

**Congressman Bill Foster (IL-11)**

**Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) Member Day Testimony**

**February 27, 2020**

- J Good morning, and thank you Chairwoman Napolitano and Ranking Member Westerman for holding this Members' Day and to the members of the subcommittee for allowing me to testify here today.
- J I am here this morning:
  - o To urge project authorization for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam in my district.
  - o To change the cost-share adjustment for Brandon Road.
  - o To support fully funding the Army Corps Joliet Flood Mitigation Study – Section 205.
- J Brandon Road Lock and Dam, located along the Des Plaines River in Joliet, Illinois, serves as the last line of defense to prevent the spread of Asian Carp and other Aquatic Nuisance Species into the Great Lakes.
- J This invasive species was introduced in Arkansas and has now traveled up the Mississippi Basin and is threatening environmental and economic catastrophe if it reaches the Great Lakes.
- J The Army Corps submitted its Chief's Report in May 2019 and it's now Congress' responsibility to authorize the project, and to provide additional authorization for the Corps to rapidly study and implement options and technologies at Brandon Road that improve the efficacy of the Aquatic Nuisance Species measures similar to the efficacy study authority associated with the electric barrier.
- J This project authorization is urgent in order to prevent Aquatic Nuisance Species from passing freely into the Great Lakes, which would affect the Great Lakes states' economies.
- J As the construction of Brandon Road moves forward following our authorization of the project, I urge the committee to provide the Corps with additional project authorization to mitigate disruption to recreational activities in the surrounding area.
- J Specifically, the Brandon Road project, as planned, would disrupt use of the 20-mile bike path that follows the Illinois & Michigan Canal downstream, as well as nearby pedestrian and bicycle paths along the Des Plaines River and Hickory Creek.
- J To mitigate this damage, Congress should require the Corps to use a small percentage of the project's money to integrate Brandon Road with the neighboring recreational areas along the I&M Canal, Des Plaines River, and Hickory Creek. Specifically, this money should be used to improve and extend the bike path and walkways along these waterways and extend the path over Brandon Road Lock and Dam.
- J Because of the national scope of the threat and the fact that the carp were introduced in a state hundreds of miles away, we request that the nonfederal cost share be waived for this project.
- J The Asian Carp and Aquatic Nuisance Species are traveling from the Southern region of the Mississippi River and as a result, it has become the Great Lake states' responsibility to prevent them from moving closer to Lake Michigan. The federal government therefore needs to pay a larger share of this project.

- ) With these economic and environmental benefits in mind, I urge the committee to include Brandon Road's expanded authorization, including this cost-share waiver, in WRDA.
- ) Illinois did not create this problem, and should not be forced to bear the cost of protecting the entire Great Lakes region.
- ) I would also like to draw to your attention to another project that requires funding in my district – the Army Corps Joliet Flood Mitigation Study.
- ) Last year, FEMA placed the downtown portions of the City of Joliet within a floodplain.
- ) While FEMA is outside of the committee's jurisdiction, FEMA's close coordination with the Army Corps is crucial. I am gravely concerned that the recent floodplain determination will negatively impact Joliet's efforts at downtown revitalization.
- ) Since this decision, the city of Joliet has actively worked with the Army Corps to design and construct a new floodwall, which can be certified as a levee and extend flood protections through downtown.
- ) I strongly support ensuring the initial USACE-Joliet study is fully funded and completed in a timely manner and, that, once certified, that Section 205 remediation project funding be directed to the City.
- ) Thank you again, and I yield back the balance of my time.