

**REMARKS OF THE HON. ROSA L. DELAURO
MEMBERS' DAY HEARING WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT (WRDA)
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2022**

Thank you, **Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, Subcommittee Chair Napolitano, Ranking Member Rouzer** and all the members of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment for holding this Members' Day hearing to examine some of our priorities for a new *Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)* for 2022.

As we all know, *WRDA* is essential to everyday hardworking Americans and vital to ensuring a robust economy. Nearly 80 percent of traded goods move through our nation's ports ... harbors ... and inland waterways. Projects for flood damage reduction help protect our rural and urban communities from coastal storms and inland flooding, which benefits millions of Americans. And ecosystem restoration projects restore and maintain our natural resources. This important work, carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), is made possible through the work enacting *WRDA*.

Since 2014, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has crafted and passed *WRDA* on a bipartisan and biennial basis. *WRDA* provides the Corps with the authority to address water infrastructure needs to cities, agriculture, and industry – to aid in the production of hydropower, to manage a national recreation program, and to address local environmental infrastructure needs. This is key to preserving our nation’s economy, protecting our communities and businesses, and maintaining our quality of life.

So, I am grateful today for the opportunity to highlight a few projects that are of concern—including the reauthorization of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Long Island Sound Program—as the committee works toward developing a new *WRDA*.

Having grown up on the shores of the Long Island Sound – it has always held a special place in my heart. More than 120 species and six states depend on the Sound for so many economic and environmental reasons. It is a beautiful estuary and a national treasure, and to my constituents – has long been considered our very own national park.

Every year, millions flock to it for recreational purposes – and it provides a critical transportation corridor for goods and people. In addition, the Sound continues to provide feeding ... nesting – and nursery areas for diverse animal and plant life. The ability of the Sound to sustain this is dependent on the quality of its waters ... habitats ... and living resources. So, I have long been a steadfast advocate for safeguarding and restoring the water quality and the diverse habitats of the Sound. Last authorized in *WRDA 2018*, the current authorization period is 2019-2023. And since the next *WRDA bill* will not be until 2024, I want to ensure that the authorization carries over until the next bill goes into effect.

As an additional part of our effort to address investments in America's water infrastructure, I also urge the Subcommittee to consider authorizing project studies for the Guilford Harbor and Sluice Channel ... the Branford Harbor and Stony Creek Channel Navigation Project ... and the Woodbridge Flood Risk Management.

The Town of Guilford's Marina (Guilford Harbor and Sluice Channel) is an essential facility for Guilford's recreational and commercial industries. The Marina in-water facilities consist of 111 floating slips, 7 commercial docks, 14 river mornings, and a boat ramp. The Marina also provides parking and access to a 1000-foot scenic overlook and finishing areas. Maintaining appropriate depths of the access channels to the Marina and East River are vital for its function.

As a result of the tidal flow and the natural silting of the Entrance and Sluice Creek Channels – it is necessary to regularly dredge these channels, the Marina Basin, and the East River Anchorage. This silting process necessitates that we maintain a schedule to dredge every 6 years. And the last dredging project was completed in 2015 – making this an urgent project to get done immediately.

The dredging of the Branford River and the Stony Creek Channel is another vital project that needs attention. Currently, both the river and channel suffer from extensive areas of shoaling, which is directly affecting the public and businesses that rely on these natural resources.

The river and channel are important components of the economic make-up of Branford and surrounding towns due to the numerous commercial, public, and recreational interests and opportunities available. There are approximately 2,000 vessels docked and moored on the river and in Stony Creek. Branford Police and Fire Departments have vessels on the river, which provide public safety, rescue, and fire suppression to all boaters, commercial facilities, and several inhabited islands along the coast of Branford.

And I must take this opportunity to mention the Woodbridge Floor Risk Management Project. While Woodbridge's designated flood hazard areas cover less than 6% of its area, these designations affect some 296 parcels within the Town. For landowners whose parcels lie within the 100-year flood zone, mitigation measures can help significantly reduce the risk of costly damage from a serious flood.

So, thank you again for the opportunity to speak today and considering my requests to help ensure that these critical projects receive

the attention they deserve so that they can continue being valuable resources for generations to come. Thank you.