

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about projects important to Northeast Ohio.

The first project that my office is planning to submit is a project in the city of New Franklin to fix issues arising from water runoff and drinking water infrastructure in the Nimisila Reservoir and Portage Lakes. These bodies of water are considered Traditionally Navigable Waters (TNW) of the United States, according to the US Army Corps of Engineers, and fall within the Army Corps improvement plan for the Upper Tuscarawas River watershed.

The Portage Lakes were constructed in the mid 1850's to serve as a source of water for the Ohio and Erie canal system. Nimisila Reservoir was constructed in the late 1930's to help maintain water levels throughout the Portage Lakes system, and the heavy industries in the region that relied on access to the water for manufacturing purposes. The entire region sits adjacent to the continental divide between the Lake Erie basin and the Ohio River system. Consequently, the modifications to the natural hydrology in the region over 150 years has meant that water flows throughout the area in ways that are dependent on manmade infrastructure, rather than natural patterns.

Much of the hydraulic infrastructure in the area, some of it now dating back to designs drawn up the mid-19th century, is now aging and faces significant deterioration. With the modifications to the area over time, this can lead to serious issues when infrastructure breaks down. The city of New Franklin, which encompasses much of the Portage Lakes region, has been working since 2011 to find a solution for issues related to stormwater runoff and flooding along the city's Main Street corridor. Attempts at a solution are complicated by the fact that the storm drainage system installed in the 1930's, when Nimisila Reservoir was constructed, appears to have reached the end of its useful life. The system appears to be substantially silted in, and in places, may be cracked or broken, leading to possible intrusion from water coming off the Nimisila Reservoir levees.

As a result of these issues, the cities of New Franklin and Green have seen flooding along the Main Street corridor on an almost annual basis, sometimes resulting in the closure of the

roadway for several days. During particularly heavy flooding in 2011 and 2019, these two cities were forced to pump water off the roadway, at a significant cost to their budgets. The city of New Franklin has been working with their consulting engineers, GPD Group, and believe that replacement of 1.25 miles of storm sewer from East Canton Road to West Nimisila Road and upgrading the storm sewer from 36" to 42" to handle increased flow.

Thank you for your consideration.