

**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Member Day Hearing on
Water Resources Development Act of 2022**

Written Testimony of Rep. Brenda L. Lawrence (MI-14)

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding critical issues facing my constituents in Michigan's 14th Congressional District.

As you all know too well, across the country, our water infrastructure is failing. Too many communities are dealing with the reality of decades of underinvestment in our infrastructure. My constituents have been paying the price for that failure for too many years.

Last summer, heavy rainfall across Southeast Michigan demonstrated how our deteriorating infrastructure is failing Michiganders.

In my district, residents in the Metro Detroit region faced the brunt of this rainfall, which flooded their basements, overran their cars, and left them without power for weeks.

In this year's Water Resources Development Act, it is critical to my constituents that we address flood control mitigation efforts.

A comprehensive study by the Army Corps of Engineers would help the Great Lakes Water Authority mitigate the risk of basement and surface flooding following similar examples of intense rain.

Forecasted increases in rainfall intensity due to climate change have demonstrated that a long-term flood mitigation plan is necessary for the residents and businesses within Great Lake Water Authority's service area in Southeast Michigan, which includes 2.8 million people—approximately 30

percent of the state's entire population.

In my district, two projects will greatly benefit from the assistance of the Army Corps.

Just north of Detroit, along the shores of Lake St. Clair, an aging sea wall is in desperate need of repairs to prevent flooding of a critical roadway. The impacted communities, Grosse Pointe Shores and Grosse Pointe Farms, have spent years engaging with key stakeholders and seeking assistance from state and federal agencies.

A feasibility study by the Army Corps could help assess the potential for a naturalization of the lakeshore to replace the obsolete concrete barrier. Not only would this naturalization protect the local water supply, sewers, and roadways from flooding, it would also address a serious safety concern due to debris from the concrete wall.

Naturalizing the Lake St. Claire shoreline would also increase biodiversity and improve a valuable fishing resource, supporting findings by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in November 2021.

My requests also include a feasibility study for the City of Detroit, where the Jefferson Chalmers and Jefferson Village neighborhoods on the Lower East Side are also dealing with severe flooding.

During a 2019 flood event, high water levels in the Detroit River flooded more than 300 homes in the Lower East Side, and 7 billion gallons of river water entered sewerage and water treatment systems.

This additional load caused increased discharges of untreated water into the Detroit River, violating water quality requirements, and putting the whole

wastewater system for Southeast Michigan at risk of failure.

A feasibility study for the City of Detroit would allow for long-term mitigation measures to address flooding.

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, I would like to thank you and the members of the Committee once more for your tireless work on this legislation, and thank you for the opportunity to address the critical needs of my district.