



December 7, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of our over 2.5 million members and supporters, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) appreciates the hard work that went in to crafting the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2022 and writes in strong support of its passage. EDF is a leading international, non-partisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting human health and the environment by effectively applying science, economics, law, and innovative private-sector partnerships. We thank Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for coming together to produce a bipartisan bill focused on water resource conservation, river and harbor improvements, water pollution control, environmental justice, and protecting safe drinking water for all Americans.

We encourage the House and Senate to pass the important provisions outlined below before the end of the year:

Addressing America's growing flood risk. Both the Senate and the House have acknowledged the importance of protecting communities and infrastructure from the growing impacts of flooding. We support provisions that: require all flooding contributors (i.e. river discharges, wind, waves, tides, and rain events) to be considered when planning flood and storm damage reduction projects; direct the Corps to incorporate congressional intent in their studies; require consideration of erosion among impacts from flood events as our climate changes; and to direct the Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) to advance the National Coastal Mapping Study to identify ways to improve coastal mapping and carry out a demonstration project in the North Carolina coastal region.

Enabling ecosystem restoration and prioritize natural and nature-based solutions. We strongly support specifying that the implementation of the Mississippi River Gulf-Outlet (MRGO) Ecosystem Restoration plan is funded at full federal expense, clarifying Congress' original intent. This clarifying language will ensure the study will be completed in the most timely and efficient manner, after a decade of inaction. Moving the restoration plan forward will lead to increased protection for communities made more vulnerable because of the channel, especially as hurricanes and flooding increase in both intensity and frequency, and to restoration of the vast ecosystem damaged by MRGO. We also strongly support the provision specifying that the implementation of the Lower Mississippi River (LMR) Comprehensive Management Study is funded at full federal expense, clarifying Congress' original intent. The LMR Comprehensive Management Study is essential to the health and prosperity of coastal communities in the region, as it advances smarter river management through the seven states making up the LMR basin. The clarifying language will advance this essential study without undue delays, reducing risks in terms of lives, economic outputs, and ecological integrity throughout the lower river basin.

Providing additional resources and consultation with Tribes, Territories, and Economically Disadvantaged Communities. Systematic inequalities built into the policies and programs that govern our coastal and riverine systems often leave low wealth communities, communities of color, and Tribal communities at greater risk of the impacts of intensifying water resource challenges. We support provisions that assist these communities in obtaining equitable solutions for their water resources challenges, including extending and expanding the Tribal Partnership program, establishing a Tribal and economically disadvantaged communities advisory committee, and requiring Tribal liaisons for each Corps district.

We thank you and your colleagues again for your hard work crafting a bill with an emphasis on environmental infrastructure, and we look forward to continuing to work with you for a flood and storm-resilient future for the communities who live, work, and play around our nation's coastlines, rivers, and waterbodies.

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie Snider
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