

## Rep. Trahan Testimony

- Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding today's hearing and for the opportunity to testify today.
- By including these priorities as we reauthorize the Water Resources Development Act, or WRDA, we'll be able to undertake critical water development projects that benefit communities across the country.
- In my district, combined sewage overflows, or CSOs, are an all too familiar issue.
- In fact, many of my colleagues have come to know me as the sewage lady because of how much I talk about the need to stop sewage overflows.
- So, I don't think it was a surprise for anyone when I used the five environmental infrastructure requests that each Member was allotted to request authorizations of \$20 million each to fix the CSOs in Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill, Methuen, and Fitchburg.
- CSOs are an issue that have plagued my district for as long as I can remember.
- It was an issue when I toured Lowell's Regional Wastewater Utility's facility as part of my first infrastructure tour after being elected to Congress three years ago.
- And it remains an issue to this day. In fact, I was just at that facility again a few weeks ago.
- Each year, hundreds of millions of gallons of waste are dumped into the Merrimack – from Manchester to Lowell and all the way out to Newburyport – and honestly, that's probably a conservative estimate based on some of the heavy rain years we've had recently.
- In addition to polluting the treasure that is the river, the human health effects from CSOs are also cause for alarm.
- 600,000 people rely on the Merrimack as their drinking water supply – and our gateway cities are continuing to grow. The same is true with the Nashua River, where Fitchburg's sewage overflows.
- Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill, Methuen, and Fitchburg have each taken a number of steps to drive down the amount of sewage that must be discharged each year – and I commend their leadership on that.
- But each of us knows that this doesn't get fixed without a serious course correction at the federal level.

- Now, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is an excellent start. Already, the EPA has provided \$188 million this year alone for water infrastructure projects, including CSOs, in Massachusetts.
- Still, fixing CSOs is not cheap. Over the last 15 years, Lowell has invested \$150 million in CSO control projects, resulting in a 60% reduction in annual volume of CSO discharges.
- Even so, an average of 300-450 million gallons of raw sewage are released into the river each year.
- Overall, the city estimates it will cost roughly \$400 million to eliminate all CSO discharges from its sewer systems.
- Lawrence, Haverhill, Fitchburg, and Methuen also face the daunting prospect of multi-million dollar projects to fix their CSOs.
- The same is true for Manchester, New Hampshire, which is further upstream along the Merrimack.
- In fact, Manchester dumps 221 million gallons in CSOs into the Merrimack each year.
- That is why my good friend, Mr. Pappas, a member of this committee, also requested a \$20 million authorization to help Manchester fix its sewage systems.
- I strongly support this request and thank him for making it.
- After all, we are all a part of the Merrimack Valley ecosystem – and sewage in the river in Manchester eventually works its way to Lowell, to Methuen, to Lawrence, and to Haverhill.
- Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and my colleagues on the Committee, I'm not asking for an authorization to fix all of the sewage systems in my district.
- But I am asking for your help to make a dent.
- \$20 million authorizations for each of these five cities will go a long way to cleaning up our drinking water and improving the health of hundreds of thousands of people in my district.
- Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today and for considering my requests.

- I look forward to working with all of you as we craft WRDA and find ways to help the communities we serve.