence, robotics, distributed ledger technology, eDNA, quantum, etc.
 - This bill takes an outside-the-box approach to remedy *potential water quality concerns, such as:*
 - Harmful algal blooms, sea-level rise, acidification, accumulation of trash and plastics, etc.
- [Urge the Committee to consider this bill]
- 1.b. Next, I previously introduced another bipartisan bill called the Combat Harmful Algal Blooms Act.
 - This bill is simple: it adds "harmful algal blooms" to be eligible for major disaster funding under the Stafford Act.
 - [Illustrate the economic impacts of HABs in Lee County, FL]
 - Lee County Fishing industry=\$618 million value
 - Economic loss expected from a HAB=\$195 million
 - Lee County Coastal Economic Output=\$11.1 billion
 - Economic loss expected from a HAB=\$3 billion.
 - Lee County Property Value Near the Coast=\$19.1 billion
 - Economic loss expected from a HAB=\$3.8 billion.
 - The economics of HABs speak for themselves
 - Providing federal major disaster funding to recover from severe HAB outbreaks will be vital for my district in the years to come
 - Plus this bill *doesn't* automatically allocate disaster funding for *every* harmful algal bloom, but instead allows FEMA to *consider* allocating funding based on the individual HAB circumstance.
 - Plus, this bill is broadly cosponsored by 15 bipartisan members of the Florida delegation.
 - [Urge the Committee to consider this bill]
 - 1.c. Also to note, I'll be introducing a bill in the near future called the Convert HABs to Fuel Act—which is another bill that takes a unique approach to combating FL's water quality challenges.
 - Briefly, this bill builds upon the Army Corps.' "HABITATS" program to take aquatic algae biomass and convert such algae into alternative fuels (biofuels).
 - As a Floridian, I welcome any opportunity to turn oranges into orange juice—and this bill incorporates a similar train of thought.
 - [CP COMMENT: PLAY ON "MAKING LEMONADE OUT OF LEMONS"]

- 2.a. Next, I urge the committee to consider another bipartisan bill I introduced called the Short Line Railroad Relief Act.
- There are approximately 600 short line freight railroads in the United States—most being owned & operated by small businesses.
 - Seminole Gulf Railway is FL-19's only short line
 - This specific short line railroad suffered “catastrophic damage” following Hurricane Ian
 - Time is of the essence after a disaster hits, and this bill authorizes a program for the DOT Secretary to issue grants & contracts to expeditiously provide much-needed capital to repair severely damaged rail infrastructure & equipment.
 - [Urge the Committee to consider this bill]
3. Finally, I've introduced several bills relating to nuclear energy this Congress—a few that have been referred to your Committee.
- Nuclear is the cleanest energy option in America's energy arsenal
 - Nuclear is a bipartisan issue
- 3.a. Specifically, I introduced a bill that would require the development of a national strategy to deploy nuclear microreactors after natural disasters hit.
- FL-19 knows all about natural disasters
 - In addition to diesel generators, it would be beneficial to have the option to utilize portable microreactors as well
 - We must proactively plan for the deployment of this next-generation nuclear technology
 - [Urge the Committee to consider this bill]
- 3.b. Finally, I'd like to leave the Committee with this innovative thought:
- Across the street from this hearing room is the U.S. Capitol Power Plant.
 - This facility provides chilled water and high-temperature steam to the U.S. Capitol Complex.
 - Many don't know that this facility previously was powered by coal.
 - Today, we're seeing many coal facilities being retired (unfortunately), and there's currently a huge opportunity to revitalize retired coal facilities with advanced nuclear technology due to the compatibility of such energy infrastructure.
 - Now imagine *the statement* Congress could make to the nuclear industry, American communities, and the world if we look into utilizing advanced nuclear reactors to power *the United States Capitol*.
 - In fact, I have a bill that would look into the feasibility of doing just that (called the U.S. Capitol Power Plant Retrofit Act).
 - [Urge the Committee to consider this bill]
 - Thank you Chairman Graves for considering my legislative initiatives.

Mr. DONALDS. And I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman. Are there any questions?

Seeing none, thank you again.

The committee will go into a brief recess.

[Recess.]

Mr. ROUZER. The committee will come back to order.

Mr. Mullin, we will start with you whenever you are ready. You have up to 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. KEVIN MULLIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Members, for the opportunity.

On New Year's Eve of 2022, my home State of California saw firsthand the dangers of climate change. Unprecedented flooding from several atmospheric rivers wreaked havoc, causing damage to private property, public infrastructure, and disrupting the lives of many of my constituents, including on their private property. District residents in the city of San Mateo, who really have never experienced storms quite like this, are now facing catastrophic losses. To quote one constituent regarding their experience, “I've lived in

San Mateo for 33 years, and where we lived has never, ever flooded ... about 4 hours [after it started], I was, in vain, attempting to bail out my house.”

The data shows we need to address flooding in my district to address the frequency of these so-called 100-year flood events. That is why I have respectfully submitted to the committee a request for a feasibility study of flood control and stormwater runoff reduction measures to be taken in San Mateo. These efforts will protect this city from future extreme weather events.

Frankly, we know this is a problem nationwide. Communities everywhere are finding it challenging to work within the authorized dollar amounts for continuing authority programs. A commonsense policy change that I am submitting to the committee is to modestly adjust these amounts for inflation and regional cost differences. This adjustment would better support projects across the country, including in my own district, where there is also an ongoing effort to protect the bayfront city of East Palo Alto and the San Francisquito Creek, which runs right through that community. This project, if funded properly, would significantly reduce the risk of flooding for over 4,000 households.

Please consider the impact these requests will have on the way communities across the country respond to extreme weather. Thank you for your time and for your work on this year’s act.

[Mr. Mullin’s prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Kevin Mullin, a Representative in Congress
From the State of California**

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for inviting me here today, I’m grateful for your audience.

On New Year’s Eve of 2022, my home state of California saw firsthand the real danger of climate change. Unprecedented flooding from several atmospheric rivers wreaked havoc throughout my district, causing damage to private property, public infrastructure, and disrupting the lives of many of my constituents.

For example, in the City of San Mateo, residents who have never experienced storms like this in the past are now facing catastrophic losses. To quote one constituent regarding their experience after one of the latest storms began: “I’ve lived in San Mateo for 33 years, and where we lived has never, ever flooded ... about four hours [after it started], I was, in vain, attempting to bail out my house.”

We know from the data that we need to address flooding in our community now. That is why I have respectfully submitted to the Committee a request for a feasibility study of flood control and stormwater runoff reduction measures that might be taken in San Mateo. These efforts will protect this city from the increased threat of extreme weather events.

But zooming out, we know this is a problem across the country. Moreover, communities are finding it challenging to work within the authorized dollar amounts for continuing authority programs. A common sense policy change that I am submitting to the Committee is to modestly adjust these dollar amounts for inflation and for regional cost differences.

This adjustment would better support projects across the country, including in my own district where there is an ongoing effort to protect the bayfront city of East Palo Alto and the San Francisquito Creek which runs through it.

I ask that you consider the impact these requests will have on the way communities across the nation respond to extreme weather. Thank you for your time and for all your work on this year’s Act.

Mr. ROUZER, I thank the gentleman. Are there any questions for the gentleman?

Seeing none, thank you again for your testimony.

Ms. Luna, you are recognized for up to 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ANNA PAULINA LUNA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mrs. LUNA. Thank you. My district is home to many pristine beaches along the Gulf of Mexico. It is my utmost priority to ensure beach renourishment continues in my community, and that is exactly why I am here before you today.

For the entirety of last year, my office has begun fighting with the Army Corps of Engineers over their decision to not move forward with the renourishment of the Sand Key Beach Project in Pinellas County. The initial construction effort for Sand Key was completed in 1993. Successive renourishment took place in 1999, 2006, 2012, and 2018, and they have significantly repaired the beach and also built up the shoreline to up to 200 feet from the seawall.

Renourishment needs to take place every 6 years in order for this area to be maintained. However, the Army Corps has informed Pinellas County that local officials must obtain over 100 percent of property owner rights in order for a beach access to take place. This is obviously not fair, being that we can't even at this current time attain over 40 percent.

Despite perpetual easements not being required by law, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers insists that it must acquire all access in order to move forward, and this is also impacting the areas of Treasure Island and Long Key.

For previous renourishments, Pinellas County property owners were allowed to sign temporary construction easements to allow the Army Corps to do its work. Army Corps also stated that the agency intends to start enforcing its new policy—purportedly from 1996, but not enforced over the last two decades.

Section 103(d) of the 1986 Water Resources Development Act, WRDA, requires the local sponsors to pay for sand placed on private property. The Army Corps of Engineers' new interpretation of this 40-year-old law is that they will not replace the public side of the sand, which is seaward of the erosion control line, unless perpetual public access is acquired from property owner rights on the landward side of the erosion control line in order for local sponsors to pay 100 percent of the cost.

Basically, this policy is out of date. What is happening is our communities impacted by it, they are citing a policy that hasn't been enforced for over 20 years, and now they are saying that if we don't basically hand over our private property rights, what is going to happen is we are not going to get help. It is going to impact our tourism. It is going to basically ensure that these property owners are going to have their property completely destroyed, not to mention we have natural habitat for some endangered species that is also going to be impacted by it.

The Army Corps has been playing games. We have been trying to reach out to them. They haven't responded to any of our phone calls. I know that I am not the only Member that is facing this problem. They are doing this to other Members, as well. And I find it ironic that it is also in red States. So, I am asking for your help

to change this policy so that they can no longer do this to our community.

[Mrs. Luna's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Anna Paulina Luna, a Representative in
Congress From the State of Florida**

Hello Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and distinguished Members of the Committee.

My district is home to many pristine beaches along the Gulf of Mexico. It is my utmost priority to ensure beach renourishment continues in my community. That is why I am before you today.

For the entirety of last year, my office has been fighting the Army Corps of Engineers over their decision not to move forward with the renourishment of the Sand Key Beach Project in Pinellas County. The initial construction effort for Sand Key was completed in 1993. Successive nourishments in 1999, 2006, 2012, and 2018 have significantly repaired and built up the beach, with the shoreline now about 200 feet from the seawall. Renourishment needs to be placed every six years. The next renourishment cycle would need to begin in 2024 to stay on schedule and not risk beach erosion that would degrade the progress made over the last three decades.

However, the Army Corps has informed Pinellas County that local officials must obtain perpetual public access easements along the length of the project from 100 percent of property owners, regardless of whether sand is being placed on their private property, in order to proceed with the next renourishment cycle. This attempted power grab seeks to strip property rights from homeowners where easements are not needed to complete the next renourishment cycle.

Despite perpetual easements not being required by law, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers insists they must be acquired to move forward with ANY beach renourishment project. This now affects not only Sand Key but also Treasure Island and Long Key projects, which were previously given the green light in Pinellas County. It does not end there; the Corps' policy will halt beach renourishment projects in over nine counties throughout Florida.

For previous nourishments, Pinellas County property owners were allowed to sign temporary construction easements to allow the Army Corps to do its work. Army Corps stated that the agency intends to start enforcing this new policy, purportedly from 1996 but not enforced for the past two decades. It is a flawed requirement to require perpetual public access easements on private properties, especially those that will not have sand placed. For obvious reasons about half of private property owners have declined to give such an easement.

Section 103(d) of the 1986 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) requires the local sponsor to pay for sand placed on private property. The Army Corps of Engineers new interpretation of this 40-year-old law is that they will not place sand on the public side of the beach, which is *seaward* of the erosion control line, unless a perpetual public access easement is acquired from the private property owners on the *landward* side of the erosion control line unless the local sponsor pays 100% of the cost. The Army Corps ridiculously maintains this position even when sand is not being placed in front of the private property.

The Corps cites section 103d of 1986 WRDA, which prohibits federal funding of benefits to privately owned shores where use is *limited* to private interest, as the reason for their unattainable perpetual easement policy. The Corps does not take into account that beaches in Florida are already public beaches, established by the erosion control line, and that beach renourishment projects with temporary construction easements do not violate 1986 WRDA.

The Corps is interpreting the law incorrectly to fit their policy wants, not, as they claim, to comply with the law. Therefore, we need to clarify in existing law that the Corps cannot abuse its power with this interpretation and stretch its interpretation of the law with no legal or statutory authority to do so.

We must rein in the Army Corps of Engineers and modify the requirements in WRDA relating to easements for beach renourishment projects and measures in the State of Florida. This policy clarification would state that a public access or use easement or perpetual property right shall not be required to be provided for any privately owned land that is located landward of the erosion control line (as determined by the State of Florida) and that the Corps may only require a temporary easement or other property right to be provided for the purpose of performing pre-

construction, construction, or post construction activities for the project of measure (including maintenance and monitoring activities).

The Corps' one size fits all approach regarding their easement policy does not take into account the vast differences in state laws when it comes to public versus private property. For instance, Florida law has an erosion control line that delineates public beach versus private land. For the purposes of federal cost sharing, Florida's beaches are already considered publicly accessible shores which satisfy the WRDA 1986 requirement.

Without renourishment, Pinellas County will be more prone to future hurricanes and flood damage, which will negatively impact the entire county's economy. Without this scheduled 2024 nourishment, the beach will dissipate and erode, demolishing many habitats to endangered species and threatened wildlife. Specifically, Loggerhead Sea Turtles, Piping Plover Shorebird, West Indian Manatee, Eastern Black Rail, Red Knot, Wood Stork, American Crocodile, Eastern Indigo Snake, Green Sea Turtle, Hawksbill Sea Turtle, and the Leatherback Sea Turtle are federally classified as endangered or threatened species and reside in and/or around the Sand Key region. Without renourishment to preserve the habitats of our endangered species, they will be placed at greater risk. The Army Corps is under an obligation to exercise its authority to further the conservation of endangered and threatened species. In this case, Army Corps action that reimagines the 1986 WRDA statute will devastate such species.

It is my top priority for WRDA 2024 to ensure that Army Corps proceeds as planned with already authorized beach renourishment projects in Florida. While this new Army Corps policy is very personal to me and my constituents in Pinellas County, I'm sure you will hear from my colleagues that this new policy is threatening many other projects throughout Florida. I respectfully request your assistance in correcting the wayward Army Corps of Engineers and ensure that Florida beach renourishment projects move forward on schedule.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentlelady.

Mrs. LUNA. Thank you.

Mr. ROUZER. Duly noted.

Are there any questions?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Mrs. LUNA. Thank you.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. LaLota.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. NICK LALOTA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

Mr. LALOTA. Thank you, Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano, for hosting this important hearing today and for allowing me to testify in front of the committee. I would like to take some time today to address two issues.

First, an issue critical to my district back home on Long Island: reauthorizing the Long Island Sound Program. In 1985, Congress created the Long Island Sound Study, also commonly referred to as the Long Island Sound Program, to identify and address the major environmental and ecological problems affecting the Long Island Sound. The Long Island Sound Program was authorized at \$40 million annually through the Long Island Sound Restoration Act, and through this legislation, a bi-state comprehensive management plan has been developed and continues to be implemented.

In 2006, Congress also passed the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act, which provided Federal dollars to projects to restore the coastal habitat to help revitalize the wildlife population, coastal wetlands, and plant life.

In 2018, the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act, which combined and reauthorized the two complementary

water quality and habitat restoration programs, was enacted as part of the America's Water Infrastructure Act.

As of 2022, Federal funding for the Long Island Sound has enabled programs to significantly reduce the amount of nitrogen entering the Long Island Sound from sewage treatment plants by 70.3 percent compared to the 1990s, reduce hypoxic conditions by 58 percent compared to the 1990s, restore at least 2,239 acres of coastal habitat, and fund 570 conservation projects.

In fiscal year 2023, the Long Island Sound received \$40 million, the largest funding level in the history of the program. The House and Senate have both included \$40 million for the Long Island Sound in their fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills, and we are extremely grateful for that.

But none of this matters unless the program is reauthorized.

And while my good friend from the other side of the aisle and the other side of the Long Island Sound, Connecticut Congressman Courtney, and I have introduced legislation, H.R. 5441, the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Reauthorization Act of 2023, to reauthorize the program, we believe this legislation can and should be included in a WRDA package. I look forward to continuing to work with this committee to get this important program reauthorized, and thank you for the support that you have already shown.

The second issue I wanted to address quite quickly is an issue of local concern that has been going on in my district for quite some time: a crumbling seawall in the village of Asharoken. The village of Asharoken connects the community of Eaton's Neck to the rest of the town of Huntington through a narrow road. Due to weather conditions and the elevation of the road, there are several times when the road has completely flooded, leaving stranded entire communities.

A brief survey of the seawall recently demonstrated a devastating scouring of the beach, and with every storm, the situation has become more and more dire for the local residents there. This has resulted in toe stones dropping, exposure of more sheet steel, and exposing the wall to total failure. This could result in total loss of the road, as well. Currently, there is redtape that is preventing the residents of Asharoken and Eaton's Neck from getting the help they need to fortify the seawall and ensure the community is not stranded when even a minor weather event occurs.

I look forward, Chairman, Ranking Member, to working with this committee and the Army Corps of Engineers to find a solution to this issue, and I hope you would agree that my constituents deserve nothing less. Thank you so much for your indulgence.

[Mr. LaLota's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Nick LaLota, a Representative in Congress
From the State of New York**

Thank you, Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano for hosting this important hearing today, and for allowing me to testify in front of this Committee.

I would like to take this time today to discuss an issue that is critical to my district—reauthorizing the Long Island Sound Program.

In 1985, Congress created the Long Island Sound Study (LISS), also commonly referred to as the Long Island Sound Program, to identify and address the major

environmental problems affecting the Long Island Sound. The Long Island Sound Program was authorized at \$40 million annually through the LIS Restoration Act. Through this legislation, a bi-state Comprehensive Management Plan has been developed and is being implemented. In 2006 Congress also passed the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act, which provided federal dollars for projects to restore the coastal habitat to help revitalize the wildlife population, coastal wetlands, and plant life.

In 2018, the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act, which combined and reauthorized the two complementary water quality and habitat restoration programs, was enacted as a part of the America's Water Infrastructure Act.

As of 2022, federal funding for the Long Island Sound has enabled programs to significantly reduce the amount of nitrogen entering the Long Island Sound from sewage treatment plants by 70.3% compared to the 1990s, reduce hypoxic conditions by 58% compared to the 1990s, restore at least 2,239 acres of coastal habitat, and fund 570 conservation projects. In FY23, the Long Island Sound received \$40 million, the largest funding level in the history of the program. The House and Senate have both included \$40 million for Long Island Sound in their FY 2024 appropriations bills, and we are extremely grateful for that.

But none of this matters if the program is not reauthorized.

While my good friend and colleague from Connecticut, Mr. Courtney and I have introduced legislation, H.R. 5441, the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Reauthorization Act of 2023 to reauthorize the program, we believe this legislation can and should be included in a WRDA (pronounced: WERDA) package. I look forward to continuing to work with this Committee to get this important program reauthorized and I thank you for the support you have already shown.

I also wanted to take just a few moments to highlight a critical local issue that has been going on in my district for quite some time—a crumbling seawall in the village of Asharoken.

The village of Asharoken connects the community of Eaton's Neck and the rest of the town of Huntington through a narrow road. Due to weather conditions and the elevation of the road, there are several times when the road has completely flooded—leaving stranded an entire community.

A brief survey of the seawall recently demonstrated devastating scouring of the beach. With every storm, the situation has become more and more dire. This has resulted in the toe stones dropping, exposure of more sheet steel and exposing the wall to total failure. This could result in the loss of the road as well.

Currently, there is red tape that is preventing the residents of Asharoken and Eaton's Neck from getting the help they need to fortify the seawall and ensure that the community is not stranded when a minor weather event occurs.

I look forward to working with this Committee and the Army Corps of Engineers to find a solution to this issue. My constituents deserve nothing less.

Thank you again to Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano for hosting this hearing today and I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman. Are there any questions?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Mr. LALOTA. Thank you.

Mr. ROUZER. Ms. Schrier, you are up for up to 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. KIM SCHRIER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

Dr. SCHRIER. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Ranking Member.

I first want to thank the committee for their work on WRDA in 2022. During the last WRDA Member Day, I spoke to this committee about the importance of continued funding of the Howard Hanson Dam, a project that the entire Washington delegation supports that will provide downstream fish passage, safe drinking water, and critical habitat restoration for endangered salmon species. We were able to include authorization of the necessary funds for project completion in the 2022 WRDA, so, thank you for that work.

Today, I would like to speak with you first about my bipartisan bill, the WIFIA Amendments of 2023. As you know, the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program, or WIFIA, is a Federal credit program managed by Federal agencies for eligible water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Under this program, borrowers, including State, Tribal, and Federal Governments, can apply for low-interest, flexible loans to fund these water infrastructure projects. These loans are invaluable resources that allow local governments to meet the infrastructure needs of their respective communities at an affordable rate.

WIFIA allotments have had a significant impact throughout the country, and to date, the program has announced \$19 billion to finance 109 projects across the country, creating 60,000 jobs. In Washington State, King County, the city of Tacoma, and Seattle public utilities have all received WIFIA loans. King County was invited to apply for a \$287 million WIFIA master agreement, which helped fund several projects, including the Northwest Lake Sammamish Interceptor Upgrade and the Sammamish Plateau Diversion Project.

Now, despite its importance and its significant impact on water infrastructure, the program has not been modified since its inception in 2014. In addition to reauthorizing the program through 2027, my bipartisan bill would update and improve WIFIA by removing barriers of entry for rural community water projects. This is an exciting and important opportunity to help rural communities access critical loans and long-term, stable funding for water infrastructure. This keeps our water clean, ensures a supply of safe drinking water, keeps costs low for ratepayers, and is particularly important for the smallest communities. So, I request that this bill be considered by this committee in the 2024 WRDA, or at least in future committee activity.

With my remaining time, I would like to speak in support of one particular project that I will be submitting for the city of Chelan in my district. To paint a picture of the city of Chelan, it is mountains with one of the deepest lakes in the entire world right in the middle. The problem is that in 2015, Washington experienced the worst wildfire season in the State's recorded history, and this included the Chelan Complex fires. It is smack in the middle of what we consider one of the highest risk firesheds in the country. This destroyed 75 homes and businesses nearby, and the risk of similar fires is only increasing.

So, seeing a serious gap in wildfire preparedness, the city of Chelan has proposed constructing a water reservoir at a higher elevation for both wildfire resilience and for water supply. The current system relies on booster pump stations to distribute water over increasing elevation and distance from the lake. The system contains some serious risks. Failure of these pump stations, which can happen in a wildfire, could disrupt water distribution to the eastern side of the city and could impact firefighting abilities.

To counter this vulnerability, the city seeks to build a new 1-million-gallon water reservoir in East Chelan. The reservoir will assist in mitigating future wildfire risks associated with their unique geographic and infrastructure challenges, and I will be submitting an

authorization request for \$9 million for the construction phase of this project.

I want to thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.

[Dr. Schrier's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Kim Schrier, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Washington**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member. I want to first thank the committee for their work on WRDA 2022. During the last WRDA member day, I spoke to this committee on the importance of the continued funding of the Howard Hanson Dam, a project with the entire Washington delegation's support that will provide downstream fish passage, safe drinking water, and critical habitat restoration for endangered salmon species. We were able to include authorization of the necessary funds for project completion in the 2022 WRDA. Thank you for your work.

Today, I'd like to speak to you about my bipartisan bill, the WIFIA Amendments of 2023. As you know, the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program, or WIFIA, is a federal credit program managed by federal agencies for eligible water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Under this program, borrowers, including state, Tribal, and federal governments, can apply for low-interest, flexible loans to fund water infrastructure projects. These loans are invaluable resources that allow local governments to meet the infrastructure needs of their respective communities at an affordable rate.

WIFIA loans have had a significant impact throughout the country, and to date, the program has announced \$19 billion to help finance 109 projects across the country, creating 60,000 jobs. In Washington state, King County, the City of Tacoma, and Seattle public utilities have all received WIFIA loans. King County was invited to apply for a \$287 million WIFIA Master Agreement, which helped fund several projects including the NW Lake Sammamish Interceptor Upgrade and the Sammamish Plateau Diversion Project.

Despite its importance and significant impact on water infrastructure, the program has not been modified since its inception in 2014. In addition to reauthorizing the program through 2027, my bipartisan bill would update and improve WIFIA by removing barriers of entry for rural community water projects. This is an exciting opportunity to help rural communities access critical loans and long-term, stable funding for water infrastructure. This keeps our water clean, ensures a supply of safe drinking water, and keeps costs low for ratepayers. I request that the bill be considered by this committee in the 2024 WRDA or in future committee activity.

With my remaining time, I'd like to speak in support of a project I will submit for the City of Chelan in my district. In 2015, Washington experienced the worst wildfire season in the state's recorded history, which included the devastating Chelan Complex fires that destroyed 75 homes and businesses nearby. Risk of similar fires is increasing. Seeing a serious gap in wildfire preparedness, the City of Chelan has proposed constructing a water reservoir at higher elevation for both wildfire resilience and water supply.

The current water system of Chelan relies on booster pump stations to distribute water over increasing elevation and distance from Lake Chelan. This system contains serious risks: a failure of these pump stations, such as from a power outage which is common during wildfires, could disrupt water distribution to the eastern side of the city for both emergency firefighting and daily life. To counter this vulnerability, the city seeks to build a new 1 million gallon water reservoir in east Chelan. This reservoir will assist in mitigating future wildfire risks associated with the unique geographic and infrastructure challenges of the city. I will be submitting an authorization request for \$9 million for the construction phase of this project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentlelady for her testimony. Any questions?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Dr. SCHRIER. Thank you.

Mr. ROUZER. Ms. Budzinski, you are recognized.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS**

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Thank you, Chairman Rouzer, and thank you, Ranking Member Napolitano, for holding this hearing today, to hear from Members on our priorities for the upcoming reauthorization of WRDA.

As a Representative for central and southern Illinois, I have the honor of serving communities outside of St. Louis in the Metro East region, communities that have struggled with the consequences of inadequate infrastructure for far too long. In Cahokia Heights, local residents have been dealing with a flooding, sewage, and drinking water crisis for decades, eroding home values and putting folks' health and safety at risk.

I was proud to secure an EPA coordinator to help us resolve this issue, and the Army Corps of Engineers has worked collaboratively with the State of Illinois to address this in the past. But our work is not done, and that is why I am requesting additional support in our next Water Resources Development Act.

In WRDA 2024, I am requesting a feasibility study of the Spring Lake Project recommended in the East St. Louis and Vicinity Ecosystem Restoration and Flood Damage Reduction Project report to advance this structural project to a preconstruction engineering design phase. This will help communities in my district with flood resilience and reduction, and ensure their homes are protected.

In addition to completing this study, the flooding issue can be mitigated by modifying the scope and authorization ceiling for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers response. By adding stormwater management to the existing scope of water and wastewater infrastructure assistance, the Army Corps of Engineers will have increased ability to remedy flooding issues as they arise, as well as mitigate future issues. Raising the ceiling from \$100 to \$200 million will also allow the Army Corps enhanced capability to respond to these issues.

The Mississippi River also serves as a vital waterway to growers and producers in my congressional district, allowing them to get their goods to market. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funded seven inland waterway construction projects. Even so, Infrastructure Law funds alone will be insufficient to complete any of these critical projects that Congress intended the IIJA fund to complete. Unless modified in WRDA 2024, the disparity between projected costs reflected in BIL funding levels and subsequent real-world project costs threaten to jeopardize and delay critical ongoing and planned capital improvements that are desperately and urgently needed to modernize our Nation's antiquated inland waterways transportation system, further delaying economic and environmental benefits.

Consistent with IIJA congressional intent, I request that we adjust funding levels to ensure that the Federal Government continues to cover 100 percent of the cost of the seven inland waterways construction and major rehabilitation projects. The requests I highlighted today alongside the others I intend to submit to the committee will help ensure that the constituents in my district are protected from floods; that the Army Corps of Engineers is well

equipped to address flooding issues; and that our waterways construction and rehabilitation infrastructure is fully funded.

Thank you very much, Chairman and Ranking Member, for the opportunity to testify here today, and I thank you in advance for consideration of my request. Thank you.

[Ms. Budzinski's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Nikki Budzinski, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Illinois**

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee as part of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Member Day. Below are the top three requests I plan to submit for your consideration as you continue your work on this important reauthorization.

The State of Illinois and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) St. Louis District has a history of working collaboratively on flood mitigation efforts in the East St. Louis Metropolitan Area. Studies sponsored by both the State of Illinois and USACE in 1957, 1965, 1976 and 1985 have yielded mixed results, with some projects suggested by the studies being implemented, while other projects were deemed uneconomical based on conditions at that time.

The WRDA 2000 authorized the USACE to perform a General Reevaluation Report of the 1965 Flood Control Act to include ecosystem restoration as a project purpose. The 2000 WRDA authorization resulted in the East St. Louis, and Vicinity, Illinois Ecosystem Restoration and Flood Damage Reduction Project report which was published in 2003. The State of Illinois supports a re-evaluation of the 2003 report to update this study with economic, rainfall and engineering data.

Additionally, there are projects suggested by the 2003 East St. Louis and Vicinity Report, including the Spring Lake Project, that may economically and substantially reduce flood risk in the region. I, alongside Senators Durbin and Duckworth, request that Congress directs the USACE to complete a Reevaluation Report for the East St. Louis, and Vicinity, Illinois Ecosystem Restoration and Flood Damage Reduction Project, and complete a Feasibility Study of the Spring Lake Project recommended in the East St. Louis and Vicinity Ecosystem Restoration and Flood Damage Reduction Project report to advance this structural project to a Pre-construction Engineering Design (PED) phase.

I also request, alongside our Illinois senators, modification to the scope and authorization ceiling for Madison and St. Clair Counties, Illinois—Section 219(f)(55) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992. Scope modification is to include Stormwater Management to the existing scope of water and wastewater infrastructure assistance, and the requested ceiling amount would be increased from \$100 million to \$200 million. This modification will enable USACE to provide engineering design and/or construction assistance to places like Cahokia Heights, East St. Louis, Washington Park and Granite City who are dealing with significant stormwater management and flooding challenges.

The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funded seven inland waterways construction projects. However, IIJA funds will be insufficient to complete any of these critical projects that Congress intended the IIJA fund to completion. Unless modified in WRDA 2024, the disparity between projected costs reflect in IIJA funding levels and subsequent real world project costs threatens to jeopardize and delay critical ongoing and planned capital improvements that are desperately and urgently needed to modernize our nation's antiquated inland waterways transportation system, further delaying economic and environmental benefits. It will also result in the IIJA failing to achieve an accelerated return on investment, which was the intent of Congress in authorizing 100 percent federal funding for these seven projects, which are especially needed given the uncertainty in global agriculture and energy markets.

To that end, consistent with IIJA congressional intent, I request that the Committee adjust funding levels to ensure that the federal government continues to cover 100 percent of the cost of the seven inland waterways construction and major rehabilitation projects.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I look forward to working with you on these important issues. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my staff with any questions or concerns.

Ms. BUDZINSKI. I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Any questions?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Mr. Davis, you are recognized for up to 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. DONALD G. DAVIS, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

Mr. DAVIS OF NORTH CAROLINA. A huge thanks goes out to our distinguished chair from the great State of North Carolina, Mr. Rouzer.

Mr. ROUZER. I have heard of that State.

[Laughter.]

Mr. DAVIS OF NORTH CAROLINA. And to our Ranking Member Napolitano, thank you and all the members of this distinguished committee for allowing me to speak on issues within the Water Resources Development Act that matter to residents of North Carolina's First Congressional District.

Since assuming office last January, one of the top issues voiced by constituents has been the significant impact of flooding throughout eastern North Carolina. This issue underscores the need to develop effective flood risk management and mitigation tools. Addressing these challenges is essential in safeguarding our communities and enhancing the resilience of eastern North Carolina against the detrimental effects of flooding.

Flooding is a reoccurring issue in eastern North Carolina due to frequent hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rainfall. Our region consistently ranks in the top 10 for yearly rainfall, making flood management a pressing concern. Flooding across eastern North Carolina often ruins crop fields, destroys homes, and tears apart roads. Families have had to rebuild their lives time and time again.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been and remains an invaluable ally in combating the water overflows affecting our communities. I express my support for two projects under their administration and oversight in North Carolina's First Congressional District: first, the Tar-Pamlico River Basin Project; and the second, the Princeville, North Carolina, Project. These initiatives play a crucial role in enhancing our resilience and strengthening our region against the challenges posed by water-related issues.

The Tar-Pamlico River Basin Project centers around a specific study area encompassing river reaches along the Tar River and its major tributaries. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommends efforts to elevate or dry flood-proof 160 structures within the 4 major population centers of Greenville, Tarboro, Rocky Mount, and Nashville. This initiative aims to reduce the impact on structures and infrastructure while mitigating the associated life safety risks.

The ongoing Princeville project seeks to mitigate flood risk in Princeville, North Carolina. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prioritizes minimizing damage to structures and infrastructure and reducing the risks to life safety associated with flooding.

Princeville faced frequent and severe flooding until it initiated a levee project in 1967 under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 205 Continuing Authorities Program. The project is rooted in the "design event," referencing back to the historic flood in 1919.

Unfortunately, Hurricanes Floyd in 1999 and Matthew in 2016 surpassed this threshold, resulting in catastrophic flooding for the town and the substantial loss of residences and other structures.

Princeville is essential to the historical roots of eastern North Carolina. It was the first town in the United States founded by formerly enslaved people and was the first independently governed African-American community chartered in the United States. For these reasons, we need to protect Princeville and its residents.

While the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 does not require reauthorizing these projects, it is essential to emphasize their importance in protecting communities across eastern North Carolina.

I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to testify before the committee today on the critical issues impacting my constituents. I look forward to continued partnership with the members of this committee. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

[Mr. Davis of North Carolina's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Donald G. Davis, a Representative in Congress
From the State of North Carolina**

Thank you, Committee Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, Subcommittee Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, and all other Members of this distinguished Committee for allowing me to speak on issues within the Water Resources Development Act that matter to residents of North Carolina's First Congressional District.

Since assuming office last January, one of the top issues voiced by constituents has been the significant impact of flooding throughout eastern North Carolina.

This issue underscores the need to develop effective flood risk management and mitigation tools. Addressing these challenges is essential in safeguarding our communities and enhancing the resilience of eastern North Carolina against the detrimental effects of flooding.

Flooding is a recurring issue in eastern North Carolina due to frequent hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rainfall. Our region consistently ranks in the top ten for yearly rainfall, making flood management a pressing concern.

Flooding across eastern North Carolina often ruins crop fields, destroys homes, and tears apart roads. Families have had to rebuild their lives time and time again.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been, and remains, an invaluable ally in combating the water overflows affecting our East communities. I want to express my support for two projects under their administration and oversight in North Carolina's First Congressional District—the Tar-Pamlico River Basin project and the Princeville, North Carolina project.

These initiatives play a crucial role in enhancing our resilience and strengthening our region against the challenges posed by water-related issues.

The Tar-Pamlico River Basin project centers around a specific study area; encompassing river reaches along the Tar River and its major tributaries. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommends efforts to elevate or dry floodproof 160 structures within the four major population centers of Greenville, Tarboro, Rocky Mount, and Nashville. This initiative aims to reduce the impact on structures and infrastructure while mitigating the associated life safety risks.

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While the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 does not require reauthorizing these projects, it is essential to emphasize their importance in protecting communities across eastern North Carolina.

I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Committee today on the critical issues impacting my constituents. I look forward to continued partnership with the Members of this Committee.

I yield back.

Mr. DAVIS OF NORTH CAROLINA. I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman. Any questions for the gentleman from North Carolina?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Mr. Costa, you are recognized for up to 5 minutes when you are ready.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. JIM COSTA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano. It is always good to be here in the committee with an opportunity to share my thoughts on projects that I think are important to the people of the 21st Congressional District and the San Joaquin Valley.

Holding this hearing obviously gives Members an opportunity to discuss their priorities for the 2024 Water Resources Development Act. As a Member that has been around for a while, I do appreciate the committee sticking to the traditional bipartisan WRDA process and committing to work in a bipartisan manner. The three of us know that that's how you really get things done, and I appreciate that very much.

I want to talk about, obviously, as my fellow colleagues have already spoken on behalf of their districts, the people that I represent in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. We like to say that where water flows, food grows. Therefore, water supply and reliability, the sustainability, especially in light of climate change, is critical, a critical factor to our region's health and economic well-being, but also to put food on America's dinner table every night. We grow half the Nation's fruits and vegetables, 90 percent of the processed tomatoes, 75 percent of the world's almonds, 20 percent of the milk produced in the Nation. The list goes on and on and on.

But projects that were developed in the 20th century, both at the Federal level and State projects combined with local projects, have allowed us to create this incredible cornucopia of food that we rely on. And food, we don't think about it oftentimes, but food is a national security issue. It really is. And to think about this great country, the greatest country in the world, and less than 4 percent of our Nation's population—less than 4 percent—is directly involved in the production of food and fiber. It is an amazing story.

So, these water projects are a key essential foundation to ensuring that water supply. Pine Flat Dam, built in the early 1950s by the Army Corps of Engineers, is one of those examples. This proposal before the committee is to raise Pine Flat Dam. It currently holds, at full capacity, 1 million acre-feet of water. By simply modi-

fyng the flood gates—not raising the dam, but modifying the flood gates—we could increase the capacity over 120,000 acre-feet of additional storage, improving storage management in the face of climate extremes like intense floods and droughts.

It seems to be in California, but other parts of the country, where we have incredible water, rain, snow, more than we can handle, and then extreme periods of drought. We just came, in California and the west coast, with 3 consecutive years of extreme drought. And we prayed and we prayed and we prayed for rain and snow in the mountains. And we must have prayed really good, because last year, we had record amounts of rain and snowfall to the point where we had floods, and that was a challenge.

But on the Colorado River that provides water for a lot of the Western States, the Lake Mead Hoover Dam that we are all familiar with has not been filled since 2000. So, the world has changed. What we thought was 17 million acre-feet of yield on the Colorado River on an average 10-year basis, we are now determining is more like 10 to 12 million acre-feet on a 10-year average, and that has dramatic impact for the upper basin States and lower basin States.

So, additional benefits to increase opportunities when we do have flood levels and above-average rainfall, it allows us to plan to recharge our groundwater, to restore our overdraft aquifers. Representative Napolitano has been very active in southern California and elsewhere, where they have successfully recharged aquifers that have been depleted, and that provides the water for municipal supply as well as for agricultural supply, and we are really beginning to do a much better job, I think, in recharging our groundwater in rural areas than we have in the past.

The feasibility study for raising Pine Flat Dam, to get back to the point, was included in the Corps 2023 Section 7001 Report, and I look forward to continuing to advance this important project through the WRDA process and any other avenues that are available.

As I spoke a moment ago about how climate change is impacted with weather patterns, with extreme droughts or extreme floods, I want to let the committee know that your support in recent years for the forecast-informed reservoir operations effort, otherwise known as FIRO, has been very helpful. Scripps Institute, a noted research and development in the country, has done some tremendous research in forecasting where we get these atmospheric storms to a degree to figure out how to plan for them.

Last year in January, and then subsequently again in March, we had an incredible amount of these atmospheric storms that Scripps has monitored, and others. This has allowed them to use enhanced monitoring and improved weather forecasting to more responsibly operate reservoirs in changing conditions. And that—what we—have to be noted, projects using FIRO and additional flexibility have seen a notable increase in water supply and storage benefits during times of drought. And given these promising results, I think we should expand FIRO for more reservoirs, including Bureau of Reclamation projects around the country.

I mean, I will give you an example. Again in California—my time is expired?

Mr. ROUZER. The gentleman's time is over by almost 2 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. OK, let me just close quickly.

There are a lot of opportunities here, and the environmental infrastructure authorization also I want to note to the committee for Fresno and Tulare Counties to authorize both counties in my district to be included in new geographical areas for eligible environmental infrastructure assistance.

With that, I thank the committee for your patience and for extending me a couple more minutes. God bless you. Happy New Year.

[Mr. Costa's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Jim Costa, a Representative in Congress From the State of California

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for holding this hearing and giving members an opportunity to discuss their priorities for the 2024 Water Resources Development Act.

I appreciate this Committee for sticking to the traditional biennial WRDA process and committing to work in a bipartisan manner.

In California's San Joaquin Valley, we grow the food that feeds the world. We have a saying, "where water flows, food grows." Water supply reliability is a critical factor in our region's health and economic well-being.

The projects managed by the Army Corps, along with the federal Bureau of Reclamation and the State Water Project play an essential role.

PINE FLAT DAM

One of my top priorities with an Army Corps nexus is the proposal to raise Pine Flat Dam. Pine Flat Reservoir's current capacity is one million acre-feet of water. Simply raising Pine Flat Dam by twelve feet would provide over 120,000 acre-feet of additional storage, improving storage management in the face of climate extremes like intense drought and floods.

Additional benefits include increased flood protection, additional groundwater recharge opportunities to restore our over-drafted aquifers, and additional agricultural and municipal water supply for disadvantaged communities.

A feasibility study for raising Pine Flat Dam was included in the Corps 2023 Section 7001 report, and I look forward to continuing to advance this important project through WRDA and other avenues.

EASTMAN LAKE ENLARGEMENT

Similar to Pine Flat, I support efforts to enlarge Eastman Lake, which is located in Madera County. A feasibility study modification was also included for Eastman Lake in the 2023 Section 7001. The proposal would increase the Lake's capacity from 150,000 to 200,000 acre-feet.

This project would provide additional flood control benefits, reduce demand for groundwater, and help meet water demands in the region.

ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR FRESNO AND TULARE COUNTIES

I am seeking to authorize both countries in my district, Fresno and Tulare, as new geographic areas eligible for Environmental Infrastructure assistance.

Environmental Infrastructure assistance is another tool in our water toolbox that our region should be able to access.

As an arid region that experiences wide swings in precipitation and water availability, ranging from extreme droughts to intense storms and flooding, the region needs eligibility to use these authorities to upgrade and modernize our water infrastructure.

This includes efforts to develop projects such as construction of water distribution works, stormwater management, surface water protection, and environmental restoration, that may be necessary for a sustainable water future in the region.

As the Committee continues to draft the 2024 Water Resources Development Act, I look forward to working with you to advance these priorities and achieve our

shared goals of maximizing the beneficial, efficient, and sustainable management of our nation's water resources.

Mr. ROUZER. You are a good man, Jim Costa.
 Any questions for Mr. Costa?
 Seeing none, thank you again.
 Mr. COSTA. Thank you.
 Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Moylan.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. JAMES C. MOYLAN, A DELEGATE IN
 CONGRESS FROM THE TERRITORY OF GUAM**

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee and staff for putting together this Water Resources Development Act, WRDA.

My office has submitted several study proposals across a wide range of issues, and I am truly very excited about the chance to come before you today because I have been told that the Army Corps of Engineers has never completed a WRDA project on Guam. Never. First time.

So, while Guam already has funding authorized, there is money there for potential future projects, there is no relevant study that has been introduced or completed to help clarify where this funding is best directed. So, we have the solution, and wish to let you know our highest priority of the project is to increase the raw water storage capabilities at what is known as the Ugum Surface Water Treatment Plant on Guam. And this is under the Guam Waterworks Authority, who I have been working closely with, and my staff, to identify our number-one project.

The Ugum Surface Water Treatment Plant, in its current state, the plant's capabilities are insufficient during times of drought or in heavy rainfall. Whether dry season or rainy season, it is not working. So, these shortcomings are a result of outdated machinery and a security system that is desperately in need of modernization.

Guam is a long way away from CONUS, and it is far, it is about 3,000 miles away from Hawaii. We are closer to Taiwan than we are to Hawaii. So, building a critical infrastructure on Guam is significantly more expensive and difficult than it is here in the lower 48, due to the tyranny of distance and also the Buy America laws that vastly inflate the already high cost of goods on Guam. So, this means opportunities like WRDA projects are crucial—crucial—for improving critical infrastructure for our island.

We know that Guam's role is a vital part of the United States national security matrix. But what that also means is that the People's Republic of China's sanctioned hackers are looking for every opportunity to infiltrate our critical infrastructure. Water infrastructure is high on the target list. So, in addition to providing basic water needs, this project proposes, if enacted, to increase our water security on the island from natural disasters and malign foreign actors.

So, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and I look forward to working really closely for the delivery of the first WRDA project for Guam, the Ugum Surface Water Treatment plant, as our top priority. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Moylan's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. James C. Moylan, a Delegate in Congress From
the Territory of Guam**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing and all the work you, members of this committee, and your staff are putting in for this term's Water Resources Development Act.

Guam needs help from the US Army Corps of Engineers, my office has submitted several study proposals for a wide range of issues. Increasing the raw water storage capabilities at the Ugu Surface Water Treatment plant, under the Guam Waterworks Authority. In its current state, the plant's capabilities are insufficient during times of drought or heavy rainfall. These shortcomings are caused by many things, but most pressing is the outdated machinery and a security system that is in desperate need of improvements.

This is a hearing to discuss future needs, and I see Guam as a perfect future partner for USACE. US Army Corps staff have informed me that a WRDA project has *never* been conducted in my district, and while Guam already has funding for a potential future project, no relevant studies have been introduced or completed to help clarify where this funding is best directed.

Being 3,000 miles from Hawaii, building critical infrastructure on Guam is significantly more difficult and expensive than it is here in the lower 48 due to the tyranny of distance and Buy American laws that vastly inflate the already high cost of goods. This means that opportunities like WRDA projects are important for improving critical infrastructure on island.

Guam's role as a vital part of the U.S. national security matrix means that Chinese hackers are looking for every opportunity to infiltrate our critical infrastructure, water infrastructure is on that target list. In addition to providing for basic water needs, these project proposals will seek to increase our water security from natural disasters and malign foreign actors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman. Any questions for the gentleman?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Ms. Garcia, you are recognized for up to 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. SYLVIA R. GARCIA, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for having me today again at Member Day. I know I did this last year, and I always look forward to it.

My home city—

Mr. ROUZER [interrupting]. If you don't mind, bring that microphone a little closer to you.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. My home city of Houston sits at the epicenter of global trade. In 2023, it was named the top U.S. city for international business by the Financial Times. That reputation is due in no small part to the continued success of Port Houston, the Nation's busiest deepwater port. Every year, Port Houston has as many ship calls as the next three largest U.S. ports combined, and it accounts for over \$900 billion in national economic value.

In the years since the pandemic, the port has rebounded with explosive growth in trade, both in imports and exports. But the port can't rest on its laurels. To keep the United States competitive in the global supply chain, the port must accept larger and larger vessels, and for that, they are literally going to have to dig deep. Literally.

That is why I am here today, Mr. Chairman. I come to you to request that the committee take up an item with clear bipartisan

support across the Houston region: for the Army Corps to assume maintenance of Project 12.

Project 12 would widen, deepen, and dredge the port so that it may continue to safely accept vessels as they transit along the Buffalo Bayou. Doing so would continue a legacy of cost sharing that has defined the port from the very start. Fun fact, Mr. Chairman: Port Houston was the first port in the Nation to be federally cost-shared with local buy-in, and in the decade since, the port has grown to be a shining example of the benefits such an arrangement can have.

Additionally, to ensure safe transit in this new age of shipping, the port must also look beyond the bayou into the channels of the Galveston Bay, which I hope will be the focus of a new feasibility study to secure an additional 12 feet of draft for larger barges.

These project priorities garner enormous benefits not only for my district, but for the entire Nation. The port is a keystone of American critical infrastructure, and it is quite literally fueling America.

Additionally, we must keep pushing for support of the gulf coast seawall barrier, which folks back home call the Ike dike. Barriers like the Ike dike are lifesaving engineering projects. They protect against the loss of life from a deadly storm surge and the loss of livelihoods from a flood, something that communities in the Houston region know all too well. Hurricane Harvey caused nearly \$125 billion in damages, and before that, Hurricane Ike caused \$38 billion in damages across several States, including Texas.

Studies show similar barrier systems to have a near immediate return on investment. Those are words that are hard to come by in Government. I have seen them firsthand, from New Orleans to the Netherlands.

We must ensure our area has the resources it needs to protect the manufacturing, retail, farming, business, and military supply chains in the Houston and Galveston region. Doing so is important. It is critical not just for our local community, but also for those important sectors in Texas and throughout the country. I urge my colleagues to include these priorities in the passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

I thank this subcommittee and the full committee for their work on these critical issues. And as usual, my office stands ready, together with Port Houston, to answer any questions that you may have. I know the staff will be working with us on a number of them, but, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your time.

[Ms. Garcia of Texas' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Sylvia R. Garcia, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Texas**

Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, thank you for having me back for Member Day!

My home city of Houston sits at the epicenter of global trade. In 2023, it was named the top U.S. city for international business by the Financial Times. That reputation is due, in no small part, to the continued success of Port Houston, the nation's busiest deep-water port.

Every year, Port Houston has as many "ship calls" as the next three largest U.S. ports combined, and it accounts for over \$900 billion in national economic value.

In the years since the pandemic, the port has rebounded with explosive growth in trade—both in imports and exports.

But the port can't rest on their laurels. To keep the United States competitive in the global supply chain, the Port must accept larger and larger vessels. And for that, they're gonna need to dig deep—literally.

That's why I am here today.

I come before you today, to request that the Committee take up an item with clear bipartisan support across the Houston region—for the Army Corps to assume maintenance of Project 12.

This project would widen, deepen, and dredge the port, so that it may continue to safely accept vessels as they transit along the Buffalo Bayou.

Doing so would continue a legacy of cost sharing that has defined the Port from the very start.

Fun fact, Mr. Chairman: Port Houston was the first port in the nation to be federally cost-shared with local buy-in, and in the decades since, the port has grown to be a shining example of the benefits such an agreement can have.

Additionally, to ensure safe transit in this new age of shipping, the port must also look beyond the bayou into the barge channels of Galveston Bay, which I hope will be the focus of a new feasibility study, to secure an additional 12 feet of draft for larger barges.

These project priorities garner enormous benefits, not only for my district, but for the entire nation.

The port is a keystone of American critical infrastructure, as it is quite literally fueling America.

Additionally, we must keep pushing for support of the Gulf Coast's seawall barrier, which many know fondly as the Ike Dike.

Barriers like the Ike Dike are lifesaving engineering projects. They protect against the loss of life from a deadly storm surge and the loss of livelihoods from a flood—something that communities in the Houston region know all too well. Hurricane Harvey caused nearly \$125 billion in damages, and before that, Hurricane Ike caused \$38 billion damages across several states, including Texas.

Studies show similar barrier systems to have a near-immediate return-on-investment. Those are words that are hard to come by in government! I've seen them firsthand, from New Orleans to the Netherlands.

We must ensure our area has the resources it needs to protect the manufacturing, retail, farming, business, and military supply chains in the Houston and Galveston region. Doing so is important, not just for our local community, but also for supporting these important sectors in Texas and throughout the country.

I urge my colleagues to include these priorities in the passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

I thank this subcommittee and the full committee for their work on these critical issues and I would be glad to take any questions.

Mr. ROUZER. Thank you very much.

Any questions for the gentlelady from Texas?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Mr. Pascrell, you are recognized for up to 5 minutes.

Mr. PASCRELL. Chairman Rouzer—

Mr. ROUZER [interrupting]. Bring that microphone up a little bit for you. The microphone, bring it up.

Mr. PASCRELL. Is it on? OK.

Mr. ROUZER. I think so, it is just not close to you. There you go.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

Mr. PASCRELL. I want to thank you, Chairman and Ranking Member, for the opportunity to testify in support of my Water Resources Development Act priorities. When I came to the Congress 25 years ago, this was my first committee. It seems like yesterday.

I submitted detailed written testimony for the record which I will outline today.

I would like to first recognize my New Jersey delegation colleagues, Representative Payne and Representative Menendez, who are fierce advocates for our great State on the full committee.

Flooding is a recurring problem in my State, with severe consequences for communities in the Passaic River Basin. My hometown of Paterson recently declared another state of emergency, and residents were evacuated from heavy rainfall causing the river to overflow the Passaic River. The river is again in flood stage, and it is expected to crest later this afternoon.

I am requesting the committee support a comprehensive study by the Army Corps of Engineers to examine measures to improve flood mitigation, river navigation, and environmental sustainability on the Passaic River.

I can't say enough—and in 25 years that I have been in this Congress—of an agency that has been more responsive than the Army Corps of Engineers. And we have had good fights with each other, but let me tell you, they have done their job, and they have listened within the resources that we provide for them.

Within Paterson Great Falls Park, there is the historic water raceway system. I hope the committee will honor my request for an Army Corps study on how they can help make the raceway system operable. The city of Garfield, across the river from Passaic, has several issues related to the Fleischer's Brook, including flooding, flash flooding, and collapsed water mains. Very dangerous situations. An Army Corps study is needed to assess these flooding risks at Fleischer's Brook.

In the borough of Hasbrouck Heights, the Berry's Creek tributary has been plagued by chronic flooding. I hope that the committee will support my request for a study of Berry's Creek to devise solutions to these issues. During the great storm of 12 years ago, it was a disaster, that whole area.

Additionally, numerous municipalities in northern New Jersey are adversely impacted by flooding in the Lower Saddle Brook Basin area, where there are a number of known contaminated sites. You have all the detailed information I provided for the committee to be a lot more specific. The Lower Saddle River Basin area—and there is a number of known contaminated sites. Saddle River is in its worst flood stage in many years right now. My staff was with the Governor to witness the destruction in Lodi yesterday, and we need to redouble our efforts here.

The Army Corps has the capacity to provide remediation services to address this contamination. I encourage the committee to work with my office to explore ways the Army Corps could perform cleanup, while the non-Federal sponsor remains financially responsible.

Finally, I urge the committee to support the Army Corps and the non-Federal sponsor of the Lower Saddle River Flood Protection Project in identifying component parts of the project that may have longstanding benefits.

I want to thank you for your time—I know it has been a long day, it will be a longer day, I've got to run back to my committee—and consideration of my request. I look forward to working with the committee to ensure that the priorities of New Jersey's Ninth Congressional District are sufficiently addressed.

[Mr. Pascrell's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Bill Pascrell, Jr., a Representative in Congress
From the State of New Jersey**

Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of my Water Resource Development Act priorities. I would also like to recognize my New Jersey delegation colleagues Representatives Payne and Menendez who are fierce advocates for our great state on the full committee.

As a former member of this subcommittee, I have been a strong proponent of the Army Corps of Engineers. They are critical in ensuring that America's infrastructure has the capacity to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and beyond.

Flooding is a recurring problem in my state with severe consequences for communities in the Passaic River Basin. Just last month, my hometown Paterson declared a state of emergency and residents were evacuated from their homes after heavy rainfall caused the river to overflow. I am requesting the Committee support a comprehensive study by the Army Corps of Engineers to examine potential measures to improve flood mitigation, river navigation, and environmental sustainability. This study would explore flood mitigation strategies through vegetation control, dredging and sediment analysis, the potential acquisition of flood-prone properties, and an assessment of the river's carrying capacity.

The Paterson Great Falls was the catalyst of America's Industrial Revolution. Within Paterson Great Falls Park there is the historic water raceway system. The raceways once diverted water from the Passaic River into a series of channels that ran throughout the city, bringing waterpower to the mills. I hope the Committee will honor my request for a needed Army Corps study on how to make the raceway system operable. This would include the impact of removing sedimentation in front of the raceway dam and the upstream flooding conditions to the hydroelectric plant.

The City of Garfield has several issues related to Fleischer's Brook, including flooding, flash flooding, and collapsed water mains. Fleischer's Brook runs through Garfield, and there are several culverts in disrepair that are damaging stormwater and sewer lines. These problems become more acute during rainstorms. An Army Corps study is needed to assess these flooding risks at Fleischer's Brook.

In the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights, the Berry's Creek tributary has been plagued by chronic flooding. Berry's Creek flows through an area close to the city's Department of Public Works facilities, where flooding of the creek has forced the relocation of garbage trucks and other equipment. I hope that the Committee will support my request for a study of Berry's Creek to devise solutions to these issues.

Additionally, numerous municipalities in Northern New Jersey are adversely impacted by flooding that occurs in the lower Saddle River basin area along the Saddle River and Sprout Brook, including the City of Garfield and the Borough of Lodi. The Lower Saddle River Flood Protection Project was authorized in 1986 to study these issues. There are a number of Known Contaminated Sites within the Lower Saddle River project area. Contamination within the project area must be addressed by the non-federal sponsor, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, before any construction can take place. The Army Corps has the capacity to provide remediation services to address the contamination. I encourage the Committee to work with my office and relevant stakeholders to explore ways in which the non-federal sponsor could request that the Army Corps perform the cleanup while the non-federal sponsor remains financially responsible. This would support the efficiency and advancement of the project.

Finally, I encourage the committee to support the Army Corps and the non-federal sponsor of the Lower Saddle River Flood Protection Project in identifying separable component parts of the project that may have stand-alone benefits. Recent flooding along the Lower Saddle River has again demonstrated the need to advance this project and provide flooding relief to my constituents who live in the affected areas.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my requests. I look forward to working with the Committee to ensure that the priorities of New Jersey's Ninth District are sufficiently addressed.

I yield back.

Mr. PASCRELL. And I yield back, Mr. Chairman. If you have any questions, I will gladly answer them.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman, and the chairman will note here that you and I have a lot of similar issues, so, I look forward to working with you to address those.

Any questions for the gentleman?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Garbarino, you are recognized for up to 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ANDREW R. GARBARINO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. GARBARINO. Good afternoon, good morning, whatever it is, Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano. I am here today to respectfully request the inclusion of critical authorization language for my district in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act.

In September of 2023, heavy rainfall brought on by a nor'easter washed away significant sections of the Fire Island shoreline. The result was homes were left extremely close to the water, boardwalks were hanging freely in the air, and emergency vehicles were unable to drive on eroded beaches.

Coastal erosion on Fire Island has been a problem for decades and threatens critical infrastructure as well as private property. Just a few months ago, a power station on Fire Island was so close to the eroded coastline that emergency protective work had to be completed to prevent it from being compromised and falling into the sea. In Seaview, their local utilities are also susceptible to flooding due to beach erosion, which is now threatening water wells.

In addition to serving as home for many of my constituents, Fire Island fulfills an important purpose as a barrier island which protects Long Island from erosion and storms.

The Army Corps of Engineers has determined that the weather event that caused this damage does not meet the requirements under Public Law 84-99 for emergency renourishment. Therefore, instead of engaging in emergency renourishment work, the Army Corps will continue in accordance with the Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point, or FIMP, project schedule. Under this project schedule, renourishment won't take place for a few years. Until then, we are left in limbo with respect to when emergency Federal assistance can be provided between scheduled renourishment periods.

Each passing storm increases the damage to our shoreline. Just this Tuesday, the town of Babylon notified my office that heavy rainfall had eroded their local beaches so badly that a playground and a pavilion structure were close to being compromised. The day after, I was notified the playground is now unusable and in the sea, and the water has made its way to the pavilion structure. Timely renourishment is necessary to prevent further deterioration.

Our communities in Massapequa are similarly threatened by erosion. In the last 2 years, the town of Oyster Bay has spent over \$3 million to purchase sand and rebuild Tobay Beach. Without this investment, Tobay would have been compromised, as well.

The longer we leave these problems unchecked, the greater the probability that Long Island will require increased support for infrastructure resiliency projects. If we can address this problem

quickly, we can avoid having to address even greater damage in the future.

To address this issue, I will be submitting proposed authorization language that will allow renourishment to occur following nor'easters affecting the Fire Island National Seashore and neighboring hamlets in between scheduled periods. My submission is based off a similar authorization that was included in the 2022 Water Resources Development Act for the State of Delaware.

The current situation on Fire Island has highlighted the need to create a mechanism for permitting supplemental work outside the typical FIMP renourishment windows, should similar damage occur in the future. It is my hope that this year's WRDA can provide Long Island and Fire Island residents with the assistance they so desperately require. Thank you for the opportunity to highlight this incredibly important issue.

[Mr. Garbarino's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Andrew R. Garbarino, a Representative in
Congress From the State of New York**

Good afternoon Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano,

I am here today to respectfully request the inclusion of critical authorization language for my district in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act.

In September of 2023, heavy rainfall brought on by a nor'easter washed away significant sections of the Fire Island shoreline. The result was homes left precariously close to the water, boardwalks hanging freely in the air, and emergency vehicles being unable to traverse the eroded beaches. Coastal erosion on Fire Island has been a problem for decades and threatens critical infrastructure as well as private property. Just a few months ago, a power station on Fire Island was so close to the eroded coastline that emergency protective work had to be completed to prevent it from being compromised. In Seaview, their local utilities are also susceptible to flooding due to beach erosion, which is now threatening water wells.

In addition to serving as home for many of my constituents, Fire Island fulfills an important purpose as a barrier island which protects Long Island from erosion and storms.

The Army Corps of Engineers has determined that the weather event that caused this damage does not meet the requirements under Pub. L. 84-99 for emergency renourishment. Therefore, instead of engaging in emergency renourishment work, Army Corps will continue in accordance with the Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point (FIMP) project schedule. With project renourishment set to take place every few years, we are left in limbo with respect to when that federal assistance can be provided between scheduled renourishment periods.

Each passing storm increases the damage to our shoreline. Just this Tuesday, the Town of Babylon notified my office that heavy rainfall had eroded their local beaches so badly that a playground and pavilion structure were close to being compromised. The day after, I was notified the playground is now unusable and the water has made its way to the pavilion structure. Timely renourishment is necessary to prevent further deterioration. Our communities in Massapequa are similarly threatened by erosion. In the last two years, the Town of Oyster Bay has spent over \$3 million to purchase sand and rebuild Tobay Beach. Without this investment, Tobay would have been compromised as well.

The longer we leave these problems unchecked, the greater the probability that Long Island will require increased support for infrastructure resiliency projects. If we can address this problem quickly, we can avoid having to address even greater damage in the future.

To address this issue, I will be submitting proposed authorization language that would allow renourishment to occur following nor'easters affecting the Fire Island National Seashore and neighboring hamlets in between scheduled periods. My submission is based off a similar authorization that was included in the 2022 Water Resources Development Act for the State of Delaware.

The current situation on Fire Island has highlighted the need to create a mechanism for permitting supplemental work outside of the typical FIMP renourishment windows should similar damage occur in the future.

It is my hope that this year's WRDA can provide Long Island residents with the assistance they so desperately require. Thank you for the opportunity to highlight this incredibly important issue.

Mr. GARBARINO. I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentleman for his testimony. Any questions for the gentleman?

Seeing none, thank you again.

Mr. GARBARINO. Thank you.

Mr. ROUZER. Ms. Lee, you are recognized for up to 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. SUSIE LEE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEVADA**

Ms. LEE OF NEVADA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member Napolitano, for holding today's hearing and for this opportunity to highlight three top priorities for Nevada's Third Congressional District as you continue to craft the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

No one knows better than a Nevadan just how precious our Nation's water resources truly are, especially in southern Nevada, where we get about 90 percent of our water from the Colorado River. For the community of Laughlin specifically, located in the rural, most southern part of my district, that number jumps to 100 percent.

Laughlin's water treatment and delivery system is the only such system managed by the Las Vegas Valley Water District that both lacks a secondary water source and lags in water storage capacity. This would already be concerning enough, if not compounded by the fact that Laughlin, like many communities in the Southwest, continues to have to contend with the effects of the worst drought in at least 1,200 years.

My first request is for authorizing urgent environmental infrastructure assistance for Laughlin's water system in the WRDA 2024 to facilitate the construction of additional storage tanks to ensure adequate reserves, fire flow, and system redundancy, as well as the construction of a new groundwater well to provide a secondary source for the Laughlin community to be able to meet emergency water needs.

I am also asking that this year's WRDA bill include my legislation to raise the funding cap on the Las Vegas Wash system. The Las Vegas Wash is the primary drainage channel for the Las Vegas Valley watershed, carrying about 200 million gallons of water to Lake Mead every single day, a key resource that makes it possible for southern Nevada to recycle nearly every drop of water that goes down our drains.

The federally backed Las Vegas Wash Program has been essential to protecting and enhancing the wash by supporting erosion control efforts, as well as biological and other restoration activities. Originally authorized more than two decades ago in WRDA 2000, raising the program's funding cap in WRDA 2024 will ensure that vital Federal assistance for the wash can continue.

And finally, I am pleased to join Ranking Member Napolitano in seeking to elevate water supply and water conservation to primary mission areas in the U.S. Corps of Engineers. For too long, these priorities, which only grow more pressing for southern Nevada with each passing day, have been regarded as ancillary or secondary to other responsibilities of the Corps such as navigation and flood control.

Requiring the Corps to give water supply and conservation equal priority moving forward will strengthen numerous initiatives that stand to benefit Nevada, the West, and the country as a whole, including measures to promote the use of innovative technologies and practices such as forecast-informed reservoir operations and managed aquifer recovery to maximize the availability of water supply opportunities and the development of drought contingency plans for communities served by the Corps water supply projects.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Napolitano, for the opportunity to appear today on this critical legislation.

[Ms. Lee of Nevada's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Susie Lee, a Representative in Congress From
the State of Nevada**

Thank you, Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano, for holding today's hearing—and for this opportunity to highlight the three top priorities for Nevada's 3rd Congressional District as you continue to craft the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

No one knows better than a Nevadan just how precious our nation's water resources truly are—especially in Southern Nevada, where we get about 90 percent of our water from the Colorado River. For the community of Laughlin specifically—located in the rural, southernmost portion of my district—that number jumps to 100 percent.

Laughlin's water treatment and delivery system is the only such system managed by the Las Vegas Valley Water District that both lacks a secondary water source *and* lags in water storage capacity. This would already be concerning enough if not compounded by the fact that Laughlin, like many communities in the Southwest, continues to have to contend with the effects of the worst drought in at least 1,200 years.

My first request is for authorizing urgent environmental infrastructure assistance for Laughlin's water system in WRDA 2024 to facilitate the construction of additional storage tanks to ensure adequate reserves, fire flow, and system redundancy—as well as the construction of a new groundwater well to provide a secondary source for the Laughlin community to be able to meet emergency water needs.

I am also asking that this year's WRDA bill include my legislation to raise the funding cap of the Las Vegas Wash program.

The Las Vegas Wash is the primary drainage channel for the Las Vegas Valley watershed, carrying around 200 million gallons of water to Lake Mead daily—a key resource that makes it possible for Southern Nevada to recycle nearly every drop of water that goes down our drains.

The federally backed Las Vegas Wash program has been essential to protecting and enhancing the Wash by supporting erosion control efforts as well as biological and other restoration activities. Originally authorized more than two decades ago in WRDA 2000, raising the program's funding cap in WRDA 2024 will ensure that that vital federal assistance for the Wash can continue.

Finally, I am pleased to join Ranking Member Napolitano in seeking to elevate water supply and water conservation to primary mission areas of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For too long, these priorities—which only grow more pressing for Southern Nevada with each passing day—have been regarded as ancillary or secondary to other responsibilities of the Corps, such as navigation and flood control.

Requiring the Corps to give water supply and water conservation equal priority moving forward will strengthen numerous initiatives that stand to benefit Nevada, the West, and the nation as a whole, including:

- Measures to promote the use of innovative technologies and practices—such as forecast-informed reservoir operations and managed aquifer recovery—to maximize the availability of water supply opportunities; and
- The development of drought contingency plans for communities served by Corps water supply projects.

Thank you again to the Chairman and Ranking Member for the opportunity to appear today to speak on this critical legislation. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LEE OF NEVADA. And with that, I yield the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentlelady. Are there any questions or comments?

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. No questions, but just a comment, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mrs. Lee, for supporting that mission that we have asked the Corps to take on, and we hope more Members come aboard because it is something that is really necessary for the whole country. Thank you.

Ms. LEE OF NEVADA. I will be carrying the torch in your absence. Thank you.

Mr. ROUZER. We thank the gentlelady.

Ms. Schultz, you are recognized for up to 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano. I appreciate the opportunity to have this chance to share how vital the Water Resources Development Act is to America's communities, and especially for Floridians.

The Army Corps of Engineers has major ongoing projects throughout south Florida, from restoring the Everglades and investing in our ports, to fighting rising seas by nourishing beaches and managing flood risk. Obviously, the Corps' work is vital to Florida on many urgent fronts.

The first item I want to bring to the committee's attention is the Western Everglades Restoration Project. Within the boundaries of the Western Everglades is reservation land that is home to the Miccosukee and Seminole Tribe of Florida. You will also find Big Cypress National Preserve and a portion of Everglades National Park there. With this watershed providing 40 percent of the water flowing into Everglades National Park and Florida Bay, it is crucial to authorize the construction of this project in WRDA.

To meet the Biden administration's ambitious goals for reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, it is imperative that we adopt a comprehensive approach. One effective lever within reach is the optimization of fuel efficiency in the Corps' existing vehicle fleet. And we don't need to invest billions in new boats and vessels to achieve this.

By incorporating real-time emissions measurements and recommending operational and technical efficiency improvements, we can achieve substantial cost savings for American taxpayers while also contributing to environmental conservation. I propose that we include language in this WRDA encouraging the Corps to consider investing in this new technology and to brief Congress on potential opportunities to leverage this technology in the future.

Next, I want to highlight that the Corps recently implemented new shore protection policy guidelines. The beach renourishment work the Corps performs along our Nation's coastlines is invaluable to our local communities, especially in south Florida. A wide, nourished beach system absorbs wave energy, protects upland areas from flooding, and mitigates erosion.

Before the Corps performs work, they need easements from adjacent landowners. That makes sense; we don't want to strip landowners of their property rights. But the Corps changed their policy and now requires non-Federal sponsors to acquire perpetual construction easements from 100 percent—100 percent—of the upland owners within a project footprint. This is a different interpretation than was used in the past 20 to 30 years, and it has placed a number of projects in Broward County and around the country at risk because getting these easements can be difficult.

I ask the committee to work with the Corps on finding a solution moving forward that works for everyone, because we cannot let these important projects stall and fail. The Corps' current interpretation of congressional intent is not accurate and was not the interpretation they used for decades. We cannot bring vital beach renourishment to a screeching halt.

The last issue I want to bring to the committee's attention is Everglades restoration work performed by the Corps. I ask the committee to include language authorizing the Corps to continue to use and implement the incremental funding clause for large CERP projects like the EAA Reservoir. Using incremental funding demonstrably reduces project delivery timelines and costs, saving American taxpayer dollars while also preserving America's Everglades.

Additionally, I ask the committee to direct the Corps to provide a report to Congress on the modifications that were made to the design of the EAA Reservoir, including the depth and size of the reservoir and why such modifications were necessary.

I appreciate the work you put into this legislation, and that you give Members an opportunity to provide input and feedback in advance of the development of the WRDA bill, and I look forward to helping you pass this bill yet again this year. Thank you both so much.

[Ms. Wasserman Schultz's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, a Representative
in Congress From the State of Florida**

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for this chance to share how vital the Water Resources Development Act is to America's communities, and especially for Floridians.

The Army Corps of Engineers has major ongoing projects throughout South Florida, from restoring the Everglades and investing in our ports, to fighting rising seas by nourishing beaches and managing flood risk. Obviously, the Corps' work is vital in Florida, on many urgent fronts.

REAL TIME EMISSIONS MONITORING

To meet the Biden Administration's ambitious goals for reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, it is imperative that we adopt a comprehensive approach.

One effective lever within reach is the optimization of fuel efficiency in the Corps' existing vehicle fleet.

And we don't need to invest billions in new boats and vessels to achieve this.

By incorporating real-time emissions' measurements, and recommending operational and technical efficiency improvements, we can achieve substantial cost savings for American taxpayers, while also contributing to environmental conservation.

I propose that we include language in this WRDA encouraging the Corps to consider investing in this new technology and to brief Congress on potential opportunities to leverage this technology in the future.

WESTERN EVERGLADES RESTORATION PROJECT

The second topic I want to bring to the Committee's attention is the Western Everglades Restoration Project.

Within the boundaries of the Western Everglades is Reservation land that is home to the Miccosukee and Seminole Tribe of Florida.

You'll also find Big Cypress National Preserve and a portion of Everglades National Park there.

With this watershed providing 40 percent of the water flowing into Everglades National Park and Florida Bay, it is crucial to authorize the construction of this project in the water resources bill.

BEACH RENOURISHMENT

Next, I want to highlight that the Corps recently implemented new shore protection policy guidelines.

The beach renourishment work the Corps performs along our nations coastlines is invaluable to our local communities, especially in South Florida.

A wide, nourished beach system absorbs wave energy, protects upland areas from flooding, and mitigates erosion.

Before the Corps performs work, they need easements from adjacent landowners. That makes sense. We don't want to strip landowners of their property rights.

But the Corps changed their policy and now requires non-federal sponsors to acquire perpetual construction easements from 100% of the upland owners within a project footprint.

This is a different interpretation than was used in the past and it has placed a number of projects in Broward County at risk, because getting these easements can be difficult.

I ask the Committee to work with the Corps on finding a solution moving forward that works for everyone, because we cannot let these important projects stall and fail.

EVERGLADES RESTORATION

The last issue I want to bring to the Committee's attention is Everglades restoration work performed by the Corps.

I ask the Committee to include language authorizing the Corps to continue to use and implement the Incremental Funding Clause for large CERP projects like the EAA Reservoir.

Using incremental funding demonstrably reduces project delivery timelines and costs—saving American taxpayer dollars, while also preserving America's Everglades.

I also ask the Committee to direct the Corps to provide a report to Congress on the modifications that were made to the design of the EAA Reservoir, including the depth and size of the reservoir.

CLOSING

I appreciate the work you put into this legislation and look forward to helping you pass the bill this year.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I yield back.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank the gentlelady for her testimony. Any questions?

Seeing none, thank you again.

One item of housekeeping. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record all written Member testimony that was properly provided to the subcommittee in advance of this hearing, in accordance with committee rules.

Without objection, so ordered.

The committee will stand in recess until 1 o'clock.

[Recess.]

Mr. JAMES [presiding]. Good afternoon. This subcommittee meeting will now come back to order. The Chair now recognizes Representative Mary Miller.

You have 5 minutes when you turn your mic on.

Mrs. MILLER OF ILLINOIS. OK, thank you.

Mr. JAMES. Thank you.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. MARY E. MILLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS**

Mrs. MILLER OF ILLINOIS. Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Illinois' 15th Congressional District. I am here today to speak in support of my bill, H.R. 5722, the Upper Mississippi River Levee Safety Act, which I strongly urge the committee to consider in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

Levees along the upper Mississippi River protect countless homes and thousands of acres of farmland from flooding. They are essential to residents, farmers, and business owners who live and work along the upper Mississippi. This legislation would give local levee districts along the upper Mississippi River more flexibility to maintain their systems and allow them to better prepare for future flooding by addressing the Federal regulatory challenges that make levee maintenance and improvements difficult.

This bill directs the Army Corps of Engineers to issue more frequent design standard updates, which will help levee districts better respond to changing rain and flood patterns. This complements the investments already made by Congress and affirms congressional intent in how the Army Corps regulates levee operators along the upper Mississippi River.

I am pleased to be joined on this bill on a bipartisan basis by several of my colleagues in the Illinois delegation and on this committee. This legislation has the support of regional stakeholders, including the Upper Mississippi, Illinois, and Missouri Rivers Association; the Illinois Farm Bureau; and Corn Belt Ports; as well as local leaders in my district.

Again, I thank you for your consideration and the chance to speak here today. I urge the committee to give this measure strong consideration as it works to draft WRDA 2024, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to address these issues, which are critically important to Illinois and every State in the upper Mississippi region. Thank you.

[Mrs. Miller of Illinois' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Mary E. Miller, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Illinois**

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen: thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Illinois' 15th District.

I am here today to speak in support of my bill: H.R. 5722—The Upper Mississippi River Levee Safety Act, which I strongly urge the Committee to include in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

Levees along the Upper Mississippi River protect countless homes and thousands of acres of farmland from flooding. They are essential to residents, farmers, and business owners who live and work along the Upper Mississippi.

This legislation would give local levee districts along the Upper Mississippi River more flexibility to maintain their systems and allow them to better prepare for future floods by addressing the federal regulatory challenges that make levee maintenance and improvements difficult.

This bill directs the US Army Corps of Engineers to issue more frequent design standard updates, which will help levee districts better respond to changing rain and flood patterns. This complements the investment that Congress has already supported through NESP and affirms Congressional intent in how the Army Corps regulates levee operators along the Upper Mississippi River.

I am pleased to be joined on this bill on a bipartisan basis by several of my colleagues in the Illinois delegation, and on this Committee. This legislation has the support of regional stakeholders, including the Upper Mississippi, Illinois & Missouri Rivers Association, the Illinois Farm Bureau, and Corn Belt Ports, as well as local leaders in my district.

Again, I thank you for your consideration and the chance to speak here today. I urge the Committee to give this measure strong consideration as it works to draft WRDA 2024 and look forward to working with my colleagues to address these issues, which are critically important to Illinois, and every other state in the Upper Mississippi region. Thank you.

Mr. JAMES. Thank you, Mrs. Miller.

Do any members of our committee wish to offer any questions for our witness?

The answer being no, Madam, you are dismissed.

Mrs. MILLER OF ILLINOIS. Thank you.

Mr. JAMES. The chairman now recognizes Representative Rick Allen for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. RICK W. ALLEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA**

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Chairman James and Ranking Member Larsen, for the opportunity to provide this testimony and highlight priorities for the Water Resources Development Act that are critical to the 12th Congressional District of Georgia—namely, the consistent issues we have experienced with the Corps of Engineers regarding the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam, or, in short, lock and dam.

Many of you probably recall that I have testified before this committee in years past multiple times, which should also underscore the importance of the lock and dam to the residents of my district and the city of Augusta.

I want to thank Congressman Mike Collins for raising this issue in the T&I hearing in June with the Corps of Engineers. I would also like to thank Congressman Hank Johnson for being a willing partner on this issue in the past, as well.

Due to environmental mitigation from the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project, or SHEP, the Corps is responsible for constructing a mitigation feature that would allow sturgeon and other endangered fish to access new spawning grounds. Dating back to the 1930s, the Savannah Lock and Dam was originally authorized for navigation purposes. But after it was no longer used for commercial navigation, many of the Central Savannah River Area's largest job creators and municipalities continue to draw from the pool that the lock and dam was designed to maintain.

In the 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation, or WIIN Act, the language required the fish passage structure to maintain the pool for navigation, water supply, and recreational activities, as in existence on the date of enactment of this act. The Corps selected a rock weir as an alternative to replace the lock and dam, which I strongly opposed, as it would drop the pool level far below the needs of the community. Lowering the pool does not meet the requirements in the WIIN Act and is unacceptable, in addition to possible flooding—definitely flooding—downstream.

In a disastrous simulation carried out by the Corps, we saw firsthand the dreadful impacts of the lower water level that would result from the installation of a rock weir. We saw marooned boats and docks on the ground, to excess debris, mudflats, the riverbanks caving in, and these businesses not able to draw the water they need, and the cities not able to draw the water they need to manufacture their products and to provide for their citizens.

To my relief, the United States District Court of South Carolina ruled against the Corps' proposed plan to remove the lock and dam in favor of the rock weir. However, the appeals court remanded the case back to the district court for further action, placing us back in legal limbo. So, we have to do this legislatively.

Throughout this tenuous process, Congressman Joe Wilson and I have worked closely with local community leaders and stakeholders who have all agreed that maintaining the water level of the pool above the lock and dam is critical, so our water users are not affected. The cities of Augusta and North Augusta, as well as Richmond and Aiken Counties, have come together supporting resolutions to protect the lock and dam and maintain the pool at the level of 114.5 feet.

If the committee takes anything away from my testimony today, it should be this: the Corps is not in compliance with the WIIN Act law by choosing an alternative that does not maintain the pool at the 114.5 foot level, as it was in December of 2016 when the law was enacted, despite repeated bicameral reiterations of congressional intent. I urge the committee to work with me to include language that will repair and maintain the lock and dam and keep the pool level that our community desperately needs, while still accommodating a fish passage required by SHEP.

I would also like to flag for the committee another WRDA priority of mine. I am seeking a new feasibility study authorization or a modification to an existing study authorization to examine the benefit of further widening and deepening the harbor of the Port of Savannah to better accommodate today's commercial demands and to prepare for meeting tomorrow's trade needs.

Thank you again to the committee for holding this Member Day, and I look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.

[Mr. Allen's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Rick W. Allen, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Georgia**

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for the opportunity to provide this testimony and highlight water issues that are critical to the 12th District of Georgia, namely the consistent issues we have experienced with the

Corps of Engineers regarding the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam, or in short, the Lock and Dam. I'd also like to thank my colleague from Georgia, Representative Collins, for raising this issue with the Committee.

Many of you may recall that I have testified before this committee in years past on this very issue, which should only underscore the importance of the Lock and Dam to the residents of my district.

I want to thank Congressman Mike Collins for raising this issue in a T&I hearing in June, with the Corps of Engineers, and would also like to thank Congressman Hank Johnson for being a willing partner on this issue in the past, too.

Due to environmental mitigation from the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project, or SHEP, the Corps is responsible for constructing a mitigation feature that would allow sturgeon and other endangered fish to access their historic spawning grounds above the Lock and Dam near Augusta, Georgia.

Dating back to the 1930s, the dam was originally authorized for navigation purposes, but after it was no longer used for commercial navigation, many of the Central Savannah River Area's largest job creators and municipalities draw from the pool that the Lock and Dam has created.

In the 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation, or WIIN, Act, the language required the fish passage structure to "maintain the pool for navigation, water supply, and recreational activities, as in existence on the date of enactment of this Act" for either a "repair of the lock wall of the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam and modification of the structure" or "removal of the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam on completion of construction of the [fish passage] structure."

The Corps selected a rock weir as an alternative to replace the Lock and Dam, which I strongly opposed as it would drop the pool level far below the needs of the community. Lowering the pool does not meet the requirements outlined in the WIIN Act and is unacceptable.

Additionally, in a disastrous simulation carried out by the Corps, we saw firsthand the dreadful impacts of the lower water level that would result from the installation of a rock weir. From marooned boats and docks to excess debris and mudflats exposed throughout the river, the Corps was forced to abandon the simulation due to instability on the riverbank.

To my relief, the United States District Court of South Carolina later ruled against the Corps' proposed plan to remove the Lock and Dam in favor of the rock weir. However, the appeals court remanded the case back to the district court for further action, placing us back in legal limbo.

Throughout this tenuous process, Congressman Joe Wilson and I have worked closely with local community leaders and stakeholders who have all agreed that maintaining the water level of the pool above the Lock and Dam is critical, so our water users are not affected. The Cities of Augusta and North Augusta, as well as Richmond and Aiken Counties, have come together supporting resolutions to protect the Lock and Dam and maintain the pool at the level of 114.5 feet.

If the committee takes anything away from my testimony today it should be this: the Corps is not in compliance with the WIIN Act law by choosing an alternative that does not maintain the pool at the 114.5 level as it was in December of 2016 when the law was enacted, despite repeated bicameral reiterations of Congressional intent.

I urge the committee to work with me to include language that will repair and maintain the Lock and Dam and keep the pool level that our community needs, while still accommodating the modest fish passage required by SHEP.

I would also like to flag for the committee a WRDA priority of mine. I am seeking a new feasibility study authorization or modification to an existing study authorization to examine the benefit of both widening and deepening the harbor at the Port of Savannah to better accommodate today's commercial demands and to prepare for meeting tomorrow's trade needs.

Thank you again to the committee for holding this member day and I look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.

Mr. JAMES. Thank you, Mr. Allen.

Do any members of our committee have any questions for our witness?

Hearing none, thank you, sir. You are dismissed. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Soto.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. DARREN SOTO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Mr. SOTO. Thank you, Chairman James and Ranking Member Napolitano, for the opportunity to talk about our WRDA projects this year. I bring you greetings from central Florida, the home of the northern Everglades.

As many people may know, the Everglades starts all the way in Orange County and flows through the Shingle Creek, through the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, down through Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee, and then forms the national park that we all know, love, and endear. And this is a critical area for water quality, for agriculture, wildlife corridors, recreation, and navigation.

The first project I would like to brief you on is the Northern Lake Tohopekaliga Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Project. This is part of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, and it is there to improve flood storage, and reduce nutrient and sediment flow into the upper Kissimmee Basin and the Lake Okeechobee watershed.

And I would be remiss if I did not mention in Hurricane Irma and in Hurricane Ian, we saw these water systems tested to the limit and then some, with flooding affecting many neighborhoods throughout central Florida. And as we see hurricanes getting more intense, it's very important that we continue to keep these water systems up to the capacity that they need to protect so many central Florida residents.

The area is also home to the Kissimmee River, which was the largest river restoration in the history of the world, a bipartisan \$1 billion project to restore the Kissimmee River to make sure water is clean going into the southern Everglades region.

The second project is the Sediment and Debris Management Program and Feasibility Study for East Lake Tohopekaliga, Boggy Creek, and its tributaries to improve water flows and reduce flooding, and help with sediment and debris management also in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes part of this area.

The third is a request through the Central Florida Water Initiative, which is a bipartisan initiative for water supply in central Florida to create alternative water supply projects. This one includes the St. Johns River/Taylor Creek Reservoir Alternative Water Supply Project to increase local water supply beyond what is currently available through permitted groundwater. Right now we get most of our water through the aquifer, but we need to establish more reservoirs. The beauty is, this reservoir was already made eligible for water storage in past WRDA bills, and now this would be about expanding this reservoir to help out, particularly, agriculture and central Florida homes.

The reservoir is the foundation for developing subsequent phases of the project such as the treatment plant. It also would serve central Florida residents in Brevard, Orange, and Osceola Counties, where I and Representative Bill Posey represent. And it is part of the regional partnership to supply up to 54 million gallons per day in annual average daily flow of treated surface water for public supply.

The next project is Lake Conway, which is north of East Lake Toho and connects through Boggy Creek, and is just north of the Orlando International Airport, one of the biggest airports in the

Nation. This would be for debris removal and environmental restoration including water quality improvement. We saw during Hurricane Ian that Lake Conway flooded and East Lake Toho flooded, and we literally had to hold water in Lake Conway for days to make sure we didn't have even worse flooding. And so, all these systems, as you see throughout many of these water systems in the Nation, are all interconnected.

And lastly, to expand the Regional Sediment Management Program. We can navigate all the way to the ocean and beyond through the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, through the Kissimmee River and out Lake Okeechobee. And so, making sure that we could help both the waterways, as well as use this sand that they pull out for navigation for beach renourishment in Florida and other areas, we can make this work in multiple ways.

So, thank you, Chairman James. Thank you, Ranking Member Napolitano, for your time today. I really appreciate it.

[Mr. Soto's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Darren Soto, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Florida**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for allowing me to testify before the Committee about my priorities for the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

Among the requests I am making is to expand and build upon the Army Corp of Engineers' existing authority to create a Florida-specific program that removes sedimentary shoals in Florida waterways and relocates the pristine sand from the shoals to renourish sandy beaches along the Florida coast. Additionally, I request making Osceola County's chain of lakes, rivers, and tributaries be a priority for this program.

In terms of projects, I request the authorization of a feasibility study for East Lake Tohopekaliga, Boggy Creek, and their connected tributaries for sediment and debris management. My environmental infrastructure requests include:

- The Northern Lake Tohopekaliga Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Project, which would allow for flood storage and reduction of nutrient and sediment flow to the Upper Kissimmee Basin of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed.
- The Historic Whitted Neighborhood Sewer Connection, which would connect to the City of St. Cloud's sewer system and provide safe and reliable wastewater disposal to approximately 52 residents within the historic African American Whitted Neighborhood located in the Narcoossee area of Osceola County, FL.
- Creation of a Sediment and Debris Management program for East Lake Tohopekaliga, Boggy Creek, and Tributaries to improve flood conveyance. Natural sediment flows through East Lake Tohopekaliga are restricted by controlled water flows resulting in navigational impairments, reduction of surface area in the lake for recreation and crucial littoral habitat, increased flood stages upstream, and increased nuisance vegetation.
- The St. Johns River/Taylor Creek Reservoir (TCR) Alternative Water Supply Project, which aims to meet future water supply demands beyond permitted groundwater supplies, serving Central Florida residents in portions of Brevard County, Orange County, and Osceola County. This reservoir/levee construction is the foundation for developing subsequent phases of the project, including transmission mains, pumping, and a treatment plant.
- Alternative water supply projects in the Central Florida Water Initiative area that provide regional benefits to Toho Water Authority and its member governments and Orange County Utilities. The project is in eastern Orange and Osceola Counties and is being implemented as a regional partnership between Orange County, Orlando Utilities Commission, City of Cocoa, East Central Florida Services, and Toho Water Authority to supply up to 54 million gallons per day (MGD) annual average daily flow of treated surface water for public supply.

- Lake Conway environmental restoration, flood control, and debris removal, including water quality improvement, to mitigate future flooding and clear the lake of existing invasive species such as hydrilla.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Larsen, I look forward to working with you to advance my priorities in this bill and I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you and I yield back.

Mr. JAMES. Thank you, Representative Soto.

Do any members of our committee have any questions for our witness?

Thank you. Hearing none, sir, you are dismissed.

Representative Bobby Scott, your time is 5 minutes, sir.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Mr. SCOTT OF VIRGINIA. Thank you, Chairman James, Ranking Member Napolitano, and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the priorities of Virginia's Third Congressional District in the upcoming Water Resources Development Act.

I represent Virginia's Third Congressional District, where the Chesapeake Bay meets the James and Elizabeth Rivers, and where water represents both challenges and opportunities. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers works to keep America's waterways and ports open to trade while working with communities across Hampton Roads to ensure that we can continue to live with the water surrounding us and shaping many aspects of our lives.

In my home district is the Port of Virginia, which is one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard. With 95 percent of our Nation's trade moving by water, it is essential that the port, which is the third largest container port in the country and supports nearly 1.3 million jobs nationally, is able to maintain operations.

The Third Congressional District is also home to multiple shipyards and the Norfolk Naval Station, the largest naval base in the world. These waterways are essential to our communities' continued prosperity as well as our national security.

It is also critical to our financial well-being that we ensure that the Port of Virginia is able to handle an increased number and size of container vehicles. The port and the Army Corps of Engineers have undertaken the dredging, widening, and deepening of the Norfolk Harbor and channels to ensure safe and efficient two-way passage for the new, larger containerships.

And I would like to take a moment to thank the members of the committee for their work with the Port of Virginia which allowed it to continue operations, especially at a time when shipping delays plagued many other ports across the country.

As the committee begins its drafting of the 2024 Water Resources Development Act, I respectfully request that the committee include a modification of the Norfolk Harbor and Channels Navigation Project to include the deepening of Anchorage F. This modification is consistent with the recommendations of the Army Corps of Engineers and will ensure that the port's reliability and efficacy is not interrupted.

My district is also the home of the city of Norfolk, which has been a leader in ensuring that the city can manage the surrounding rising water and is already serving as an example to other municipalities working to adapt to climate change. Unfortunately, due to climate-driven sea level rise compounded by historic land subsidence in the region, inundation from these waterways poses a serious risk. High tides, nor'easters, and hurricanes exacerbate the risk of flooding in the city of Norfolk and around the region. As the home of the Norfolk Naval Station and numerous other Federal and military facilities, this recurrent flooding poses a national security risk.

And I would like to again thank the committee for moving the Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management Project forward, as well as the Virginia Peninsula Flood Study.

State and local officials in Virginia already appreciate the significant threat of sea level rise. Unfortunately, the cost of proactively and aggressively addressing this problem head-on is far too great for the city to bear by itself, and we need continued support from the Federal Government. To that end, I am requesting that the committee add the city of Norfolk to the Temporary Relocation Assistance Pilot Program due to the ongoing Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management Project. This would allow Norfolk to join other communities in extending temporary relocation assistance to those who are impacted by the nonstructural program of the Norfolk project. These nonstructural adaptations are to individual buildings in communities that are vulnerable to flood risk.

And finally, I request that the committee include language authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers to include Federal lands in their coastal resiliency studies. As I have mentioned earlier, Hampton Roads is surrounded by water and home to numerous Federal facilities and military infrastructure, and these areas would be included in these studies. Our area, our region is a perfect example of why comprehensively studying flooding is essential, and how we can only resolve the coastal resilience puzzle when we are able to consider all of the pieces. We have to include all of them, including the Federal agencies.

So, Chairman and Ranking Member, thank you for the opportunity to share my priorities for the forthcoming Water Resources Development Act of 2024, and I look forward to working with you as we continue this critical work. Thank you.

[Mr. Scott of Virginia's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, a Representative in
Congress From the Commonwealth of Virginia**

Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the priorities of Virginia's third district in the upcoming Water Resources Development (WRDA) Act.

I represent the 3rd congressional district of Virginia where the Chesapeake Bay meets the James and Elizabeth Rivers, and where water presents both challenges and opportunities. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work to keep America's waterways and ports open to trade, while working with communities across Hampton Roads to ensure that we can continue to live with the water that surrounds us and shapes many aspects of our lives.

My district is home to the Port of Virginia which is one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard. With 95 percent of our nation's trade moving by water, it is essential that the port, which is the third largest container port in the country and supports nearly 1.3 million jobs nationally, is able to maintain operations. The 3rd district is also home to multiple shipyards and Naval Station Norfolk, the largest naval base in the world. These waterways are essential to our communities' continued prosperity as well as our national security.

It is also critical to our financial well-being that we ensure that the Port of Virginia is able to handle the increased number and size of container vessels. The Port and the Army Corps of Engineers have undertaken the dredging, widening and deepening of the Norfolk Harbor and Channels to enable safe and efficient two-way passage of the new larger container ships. I would like to take a moment to thank the Members of the Committee for their work with the Port of Virginia which allowed it to continue operations, especially at a time when shipping delays plagued many other ports across the country.

As the committee begins drafting the 2024 Water Resources Development Act, I respectfully request the committee include a modification of the Norfolk Harbor and Channels navigation project to include deepening Anchorage F. This modification is consistent with the recommendations of the Army Corps of Engineers and will ensure the Port's reliability and efficacy is not interrupted.

My district is also home to the City of Norfolk, which has been a leader in ensuring that the city can manage the surrounding rising water and is already serving as an example to other municipalities working to adapt. Unfortunately, due to climate-driven sea level rise, compounded by historic land subsidence in the region, inundation from these waterways poses a serious risk. High tides, nor'easters, and hurricanes exacerbate the risk of flooding in the City of Norfolk and the region. As the home of Naval Station Norfolk and numerous other federal and military facilities, this recurrent flooding also poses a national security risk. I would like to again thank the Committee for moving the Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management project forward as well as the Virginia Peninsula Flood Study.

State and local elected officials in Virginia already appreciate the significant threat sea level rise poses to Hampton Roads. Unfortunately, the cost to proactively and aggressively address this problem head-on is far too great for any city to bear by itself. While Norfolk has already spent considerable sums of money to study its recurrent flooding issues and implement resilient infrastructure where feasible, the cost of the entire project is in the billions of dollars. Both the Commonwealth and the Federal government have been supportive of the need and I look forward to continued support and partnership.

To that end, I am requesting that the Committee add the City of Norfolk to the Temporary Relocation Assistance Pilot Program, due to the ongoing Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRSM) project. This would allow Norfolk to join other communities in extending temporary relocation assistance to those that are impacted by the nonstructural program of the Norfolk CSRSM project. These nonstructural adaptations are to individual buildings in communities that are vulnerable to flood risk.

Finally, I request that the Committee include language authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers to include federal lands in their coastal resiliency studies. As I have mentioned earlier in my testimony, Hampton Roads is an area surrounded by water and home to numerous federal facilities and military infrastructure and these areas should be included in these studies. Our region is a perfect example of why comprehensively addressing flooding is essential to coastal resilience. We can only solve the coastal resilience puzzle when we are able to consider all the pieces. Including all implicated land in a study is the only way to ensure the study is comprehensive, cost effective and accurate.

Chairman and Ranking Member, thank you again for the opportunity to share my priorities for the forthcoming Water Resources Development Act of 2024. I look forward to working with you to ensure that these priorities are included to allow for the critical work in Hampton Roads to continue.

Mr. JAMES. Thank you, sir.

Do any members of our committee have any questions for our witness?

Thank you, brother Scott, you are dismissed.

Mr. SCOTT OF VIRGINIA. Thank you.

Mr. JAMES. The Chair now recognizes Representative Sewell for her testimony.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. TERRI A. SEWELL, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA**

Ms. SEWELL. I want to thank the distinguished members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony before you today.

As you draft the Water Resources Development Act, otherwise known as WRDA, of 2024, I would like to request an adjustment to the non-Federal cost share for the construction of the Selma Flood Risk Management and Bank Stabilization Project that was authorized in the 2022 WRDA bill.

Flooding caused by various storms and hurricanes in recent years has caused severe river erosion in the historic downtown of Selma, Alabama. Not only is it in my district, it is also my beloved hometown.

As a result of the storms, many buildings along the riverbank have become structurally compromised, and some buildings have already collapsed into the Alabama River. Army Corps of Engineers officials from the Mobile office warned that the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge could be threatened if the river erosion is not addressed immediately.

As the site of the historic Bloody Sunday and the Selma to Montgomery March of 1965, the preservation of the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge and the Selma riverfront is not only important to the city of Selma, but also this Nation. Every year, a bipartisan group of Members of Congress make the pilgrimage to Selma, Alabama, to retrace the steps of our beloved John Lewis across the Edmund Pettus Bridge to reflect on the role that the people of Selma played in the advancement of our great democracy. This history must be preserved.

As authorized in the WRDA 2022 bill, the Selma Flood Risk Management and Bank Stabilization Project will reduce the risk of the failure of 10 historic structures along the riverbank, protect the Edmund Pettus Bridge, and provide a response for imminent flooding events in the future.

The problem is that the non-Federal sponsor, the city of Selma, simply cannot afford the \$9.26 million cost share that is currently required for this construction project. The median income in Selma is only \$31,000 a year, and 30 percent of Selma residents live in poverty. The city clearly meets the definition of an economically disadvantaged community according to the implementation guidelines and guidance of the WRDA 2020 bill.

Moreover, tomorrow marks the 1-year anniversary of the severe thunderstorms and tornadoes that caused destruction across my district, including the city of Selma. This disaster placed an unprecedented financial burden on the city of Selma to begin recovery and rebuilding efforts from this tornado storm.

Simply put, if the current cost structure is not addressed, this desperately needed Army Corps of Engineers project will be significantly delayed, and the severe erosion along the Alabama River will continue. More historic buildings will collapse into the Alabama River, and the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge structural integrity will remain under threat. Not only do the residents of Selma deserve to be protected from flooding, but the Nation deserves to have this historic, significant site protected.

I thank the committee for your consideration of my request, and I look forward to working with all of you to resolve this issue as we face the 2024 WRDA bill.

[Ms. Sewell's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Terri A. Sewell, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Alabama**

Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony before you today. As you draft the Water Resources Development Act of 2024, I would like to request an adjustment to the non-federal cost share for the construction of the Selma Flood Risk Management and Bank Stabilization project that was authorized in the 2022 Water Resources Development Act.

Flooding caused by various storms and hurricanes in recent years has created severe river erosion in the downtown area of Selma, Alabama. As a result, many buildings along the riverbank have become structurally compromised, and some buildings have already collapsed into the Alabama River. Moreover, Army Corps of Engineers officials from the Mobile District warn that the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge could be threatened if the river erosion is not addressed immediately.

As the site of the historic Bloody Sunday and Selma to Montgomery March of 1965, the preservation of the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge and the Selma Riverfront is not only important for the City of Selma, but also the nation. Every year, a bipartisan group of Members of Congress make the pilgrimage to Selma to retrace the steps of our former colleague John Lewis across the Edmund Pettus Bridge to reflect on the role that the people of Selma played in the advancement of our great democracy. This history must be preserved.

As authorized in the WRDA 2022 bill, the Selma Flood Risk Management and Bank Stabilization project will reduce the risk of failure of ten historic structures along the riverbank, protect this Edmund Pettus Bridge, and provide a response plan for imminent flooding events.

However, as the non-federal sponsor, the City of Selma simply cannot afford the \$9.26 million cost share that is currently required for this construction project. The median household income in Selma is only \$31,000 a year, and 30% of Selma's residents live in poverty. The city clearly meets the definition of an Economically Disadvantaged Community according to the implementation guidance for the Water Resources Act of 2020.

Moreover, tomorrow marks the one-year anniversary of the severe storms and tornadoes that caused devastation across my district, including in the City of Selma. This disaster placed an unprecedented financial burden on the City to begin recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Simply put, if the current cost-share is not addressed, this desperately needed Army Corps of Engineers project will be significantly delayed, the severe erosion along the Alabama River will continue, more historic buildings will collapse into the river, and the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge's structural integrity will remain under threat.

Not only do the residents of Selma deserve to be protected from flooding, but the nation deserves to have this historically significant site protected. I thank the committee for your consideration of my request, and I look forward to working with all of you to resolve this issue in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act.

Mr. JAMES. Thank you, Madam.

Do any members of our committee have any questions for our witness?

Hearing none, you are dismissed, ma'am. The chairman now recognizes Representative Katie Porter, who now has a weapon that she can brandish. Slide over. Sweetness.

[Laughter.]

Mr. JAMES. We will wait until you are ready. You have 5 minutes when you start talking. Thanks.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. KATIE PORTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Ms. PORTER. Thank you, Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano, for holding this hearing so that Members can share our water infrastructure priorities for this year's Water Resources Development Act.

The WRDA process provides a unique opportunity for Members to deliver Federal priorities and projects that guarantee consistent and ample clean drinking water, and even help constituents avoid devastating flooding. That is exactly what my requests do, and I strongly urge this committee—and I know that they will—give them full and fair consideration.

The Westminster-East Garden Grove Flood Risk Management, or WEGG, Project was authorized in 2020 to reduce the risk to life, safety, and property from flooding in Orange County due to current deficiencies of flood control channels. The WEGG Project is anticipated to protect 1 million residents, 24,000 at-risk structures, U.S. military operations, and critical transportation infrastructure from \$5.45 billion in damage. The project will also save Orange County residents from collectively paying approximately \$3.7 million annually in flood insurance premiums.

However, the WEGG Project cannot access Federal funding, and its supposed Federal cost share is not enough to help the county prepare 74 square miles for storm readiness. That is why I am requesting that this committee authorize the Orange County Flood Control District and the county of Orange to enter into a project partnership agreement so that the WEGG Project can access available Federal funds.

I also request that this committee increase the county's cost share ratio to 50 percent for the project's implementation to improve the flood control and the protection of this highly urbanized, at-risk area.

The next project is one that many southern Californians know, the Santa Ana River Mainstem/Prado Dam Project, or SARP. SARP is designed to provide flood protection to more than 3.35 million people in Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. Most of the construction work is finished, but it still needs funding to acquire additional lands for the expansion of the Prado Reservoir, installation of protective dikes, and raising the spillway.

If these upgrades aren't made, then the surrounding area could see more than \$40 billion in economic losses. That is why I am requesting that this committee authorize the Army Corps of Engineers to approve new project appraisals that cost more than \$1.5 million and to reimburse the county for amended project agreements when new easements are acquired. These requests are necessary for the project's completion and to safeguard millions of residents from flooding.

Finally, I want to highlight my support for a critical drought resilience program in southern California. The forecast-informed reservoir operations, or F-I-R-O, FIRO, program has supported watershed monitoring and modern weather forecasting to capture stormwater at Prado Dam efficiently. It is really a success story of how to balance flood risk management, water supply, and water re-

siliency. And I know that Ranking Member Napolitano has done so much to champion this project.

It should not be surprising to hear that California still struggles with drought. Our snowfall and rainfall this year is already very low, and because of climate change, the Sierra Nevada snowpack right now, today, is at its lowest level in 20 years. So, we are now at a point where we need to be looking at solutions amid a major water crisis in the West. And programs like FIRO are a significant step in the right direction, and they have been proven already to be successful.

Lake Mendocino, for example, in northern California, saw an increase to its reservoir storage by 20 percent through FIRO, and now Prado Dam, especially with atmospheric river events, has been able to significantly reduce flood risk for Orange County while also creating significant levels of water conservation.

So, I respectfully request that this committee include the projects I have spoken for in support of today in its reauthorization. I know that you share my desire to make sure that every American is safe from ecological and economic disasters, and that all of our constituents are protected from the harmful effects of lasting drought.

[Ms. Porter's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Katie Porter, a Representative in Congress
From the State of California**

Thank you, Chairman Rouzer and Ranking Member Napolitano, for holding this hearing so that members can share our water infrastructure priorities for this year's Water Resources Development Act.

The WRDA process provides a unique opportunity for members to deliver federal projects that guarantee consistent and ample clean drinking water and even help constituents avoid devastating flooding.

That's exactly what my requests do, and I strongly urge this committee to give them full and fair consideration.

The Westminster-East Garden Grove Flood Risk Management (WEGG) project was authorized in 2020 to reduce the risks of life, safety, and property from flooding in Orange County due to current deficiencies of flood control channels. The WEGG project is anticipated to protect one million residents, 24,000 at-risk structures, U.S. military operations and critical transportation infrastructure from \$5.45 billion in damage. The project will also save Orange County residents from collectively paying approximately \$3.7 million annually in flood insurance premiums.

However, the project cannot access federal funding and its supposed federal cost-share is not enough to help the County prepare 74 square miles for storm readiness.

That is why I am requesting that this committee authorize the Orange County Flood Control District and the County of Orange to enter into a Project Partnership Agreement so that the WEGG project can access available federal funds. I also request that this committee increase the County's cost-share ratio to 50 percent for the project's implementation to improve the flood control and protection of highly urbanized, at-risk areas.

The next project is one that many Southern Californians know—the Santa Ana River Mainstem, Prado Dam Project, or SARP. SARP is designed to provide flood protection to more than 3.35 million people in Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties.

Most of the construction work is finished, but it still needs funding to acquire additional lands for the expansion of the Prado reservoir, installation of protective dikes, and raising the spillway. If these upgrades aren't made, then the surrounding area could see more than \$40 billion in economic losses.

That is why I am requesting that this committee authorizes the Army Corps of Engineers to approve new project appraisals that cost higher than \$1.5 million and reimburse the county for amended project agreements when new easements are acquired. These requests are necessary for the project's completion and to safeguard millions of residents from flooding.

Finally, I want to highlight my support for a critical, drought resilience program in Southern California. The Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) Program has been supporting watershed monitoring and modern weather forecasting to efficiently capture stormwater at Prado Dam. It has also a success story of how to balance flood-risk management, water supply, and water resiliency.

It should not be surprising to hear that California still struggles with drought. Because of climate change, the Sierra Nevada snowpack—a critical piece of Californian water delivery—is at its lowest levels in 20 years.

We are now at a point where we need to be looking at solutions amid a major water crisis in the west. Programs like FIRO are a significant step in the right direction and have proven success.

Lake Mendocino in northern California saw an increase to its reservoir storage by 20 percent through FIRO and now Prado Dam, especially with atmospheric river events, has been able to reduce flood risk for Orange County while also balancing significant levels of water conservation.

I respectfully request that this committee include the projects I've spoken in support of today in its reauthorization. Let's make sure that every American is safe from ecological and economic disasters and protect our constituents from lasting drought.

I yield back.

Ms. PORTER. I yield back.

Mr. JAMES. Thank you, ma'am.

Do any Members have any questions for Ms. Porter?

[Pause.]

Mr. JAMES. Thank you for your time.

The committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:31 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

Prepared Statement of Hon. Gabe Amo, a Representative in Congress From the State of Rhode Island

Chairs Sam Graves and David Rouzer and Ranking Members Rick Larsen and Grace Napolitano, I thank the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the below priorities of Rhode Island's First Congressional District for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024.

Each WRDA is important to ensuring the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) fulfills its mission. If drafted with the below priorities, this upcoming WRDA would help strengthen water resource infrastructure in Rhode Island and across our nation by energizing our economy, supporting resiliency projects and initiatives, creating good-paying jobs, protecting our environment and modernizing our water infrastructure.

Given the increased threat that the climate crisis poses, the mission of the Corps is more important than ever to protect our coastal communities. There remains an increased risk of extreme weather events such as floods, hurricanes, and storms that continue to threaten our economy and the lives of Rhode Islanders.

According to the latest data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States experienced direct losses from 18 separate billion-dollar disasters total[ing] over \$170 billion in 2022.¹ This worrying trend grew in 2023 to 25 confirmed weather/climate disaster events with losses exceeding \$1 billion each to affect the United States.

Coastal communities like those in Rhode Island are facing unprecedented risk from these threats, which is why the Corps work to reduce flood and storm damage, restore vital aquatic ecosystems, and improve our resilience is vital.

I look forward to working with the Committee on the WRDA of 2024. Below are specific requests that I submitted to the Committee for consideration.

Authorization of "Rhode Island Coastline, Coastal Storm Risk Management" Project

According to the Corps: The Rhode Island CSRM study was conducted due to frequent flooding from high tides, spring tides, and coastal storms in the study area. The study's purpose is to identify a plan to reduce the risk of coastal storm damage along a large portion of the Rhode Island coastline while contributing to the resilience of communities, important infrastructure, and the natural environment. The study area includes significant critical infrastructure at risk of damage from future flooding and coastal storms including police, fire, and emergency support service facilities; schools; energy production facilities; water and wastewater facilities; nursing homes and assisted living facilities in addition to communities and businesses. These areas that experience frequent flooding are considered at high risk of coastal storm flooding with an associated threat to life safety; and are susceptible to relative sea level change.

Reauthorization of the National Dam Safety Program

Dams play a vital role in Rhode Island's infrastructure and contribute to the economic development of our nation. This vital program is an essential partnership between states, federal agencies and other stakeholders to encourage and promote the establishment and maintenance of effective federal and state dam safety programs that reduce risk to human life, property, and the environment from dam related hazards. Unfortunately, formal authorization for the National Dam Safety Program lapsed on September 30, 2023. I hope this program will be reauthorized to ensure states like Rhode Island have the resources and support needed to monitor dams in our communities and reduce the risks associated with dam failure.

¹ <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>

Technical assistance to States for identifying ownership of unsafe dams

A major barrier to identifying and repairing dams in our state and across the nation is insufficient legal expertise to efficiently identify owners of derelict dams. I urge the committee to consider including language that will provide states and the Corps with sufficient legal technical assistance to expedite title research, especially in coastal states with high numbers of unidentified dam owners.

Modify the formula for the High Hazard Potential Dam (HHPD) Rehabilitation Grant Program

As you know, HHPD provides grants for technical, planning, design and construction assistance for rehabilitation of dams that fail to meet minimum safety standards and pose unacceptable risk to life and property. The current grant formula favors states with a proportionally high number of HHPDs by providing the majority of funds to these states, regardless of necessity or requested funding amount. To better ensure federal funds are more evenly distributed, I urge the Committee to change the formula. A proposal worthy of consideration is: one half equal distribution between all states that apply, and one half distributed based on a proportion of eligible HHPDs of the given state in relation to eligible HHPDs of all states that apply.

Increase Federal Limit and authorizations for Continuing Authorities Programs (CAP)

The last time Congress increased the per-project federal expenditure limit for the CAP was 2014. Construction costs have drastically increased in the last decade. Increasing the federal limit and authorization for the CAP to account for the per-project adjustments would better allow the Corps to meet its mission.

Use of Innovative Materials and Associated Techniques

I applaud President Joe Biden's administration for mandating the Corps aim to design infrastructure projects with 100-year life spans. This long-term horizon is important to building resilient infrastructure that can withstand the threat climate change poses to our communities. The Corps has completed several pilot projects using innovative materials, which can be more durable and lightweight than traditional building materials and are less likely to corrode or degrade. I urge the Committee to allow the Corps to improve research, review standards, and deploy innovative materials and associated techniques for composite material because it could reduce costs, improve climate resiliency, and reduce carbon emissions. I hope these materials will be produced domestically to help good paying jobs across the United States and Rhode Island, especially because our state has a burgeoning composites industry whose growth would be accelerated by further federal investments.

Improved Connectivity Between Federal and State Initiatives and Planning

Rhode Island has been a leader in developing a state-approved coastal management plan. By improving the connection between federal and state partners for state-approved projects, strategies, and plans, the Corps could expedite the uptake of projects. Requiring GAO to detail how the Corps currently operates in conjunction with state-approved management plans would better inform how to improve this process.

In addition to the above priorities, I would also like to echo my support for the importance of better understanding the funding disparity we have seen between coastal and inland projects. I look forward to an expeditious completion of the Government Accountability Office results on this matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these requests that will benefit Rhode Islanders. Please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions.

I yield back.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Lisa Blunt Rochester, a Representative in Congress From the State of Delaware

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and members of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, thank you for the opportunity to advocate for stronger water infrastructure on behalf of the state of Delaware, especially for my constituents in vulnerable coastal and riverbank communities.

Congress has one of the best bipartisan track records in crafting the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)—in fact, Congress has passed a bipartisan reauthorization of WRDA every two years since 2014.

As the state with the lowest mean elevation in the country, WRDA is especially important to Delawareans, who feel the impacts of rising sea levels with every passing day. By 2050, the Delaware Geological Survey predicts that our sea level will rise by 1.3 feet.¹ And by the late century, climate change will cost Delaware well over \$1 billion annually, with cumulative costs of high tide flooding across the century sitting at \$17 billion alone.² These astronomical projections, the loss of habitation, water contamination, surges, and severe flooding are why I address the Committee with such urgency today.

In fact, the reality of this proved true just this week, as Winter Storm Finn tore across the United States and Delaware's coasts and cities. This powerful storm's high winds, heavy rain, and widespread flooding threatened to upend the lives of so many Delawareans. I urge the Committee to pass a strong WRDA that meets this moment head-on. WRDA is crucial to protecting communities across the country, especially in Delaware.

In previous WRDAs, the Delaware delegation worked to strengthen our shorelines and make our communities less susceptible to flooding and erosion. I'm particularly proud of what we accomplished together in WRDA 2022 through the inclusion of major provisions of the Shoreline Health Oversight, Restoration, Resilience, and Enhancement (SHORRE) Act,³ a bill I coauthored with Chairman Graves and Senators Carper and Cassidy to protect coastal communities from the devastating impacts of climate change.

Since then, Members from both sides of the aisle have continued to recognize the importance of increasing the coastal resiliency of the First State to protect against the numerous environmental threats to our livelihoods and natural heritage. We've ensured the operation of Delaware's ports and waterways, reinforced our Bay Beaches, and implemented environmental infrastructure authorities across the state. And for that, I am deeply grateful.

Securing the safety, economic security, and long-term viability of Delaware's coastal and riverbank communities means building on our progress and fulfilling our commitment to once again passing a strong WRDA without delay. Because the reality is that extreme storms and flooding are increasing in frequency, and when disaster strikes, it costs taxpayers even more.

Delaware's partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a strong one, but we need to do more to meet the challenges of today and the individualized needs of our most at-risk communities.

That is why I am advocating for new authorities for the City of Wilmington and the City of Rehoboth under the Environmental Infrastructure Program so these hard-hit localities can pursue critical wastewater and stormwater system improvements and infrastructure.

I am also requesting flood resilience feasibility studies for the Town of Milton and the City of Wilmington. Although they have already worked tirelessly to address persistent flooding, more must be done. They require comprehensive solutions so that when it rains or storms, livelihoods aren't on the line.

As this Committee knows, coastline degradation of Delaware's famed beaches poses a threat to residents and tourists alike. That is why I am requesting the addition of Broadkill Beach to the existing Delaware Beneficial Use of Dredged Material for the Delaware River project authorization for beachfill and restoration purposes.

Finally, I ask the Committee to authorize a watershed-wide ecosystem restoration study for the Delaware Inland Bays. This will create a path forward for critical salt marsh restoration, shoreline stabilization, and stormwater management.

I want to thank the Committee for their incredible work on this legislation and their partnership over the years. On behalf of the First State, thank you for your consideration and I look forward to working with you.

¹ *The Delaware Geological Survey. Determination of Future Sea-Level Rise Planning Scenarios for Delaware—The Delaware Geological Survey. (2017, November). <https://www.dgs.udel.edu/projects/determination-future-sea-level-rise-planning-scenarios-delaware>*

² *Industrial Economics, Incorporated. 2021. An Economic Analysis of the Impacts of Climate Change in the State of Delaware. Prepared for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.*

³ <https://bluntrochester.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2927>

**Prepared Statement of Hon. J. Luis Correa, a Representative in Congress
From the State of California**

Thank you, Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for hosting Members' Day for members to share their requests for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024.

Today, I'd like to highlight two projects that in the heart of my district.

In the 1986 Water Resources Development Act, the Santa Ana River Mainstem Project (SARMP) was fully authorized as a flood-risk management project. The SARMP, which includes the Santiago Creek (Creek) component, also received funding under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (BBA18) so that all components could be completed as designed and approved. The Creek work represents the last component of the SARMP.

My request for WRDA 2024, which was developed after consultation with the Corps, would amend the current authorizing language to better address the *flood control* needs and concerns of the community located on a specific stretch of the Creek component entirely in my District.

Since the US Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) released the proposal for the Creek, there has been a bifurcated response: strong support for work upstream of the I-5 Freeway (I-5) and uniform, emphatic, and consistent opposition to the proposed work between the I-5 and the confluence of the Creek with the Santa Ana River (the River).

Primarily, the affected community supports flood control measures but ardently objects to the wholesale removal of trees in and along the Creek channel section in their neighborhoods that support a wide variety of wildlife, including Bald Eagles.

This language would address the concerns raised by my constituents directly impacted by the proposed plan by enabling the Corps to redesign the plan.

Specifically, the language would separate the Creek component into two distinct sections, one upstream of I-5 and a second downstream of I-5. This would permit and require the Corps to continue work on all other portions of the SARMP, including the work upstream of I-5, by leaving the rest of SARMP unaffected. Through this language, the Corps would not initiate construction in the stretch between the I-5 and the confluence of the River unless and until the Corps redesigns the project to minimize the impacts to existing trees located in or adjacent to this portion of the project. This new plan would be subject to public and environmental review. Moreover, since the entire SARMP is funded by BBA18, all costs associated with minimizing impacts to existing trees shall be met using available BBA18 funds.

I thank the Committee again for this opportunity to discuss making this important flood control project work for the conscientious Santa Ana residents who are eager to retain the wildlife corridor along the Creek in their neighborhood.

My second request is to support the OC River Walk project, located in Anaheim, California. OC River Walk is a dynamic and multi-functioning project with water resource, recreational, and economic benefits. The project aligns with the Corps' Environmental Operating Principles, and the project is structured to avoid detrimental impacts to the important flood resiliency functions of the Santa Ana River and enhance its benefits.

My request is for an expedited review of the Section 404 and 408 permit process from the Corps for the planned OC River Walk. The City of Anaheim has initiated the Section 404 and Section 408 permitting process with the USACE Los Angeles District (South Pacific Division).

Expedited review of the Section 404 and 408 permits and associated studies will allow the City of Anaheim to move more quickly toward construction and allow the region to benefit more quickly from the anticipated project outcomes.

The project has achieved support and engagement from the critical stakeholders, including Orange County Water District, the City of Orange, Orange County Public Works/Flood, and Orange County Parks. OC River Walk will ensure that the Santa Ana River continues to serve as the County's primary flood control infrastructure and increases the replenishment capacity of the Orange County Groundwater Aquifer, while improving connectivity, recreation, aesthetics, and ecology of the River and adjacent land. The City of Anaheim is eager to begin construction as soon as possible to ensure the project is complete in time for the 2028 Summer Olympics in the region.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter and I look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other issues.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Jasmine Crockett, a Representative in
Congress From the State of Texas**

Thank you, and good morning, everyone. I first want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for their willingness to have Members testify on the water resource development needs impacting the entire country, including my district.

This is the core of what it means to represent your constituents—to hear what is happening on the ground in your community, and come to Congress to fix those issues.

The most pressing issue facing Dallas County in my District is its need to raise the current county-wide authorization cap.

Dallas County is home to over 2.5 million Americans and supports the flow of over \$500 billion in commerce, particularly in the trade and transportation sector impacting the entire United States. Yet our cap is far below where it needs to be.

When my office spoke with the Fort Worth District of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Corps stated that the current authorization cap is not nearly enough to complete the projects currently underway.

Specifically, to complete the dredging of White Rock Lake, the Corps stated that we need an additional \$20 million dollars. But if that is the only increase, Dallas County will be unable to make any other enhancements to water resources in the county.

That is why, in order to complete the current projects and have headroom for projects in the pipeline, the Corps recommends, and as such I urge the Committee to authorize, an additional \$40 million dollars for Dallas County, Texas.

If we do not receive an increase in authorization, we will have begun spending money on a project we do not complete. Even if we choose to resume the project later with subsequently increased authorization, the cost of materials and labor will have risen.

No matter how you look at it, if Dallas County does not receive an increase in authorization, this Congress would be responsible for an unacceptable waste of taxpayer dollars.

There are several other worthy projects that the community desperate needs in Dallas County that you will surely hear about from other Members of the Dallas County delegation today.

But if we don't receive the requested new authorization level of \$80 million dollars, none of those projects will be able to move forward.

I am not here requesting funding for a particular pet project, but instead am working to ensure the projects important to my colleagues across North Texas are able to move forward.

Given the current authorization level was set all the way back in 2007, I hope you all will agree with me that Dallas County is long-overdue for an increase in authorization.

I hope this Committee will take direction from the Army Corps of Engineers, who requested this increase in authorization. And I will close with my hope that we are able to move a strong, bipartisan bill forward at the end of this process. We all lose, and importantly each and every one of our constituents lose, if we aren't able to pass this bill.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to increase the Dallas County, Texas authorization to \$80 million dollars, thank the Committee for its time, and yield back.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Danny K. Davis, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Illinois**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to discuss my requested project priority for inclusion in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024. As the Committee bipartisanly advances a bill that will help strengthen the nation's global competitiveness, grow our economy, and enhance the quality of life for communities throughout the country, I respectfully request your consideration of water resource development and management related activities of great significance to the constituents of the 7th Congressional District of Illinois.

Specifically, I want to highlight the Section 219 water-related environmental infrastructure and development project I submitted on behalf of the Village of Forest Park in Cook County, Illinois. Located in the western suburbs of Chicago and bordered by the Des Plaines River to its west, the Village of Forest Park has long experienced stormwater flooding and overflows of its combined sewer system. In fact, the 1992 WRDA law, authorized \$10 million for the Village of Forest Park to partner

with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for wastewater infrastructure and stormwater management projects throughout the Village's 2.4 square miles.

Unfortunately, the Village of Forest Park continues to struggle with stormwater-related issues, such as surcharging sewers and residential/commercial property basement backups due to its undersized, combined sewer system. To remedy these issues, the Village of Forest Park seeks a modification to its existing authorization under Section 219(f)(330) of the WRDA 1992 law, as amended, for an increase of \$40 million for wastewater infrastructure and stormwater management. In particular, the Village plans for the full separation of the storm sewer from the combination sewer so that all stormwater would outfall into the Des Plaines River. Additionally, the Village of Forest Park, as the non-federal project sponsor, requests authorization to work with the USACE to enhance its potable water supply and storage management capacity by relocating and replacing its aged water reservoir and installing a new and modernized pumping station.

In closing, I respectfully request that the Committee include this priority Environmental Infrastructure and Water Management Project for the Village of Forest Park, Illinois, in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024. This modification simply builds upon USACE's existing authority by increasing the project's authorization funding level to meet the municipality's current stormwater and water storage needs. If approved, this project is anticipated to have multiple benefits for the Village of Forest Park, including improved stormwater management resulting from the complete separation of sewers in the Village as well as increased potable water storage capacity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to working with you as the WRDA reauthorization bill advances.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Lloyd Doggett, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Texas**

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

The Waterloo Greenway project in Austin is restoring Waller Creek, a water way through downtown Austin, which connects Ladybird Lake with the beautiful Waterloo Park. It has been a great addition to the quality of life in my hometown, while also offering great potential for economic benefits. Federal funding through Section 5138, TEXAS (authorized in Pub. L. 110-114; Water Resources Development Act of 2007) has encouraged additional private and local governmental funding.

Our success with Waterloo Greenway has inspired interest in similar environmental infrastructure improvements from other communities. We hope to have additional funding for Waterloo Greenway, and want to see other communities achieve similar benefits. Increasing the authorization for Section 5138 from \$80 million to \$150 million will enable the Army Corps to reach their goals, not only in Austin but also for other worthy projects.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Greg Landsman, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Ohio**

Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for the opportunity to provide Member testimony regarding the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

As the Committee undertakes its important work on the Water Resources Development Act, I respectfully request consideration be provided to the City of Cincinnati's request for an increase of its authorization to \$30 million for much-needed Capitol Improvement Program projects being carried out by the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD).

MSD—located in and serving Ohio's First Congressional District as well as the wider Southwest Ohio region—is a ratepayer-funded wastewater utility that provides service to approximately 240,000 households and businesses in the Greater Cincinnati Area, including portions of Hamilton County, Butler County, Clermont County, and Warren County.

MSD operates a service area that encompasses 290+ square miles and consists of more than 3,000 miles of public sewers, approximately 100 pump stations, nine wet weather facilities, and nine wastewater treatment plants. MSD is subject to a federal consent decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission—which mandates extensive improvements to the MSD system primarily fo-

cused on reducing sewer overflows. Since 2009, MSD has invested over \$1.1 billion in mandated system improvements and subsequent phases are expected to exceed another \$1 billion.

MSD's approved 2023–2027 Capital Improvement Program totals more than \$1.4 billion, which includes costs associated with consent decree Phase 2A projects as well as anticipated Phase 2B projects. In addition to these obligations, inflation, increasing regulatory requirements, and aging infrastructure are drastically increasing utility cost of service. MSD is already seeing many ratepayers with paying utility bills in the post-pandemic economy, creating a significant concern as to the negative impacts of rate increases to fund these obligations and continuing operations—and an increase of the existing authorization to \$30 million will significantly benefit the households and businesses throughout the Greater Cincinnati Area.

Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Committee Members for the opportunity to provide testimony. I appreciate the important work each of you is undertaking for the people we all serve.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. John B. Larson, a Representative in Congress
From the State of Connecticut**

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

I write today in support of the termination of USACE Contract DA–19–016–CIVENG–56–203, regarding the Colebrook River Reservoir, Connecticut. This contract is between the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Metropolitan District (MDC), the non-profit municipal corporation which provides clean water to the Greater Hartford, CT region.

More than fifty years ago, the USACE and the MDC entered into a contract to construct the Colebrook Dam. While primarily constructed for flood control, the dam also created a reservoir. In return for 10 billion gallons of emergency drinking water storage, the MDC agreed to pay a portion of the capital cost of the dam and a portion of maintenance and operations costs over a fifty-year period. In 2019, the MDC completed their capital expense obligation.

Unfortunately, the reservoir has proven to be unsuitable for emergency water storage. Through the history of the project, the water has never been utilized. The Connecticut Department of Public Health has found that under severe drought conditions, most, if not all, of the 10 billion gallons would be unavailable. They additionally found that the requirements needed to connect this water source with existing water supply infrastructure make the water unsuitable for use even under non-drought circumstances.

In light of this, the MDC attempted to end their work with the USACE upon completion of their obligations in 2019, believing the project completed. Unfortunately, the USACE considers the MDC liable in perpetuity for operations and maintenance expenses, barring termination by legislation. As a result, unless this committee takes action, the MDC, and by extension, its ratepayers, are contractually bound to fund the operations in which they receive no benefit. At a time when utility costs have risen, removing this cost is a common sense way to benefit thousands of households, many of them low income.

I urge the committee to recognize that the agreement between USACE and the MDC has run its course and to end this contract.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Mike Levin, a Representative in Congress
From the State of California**

Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of my constituents in California's 49th district and share their priorities on water infrastructure issues.

My district has more than 50 miles of California coastline and I am honored to represent such a beautiful community. However, due to rising sea levels caused by climate change, coastal storms and flooding, and even development by the federal government, our beaches and coastal bluffs are eroding away. This erosion threatens vital infrastructure that my constituents rely on such as the LOSSAN Rail Corridor connecting San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Luis Obispo, and disrupts the habitats of sea birds and aquatic wildlife. In addition, coastal erosion jeopardizes public safety and recreational benefits for my constituents and the millions of tourists to the region.

Since coming to Congress, I have fought for sand replenishment projects up and down the coastline in the 49th district. After years of advocacy and collaboration, I'm particularly proud to have secured more than \$41 million in federal funding to pump over one million cubic yards of sand onto beaches in San Clemente, Solana Beach, and Encinitas, which will widen our beaches, reduce storm damage, and improve recreational opportunities. I'm grateful for the Corps' work on these projects, and I will continue to promote additional shoreline restoration efforts, including better integrated regional planning to ensure the resilience of our coast for generations to come.

I would like to draw the Committee's attention to one long-delayed shoreline project in particular: the Oceanside Special Shoreline Study. Oceanside has experienced beach erosion for decades since the construction of Camp Pendleton Harbor in 1942. The federal government has acknowledged that construction of the harbor jetties was a direct contributing cause of the erosion of beaches in the area.

This erosion presents a safety hazard and has damaged infrastructure, impacted recreational resources, and threatened property. Only one third of Oceanside's beaches sustain any dry sand. This means the remaining two thirds of the coast, or roughly 2.5 miles out of Oceanside's 3.8-mile coastline, have only low tide, wet sand beaches. Two of the beaches most impacted by erosion are also the ones that offer free public parking or are easily accessible by public transit; as these beaches erode, public accessibility to the ocean will erode as well. Further, lifeguards in the area must regularly rescue individuals who have difficulty getting back onto dry land using the uneven rock riprap along the coast; additional beach sand is necessary in order to provide a safe ingress into and egress out of the ocean.

The federal government has a responsibility to my constituents to right these wrongs and mitigate the environmental harms in Oceanside that have been decades in the making. In order to alleviate this erosion, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000 directed the Corps to complete a study to mitigate the erosion and other impacts from the construction of Camp Pendleton Harbor and to restore beach conditions along the affected shores. However, when I came to Congress nearly 20 years later, this study had not yet been completed, despite the statutory deadline of 32 months that Congress set for the Corps.

In WRDA 2020, I appreciate that you included language directing the Corps to expedite the completion of a feasibility study for Oceanside shoreline protection, and that the Corps ultimately allocated \$1.82 million in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to complete this study. However, over three years later, I am concerned that the Corps may once again put this study on a shelf, an outcome that would be entirely unacceptable after the communities I represent have waited more than two decades for its completion.

It is of the utmost importance to my constituents and me that the Corps work in an expedited manner to complete and submit to Congress their feasibility study in Oceanside, which must include the necessary environmental documents and a full engineering and cost analysis of their recommended plan. I look forward to working with the Committee and the Army Corps to get this study done, so we can finally progress to a project that mitigates the harms done by the federal government and restores our beaches for the safety and enjoyment of our community.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Zoe Lofgren, a Representative in Congress
From the State of California**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and members of the full Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today and for your work as the Committee prepares the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024. As you consider WRDA proposals, I strongly urge the Committee to support the following requests on behalf of the communities I represent.

First, I am requesting an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study regarding expanding the capacity of Soap Lake in San Benito County to prevent and mitigate flooding in the region. Soap Lake currently acts as a holding basin during the rainy season and helps regulate water flow to the Pajaro River and surrounding tributaries. For decades, there have been several major floods along the Pajaro River that have destroyed homes and displaced residents. Most recently, in March 2023, the Pajaro River levees were breached, causing hundreds of millions of dollars in damage. The County of San Benito, which would be the non-federal partner on the study, is interested in expanding Soap Lake to reduce downstream flood risks along the Pajaro River during high rain events.

I am also requesting authorization of two important Environmental Infrastructure projects in my Congressional District. The first is for the City of San Juan Bautista to upgrade its drinking and wastewater system by connecting to regional water and wastewater systems. Due to excessive groundwater salt content, the City is not able to provide adequate drinking and wastewater treatment services to its residents. The City has identified the project as its highest priority public infrastructure project. Without access to adequate drinking and wastewater systems, it is extremely challenging for the City to attract new residents or businesses. Additionally, with a population of approximately 2,000 people, it is extremely challenging for the City to meet its water infrastructure needs without additional sources of assistance. This project is a sound investment and will ensure that San Juan Bautista residents have access to safe water resources.

The second Environmental Infrastructure project I am requesting would replace cast iron water lines in the historic downtown of the City of Hollister. The City experiences frequent earthquakes from the nearby Calaveras fault line, and the City's aging water lines have experienced multiple significant water line breaks over the years, disrupting residents, businesses, and local traffic. Many of the old water lines also do not provide enough flow to meet fire code standards for fire hydrants, which the project would also address. This project would help secure reliable water supply in the City and reduce public safety risks in the event of an earthquake or fire.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests that are so crucial to the safety of residents in Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and along the Pajaro River.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Stephen F. Lynch, a Representative in
Congress From the Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

Dear Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, Subcommittee Chairman Rouzer, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Napolitano,

As the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee welcomes input on this Member's Day on a variety of topics of the upcoming year, I respectfully submit comment on the Water Resources Development Act. For years, this bipartisan bill supported vital projects throughout my district from sweeping port infrastructure to river and dam renovations. I will be submitting my requests through the portal but would like to highlight a few of the issues today.

1. Ensuring payment and performance protections for water infrastructure projects, H.R. 1740
 - I, along with Mr. Bost, propose to amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) (33 USC Ch.52) to apply a policy solution that would ensure all water infrastructure projects using financing authorized under WIFIA, including the Corps Water Infrastructure Financing Program (CWIFP), have adequate protections for workers, subcontractors, suppliers, and taxpayers.
 - The proposed policy solution would have the Secretary of the Army or the EPA Administrator, as appropriate, ensure WIFIA-financed water infrastructure projects have payment and performance security protections by requiring surety bonds if the project is not subject to State or local payment and performance security requirements. If a State has requirements for security protections of at least 50% of the construction cost, the Secretary or the Administrator must accept the State requirements. Otherwise, the project would be required to follow protections in the Federal Miller Act, which has been applied to all public works contracts greater than a given dollar threshold (currently, \$100,000) for nearly a century. This would ensure common protections are applied for the Federal interest with respect to Federal funds and other project risks related to design and construction.
 - This policy solution is currently applied to transportation projects that use the Transportation Infrastructure Finance Innovation Act (TIFIA) program based on legislation I led. Congress overwhelmingly supported the adoption of the policy for TIFIA as shown by way of a unanimous floor vote, 97-0, to include the provision in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Similarly, the language was included in the House-passed transportation bill after the policy was adopted in a bipartisan en bloc amendment that passed by voice vote. The WIFIA policy solution mirrors the TIFIA solution, thereby maintaining parity between the two programs.

- For nearly a hundred years, the federal government has recognized the importance of requiring performance and payment bonds to protect its public works projects. Bonds play a vital role in ensuring that project completion will not be threatened by financially-distressed contractors; subcontractors and suppliers receive prompt payment for their labor and materials; projects are delivered within budget and on time; and, as shown by an Ernst and Young (E&Y) study, overall project cost savings. Over 95% of all public projects require bonding under either the Federal Miller Act or state-law equivalents (collectively the Miller Acts). However, the applicability of the Miller Acts' bonding requirements is not always clear on newer forms of project procurement, specifically including public-private partnerships (P3s). Therefore, the increasing trend of using P3s to procure and deliver water infrastructure could lead to a substantial amount of federally-financed projects that do not maintain the same level of protections that have been required on public infrastructure projects over the past century.
 - This loophole/gap for newer forms of project procurement, which have the same risk as traditional projects, if not greater, leaves workers and taxpayers exposed to unnecessary risks. Without these protections, in the event of a contractor default, the project may come to a screeching halt for an indefinite period, leaving subcontractors and workers without pay and forcing states, and importantly, taxpayers, to absorb the additional costs of rebidding, restarting, and finishing the project.
 - I propose to amend WIFIA to adopt a policy solution that would ensure all forms of project procurement for water infrastructure using WIFIA-authorized financing, including P3s, utilize the traditionally required protections for workers, subcontractors, suppliers, and taxpayers, ensuring parity for all infrastructure projects.
 - Finally, aside from performance and payment security, surety bonding provides a number of additional benefits to public infrastructure projects. Ernst and Young performed a study, "The Economic Value of Surety Bonds," that highlighted a number of these additional benefits, which include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Bonded projects are more likely to be completed on time or ahead of schedule than unbonded projects. What's more, unbonded projects are 10 times more likely to default than bonded projects.
 - ii. Bonded projects cost less than unbonded projects. 75% of project owners report that surety bonding reduces contractor pricing by an average of 3.2%
 - iii. If a contractor defaults on a bonded project, surety companies intervene, lowering the cost of project completion by 85% and reducing the time to complete by two times.
2. Better Use of Dredge Materials
- Dredge Materials (primarily sand) should be used to better our shorelines rather than being thrown out and not being used. Dredge materials are often disposed of which are not environmentally friendly or eliminated in a way that is not the most effective for the Corps.
 - I ask the committee to value the environmental impact of moving dredge materials from location to location without meaning. I am told that such excess movement is "least cost alternative", but it would be better for the environment and serve a better future if it was used for shore maintenance or other recovery efforts.
 - Congress must value environmental impacts that may not show on the balance sheet. Such a policy must list environmental impacts and then refer to them as an additional cost saving technique rather than ignoring the future of climate.
 - I understand that there is rulemaking on how to broaden how Corps considers costs, benefits, impacts, and alternatives, but how can Congress ensure that dredge materials are included in this concept?
3. Continuing Authorities Program Funding Limit Raised
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) is a group of nine legislative authorities under which USACE can plan, design, and implement certain types of water resources projects without addi-

tional project specific congressional authorization. The purpose of the CAP is to plan and implement projects of limited size, cost, scope, and complexity.

- There is a limit on spending that is currently at \$10 million but should be raised to \$12.5 million or at least the cap should be adjusted with inflation.
- The Corps needs flexibility to spend the money necessary to address the issues under CAP and the current limit is harmful to the success of the Corps.

4. Harbor Maintenance Trust Funds

- I ask for visibility on the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund.
- There is a percentage set aside for Small Harbors but Congress doesn't know how much is going to which Small Harbors. I am concerned that not enough is going to the Small Harbors in New England. Congress wants to know which harbors are the small harbors that are benefiting from this.
- This was created as a set-aside in WRDA '20 but the limits/rules haven't been followed for any of the percent targets that was put in law.
- Congress must ensure that the rules are followed and not seen as optional.

In addition to policy changes, I am looking for help on moving a few projects forward.

1. New Charles River Dam

- The New Charles River Dam is located on the Charles River, between the Charlestown and North End sections of Boston. The Charles River Dam Project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of August 13, 1968 (PL 90-483). Project purposes included flood control, navigation, fish passage, and recreation. The project was completed by USACE in May 1978 at a cost of \$61.3 million. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) has been operating and maintaining the project successfully over the past 40 years. The project provides critical flood risk management to about 2,440 acres of urban property along the banks of the Charles River. Much of this property is in Boston, Brookline and Cambridge.
- The dam forms a tidal barrier between Boston Inner Harbor and the Charles River. The impoundment upstream of the dam is known as the Charles River "Basin". The Basin extends 8.6 miles upstream to the Watertown Dam. Water level of the Basin is maintained within targeted elevations through dam operation. Water levels in the harbor vary with the tides. When the water level is lower in the harbor than in the Basin, the two submerged flood control sluiceways are used to drain Basin waters (gravity drainage). When the water level is higher in the harbor than in the Basin, one or more flood control pumps may be used to drain Basin waters.
- The purpose of this study is to provide technical assistance to the non-federal sponsor DCR in the assessment of the adequacy of the New Charles River Dam to meet changing climate conditions. This technical assistance is in support of the Commonwealth's water resources management planning associated with changing hydrologic conditions, climate change, long-term sustainability, and resilience. The first phase, a scoping study includes gathering background information on the Charles River Dam and identifying and selecting tasks, methodologies and models to be used for the adequacy assessment. The Phase 1 scoping study was completed in summer 2021. Phase 2 includes consideration of sea level rise and coastal storms, current and future rainfall and runoff conditions in the watershed, and evaluation of dam/reservoir operations under these changing conditions. Phase 2 started in September 2022.
- In WRDA 2022 there was a feasibility study added and I am supportive, and this year want to make sure the study had all the resources it needs to be successful.

2. Smelt Brook

- The towns of Weymouth and Braintree requested District assistance with restoring fish passage in Smelt Brook tributary to the Weymouth-Fore River under Section 1135—Project Modifications to Improve the Environment Program. USACE has evaluated an array of potential solutions and plans to release a draft Detailed Project Report to reconnect rainbow Smelt with their historic spawning habitat in Smelt Brook in the Fall of 2022 for public comment.

- In WRDA 2022 this study was included in the report and noted that there was a lack of sufficient funds.
 - I am waiting for the Detailed Project Report after the Fall of 2022 public comment period.
3. Hayward Creek
- The Town of Braintree requested District assistance with restoring fish passage in the Hayward Creek and Eaton Pond watershed under Section 1135—Project Modifications to Improve the Environment Program.
 - A federal interest determination is underway, but I know if that can be expedited.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication for the future of water resources and the USACE. If you have any questions, please contact my staff, William Seabrook.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Harold Rogers, a Representative in Congress
From the Commonwealth of Kentucky**

Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, and other distinguished Members of the subcommittee, I would like to thank you for your consideration of my priorities for the 2024 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). I know your Committee works diligently to ensure that all Americans can benefit from our nation's incredible water resources and infrastructure—whether through the transportation of goods on our waterways, locks, and dams, flood control projects that protect our communities from disaster, and also incredible recreational opportunities. Previous WRDA bills have done a great deal to help the people of my district in southern and eastern Kentucky across each of the aforementioned areas. Whether it is the importance of locks and dams on the Kentucky and Ohio Rivers to the Kentucky economy, Wolf Creek Dam on Lake Cumberland, the incredible flood control projects in many of my towns and communities, and our Corps lakes' many recreational uses, we benefit greatly from these resources. As you begin the 2024 WRDA process, I would like to raise four specific priorities that will benefit those in my district in Kentucky.

1. Modify the Service Area for the Section 202 Flood Control Program

First, I request the expansion of Section 202 of the Energy and Water Development Act of 1981 to include the North, Middle, and South Forks of the Kentucky River, which suffered catastrophic flooding in the winter of 2021 and summer of 2022. The mountainous terrain in southern and eastern Kentucky has long caused the region to suffer from frequent floods. Since inception, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 202 program has made a transformative impact along the Cumberland and Big Sandy Rivers—saving countless lives from severe flooding—but does not cover the Kentucky River and its forks.

The devastating damage of the 2021 and 2022 floods left thousands without homes, destroyed communities, and cost the lives of 44 Kentuckians. Over \$600 million has already been spent in response to the 2022 floods, and there is plenty more to come. We must begin to implement measures to mitigate flood damage in this region, protecting my constituents. Expanding Section 202 to cover the Kentucky River and its forks would enable the Army Corps of Engineers to immediately begin construction on flood control measures, both structural and non-structural, upon completion of the necessary studies. It is clear the region is in need of assistance from the Army Corps of Engineers to help prevent future flooding of this magnitude, and we fear we cannot wait until it's too late.

2. Authorization of Construction for a Flood Warning Emergency Evacuation Plan (FWEEP) in the Kentucky River Basin

In response to the severe flooding of 2021 and 2022, I have secured community project funding for several studies across the region. In meeting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District, it became clear to me that a more comprehensive Flood Warning Emergency Evacuation Plan (FWEEP) is also needed. A FWEEP across the region would ensure that these disadvantaged communities have a fighting chance of getting to safety should severe flash flooding occur like it did in the past. It is a cost effective, lifesaving tool that we should waste no time in implementing.

3. *Wolf Creek Dam Water Reallocation Study Prohibition*

Third, I request that language be included in this year's WRDA to prohibit a water reallocation study to be conducted at Wolf Creek Dam. This request would maintain historic WRDA and Energy and Water Appropriations language prohibiting a water reallocation study at Wolf Creek Dam on Lake Cumberland. The region surrounding the dam is one of the poorest in the nation, and a reallocation study might lead to increased rates, which would place financial hardship on my constituents.

4. *Inclusion of the MARINA Act*

Finally, I am seeking the inclusion of the MARINA Act, which would modernize the relationship between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and marina owners. This legislation, introduced in both the 117th and 118th Congress, would encourage economic growth and improve access to outdoor recreation. This language would allow for marina owners to successfully implement necessary facility improvement projects without burdensome administrative fees from the Army Corps of Engineers.

The MARINA Act would: (1) cap gross revenue fees on the sales of food, beverages, fuel, boats, motors, and boat lifts at one percent for calculating rental payments, (2) standardize the schedule for administrative fees, and (3) extend initial lease terms to 50 years and renewals to 25 years. The added stability in the length of lease contracts and renewals would also provide aid in expanding access to credit for marina owners.

Thank you again for your consideration of my 2024 WRDA requests. I look forward to working with you as this process unfolds, so we can continue to maximize both Kentucky and our nation's water resources. If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Robert J. Wittman, a Representative in Congress From the Commonwealth of Virginia

INTRODUCTION:

Chairwoman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today. I am honored to highlight some of the needs facing Virginia as you consider oversight on the implementation of the Water Resources Development Act of 2022.

The Water Resources Development Act is necessary legislation that provides for improvements to the Nation's ports, inland waterways, flood protection, ecosystem restoration, and other water resources infrastructure and policy. Water infrastructure is vital to moving goods throughout the country, from products we all use in our everyday lives, to crops and goods we produce domestically and send abroad. I hope this committee and the House upholds its duty to authorize nationally important water infrastructure improvements that are more locally driven.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the Army Corps of Engineers as they work hard to manage more than 1,500 water resource projects with many of them in Virginia. The Army Corps of Engineers is critical to our commonwealth, from the Norfolk Harbor Channel Widening and Deepening Project to the public waterways restorations projects across Virginia.

PORT OF VIRGINIA:

As a proud representative of the Commonwealth of Virginia, home of the Port of Virginia—one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard—advancing the work being done by the Port of Virginia to improve and expand its operations is critical. The Port manages cargo that is shipped to all 48 contiguous states.

The Port of Virginia is a national gateway for commerce, supporting businesses across the country. Moreover, in Virginia's 1st District 234 businesses utilize the services of the Port of Virginia.

As a catalyst for commerce, the Port is attracting growth, fostering development, and creating jobs. On the state level, cargo moving through the Port supports more than 436,667 jobs statewide and generates in excess of \$100.1 billion in annual economic impact for Virginia.

WRDA PROPOSALS SUBMITTED:

I would like to take this time to highlight some WRDA priorities the subcommittee should look at while conducting oversight of its implementation.

1. *Norfolk Harbor and Channels: Anchorage F Expansion*

Anchorage F is currently designed as a 3,000-foot diameter circle for free-swinging bow anchoring. The anchorage in its current design is used primarily as an emergency anchorage in inclement wave weather in the harbor or in situations of unexpected delays. For vessels to effectively utilize the anchorage, it is imperative—and common-sense—for the anchorage and approach depths to match that of the Federal Channel.

A deeper and wider anchorage will allow further use of the anchorage beyond the primary function and permit use by larger vessels calling on our port. Additionally, an improved anchorage and anchorage approach could provide passing vessels safe harbor during storm conditions.

The modification includes widening the Anchorage F beyond its currently authorized diameter of 3,620-feet to a diameter of 3,840-feet and deepening the anchorage to 55-feet consistent with the 1986 authorization and the project depth of the Federal Channel.

2. *Virginia Coastal Resilience Feasibility Study*

I request oversight to ensure the USACE includes Federal properties in their feasibility studies for the Norfolk-Hampton Roads, Virginia.

By allowing the USACE to include Federal properties for an upcoming Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSR) study of the Peninsula and greater Hampton Roads area, it would solve the restriction problem in incorporating these installations and facilities into the Civil Works planning and construction processes. I believe this is a commonsense issue that will ultimately produce a better report of action by a range of actors in the region.

CONCLUSION:

I want to thank the Chairwoman, Ranking Member, and the Members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with the Committee and the Corps to ensure WRDA 2024 is implemented as intended.

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