

## WRDA Comments

Chairwoman Napolitano and Ranking Member Rouzer,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today to request that the Subcommittee give the fullest consideration to my Water Resources Development Act submissions, which will address longstanding environmental and infrastructure concerns that have an impact across Georgia, and in particular the Second Congressional District in southwest and middle Georgia.

My first priority is to address the perennial problem of aquatic invasive species, particularly hydrilla, that has plagued Lake Seminole for the past twenty years. Many areas of the lake are inaccessible because of this aggressive weed. It negatively affects water quality, the economy, the biosphere, and local businesses. I am joined by Congressman Lawson and Congressman Dunn of Florida in asking the Subcommittee to support an amendment that would identify hydrilla as an additional aquatic invasive species of concern under Section 1108 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2018, which directs the Army Corps of Engineers to research their prevention, management, and eradication. Adding hydrilla to the list will emphasize the range of aquatic invasive species that plague U.S. waterways, as well as focus the Corps of Engineers' attention on Hydrilla, a particularly pernicious plant.

I also have two requests that would greatly alleviate the water infrastructure in Albany, Georgia. One addresses combined sewer outfall. During hard rains, millions of gallons of sewage mix with hundreds of millions of gallons of rainwater. While the city has made progress separating the outfall, they would

benefit from federal support to completely separate the sewage from the rainwater. For this project, I support the request of \$105 million in funding as an environmental infrastructure project.

The second project involves the Albany, Georgia floodplain. Significant portions of Albany are flood-prone, and I ask that the Subcommittee support a request for a study on the feasibility of modifying the landscape to reduce the city's flood potential.

Next, I come before the Subcommittee to fully support a request for further research at the Port of Savannah to increase the number of ships that can safely utilize the port. The Port of Savannah is one of the top fifty busiest water ports in the world and has played a significant role in mitigating global shipping and supply chain challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The Port of Savannah is the pride of Georgia, particularly in its role as the biggest, busiest, and most economically productive port in the region. The Savannah Harbor Expansion Project has completed many of its milestones since construction commenced in 2015; however the existing federal channel still cannot adequately support the influx of newer, larger vessels that are calling on the port. As the dean of the Georgia Congressional Delegation, I am requesting a study to determine the feasibility of widening the Savannah Harbor to accommodate a greater throughput of large vessels to ensure the South's busiest port can keep pace with the ever-growing demand for maritime shipping. Further improvements to the Savannah Harbor will undoubtedly spur economic activity in Georgia and the broader southeast region.

Finally, I am requesting that the Corps of Engineers study the feasibility of installing a forecast informed reservoir operations (FIRO) system in the Apalachicola Chattahoochee Flint (ACF) River Basin. The FIRO system is an approved Corps policy and a flexible and adaptive water management tool to help water managers make decisions about holding back or releasing water from reservoirs based on modern meteorological, river flow, and other forecasting methods and metrics. With climate change causing increased rainfalls and intermittent drought, forecast-informed reservoir operations in the ACF River Basin will provide the necessary flexibility to safely meet future climate conditions.