

**T&I Committee – Water Subcommittee
WRDA Member Day
Congressman Bradley S. Schneider**

Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to testify and advocate on behalf of my district as the subcommittee begins consideration of the next round of Water Resource Development Act projects.

I first want to discuss the critical role the U.S. Army Corps must play in ensuring the climate resiliency of our communities. My district—like all of ours—has seen first-hand the impact of climate change, having faced several so-called “100-year floods” over the past decade or so. These major precipitation events, increasing both in frequency and severity, will strain our existing water infrastructure. A stark example of how we’re already seeing the impact in our community: the Des Plaines River Trail in my district is a wonderful, multiuse trail running throughout my district. But because of climate-fueled precipitation, over the last 4 years it has been flooded 50% of the time.

We must ensure we build in the necessary capacity and resiliency in our water infrastructure to handle the challenges of the climate crisis. And we know this investment pays for itself: FEMA estimates that for every dollar invested in flood mitigation, there are \$4 of public benefit.

We must also work to better understand how climate change will impact the Great Lakes system, one of our country’s greatest natural treasures, a prime economic engine for our region, and the source of drinking water for more than 30 million people. Our stewardship of the Great Lakes is especially important as we see lake levels fluctuate wildly over a few years’ time. These fluctuations can have a dramatic effect on coastal erosion as we’ve seen firsthand in my district. And we must make sure we’re doing everything we can to make the Great Lakes system climate resilient. They are a national treasure that we must protect.

Second, I would like to advocate for the inclusion of Lake County within Sec. 219 authority. In Illinois, Cook County is a designated geographic area eligible for Sec. 219 which allows local municipalities to work jointly with the Army Corps on environmental infrastructure. However, despite efforts in years past to add Lake County, no geographic areas have been added to Sec. 219 authority in over a decade. This must change, particularly as we see climate change taking an increasing toll in my community.

I have submitted a request to this year’s WRDA, jointly with two of my Illinois colleagues, to add Lake County to Sec. 219. I encourage this committee to consider this request so that we can provide Lake County with more tools to improve its water and environmental infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.