



National Wildlife Federation

National Advocacy Center

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December 5, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Water Resources Development Act of 2022

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Republican Leader McCarthy:

The National Wildlife Federation writes in support of provisions within the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 that would advance the development of equitable solutions to entrenched water resources challenges and protect and restore vital wildlife habitats. We thank Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for their bipartisan work in developing these important provisions and advancing them through conference.

Coastal and riverine communities—and especially communities of color and Tribes—face immense and intensifying water resources challenges in the face of climate-fueled floods and disasters and decades of assaults on the natural systems that protect people and wildlife alike. These same assaults are also pushing the nation's fish and wildlife to the brink. Numerous provisions in the bill will help make progress in addressing these challenges and infusing resilience into the nation's water resources projects.

The National Wildlife Federation supports the provisions in WRDA 2022 that will help:

- Redress pervasive environmental injustices by providing tools and direction to the Corps to assist Tribes and frontline communities in obtaining equitable solutions for their water resources challenges. These provisions include: establishing a Tribal and economically disadvantaged communities advisory committee; requiring Tribal Liaisons for each Corps of Engineers District; extending and expanding the Tribal Partnership program and providing additional assistance to help defray the costs to Tribes of obtaining assistance; and requiring the Secretary to coordinate with federal and state agencies responsible for the remediation of contaminated sediments at certain Corps projects.
- Improve community and ecosystem resilience by providing direction to the Corps that will assist communities in adapting to the increased flooding, storms, and erosion caused by our changing climate. These provisions direct the Corps to improve the resilience of the nation's shorelines, riverbanks, and streambanks; and allow the Corps to consider the full array of flooding contributors when planning flood and storm damage reduction projects, including river discharges, wind, waves, tides, and rainfall.

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- Restore the Mississippi River and its coastal and floodplain wetlands that provide vital and sustainable protections from storms and floods, essential fish and wildlife habitat, clean water, and extensive economic opportunities that benefit the entire country. These provisions include: facilitating restoration of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet and development of the Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Management Study by clarifying that those activities will be carried out at full federal expense; ensuring that the Corps will routinely carry out highly effective and cost-effective water level management activities on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to help redress sedimentation and to improve the quality and quantity of fish and wildlife habitat; and increasing the authorization limits for the Upper Mississippi River restoration program.
- Advance the ongoing implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan to restore America's Everglades and study options to eliminate harmful discharges and toxic algae throughout the Greater Everglades ecosystem. Comprehensive Everglades restoration will safeguard the drinking water of 9 million Floridians and help make communities more resilient.
- Prevent the movement of invasive carp and other invasive species from the Mississippi River basin into the Great Lakes by establishing a 90 percent federal cost share for the Brandon Road project. Ultimately, however, the National Wildlife Federation believes the Brandon Road project should be authorized at full federal expense, including for construction, operation, and maintenance, to ensure there are no delays in the funding and construction of this project that will help block invasive carp from advancing from the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers through the Chicago Area Waterway System and into Lake Michigan.

The National Wildlife Federation does have concerns with a number of provisions and projects in WRDA 2022 due to their potential for significant adverse implications for vital wildlife habitat, natural infrastructure, and communities—including authorization of the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration project, which requires significant additional analysis and study.

We encourage the Senate to advance the important provisions outlined above before the end of the year, to advance more equitable, inclusive, and resilient water resource planning and critically important ecosystem restoration efforts.

Sincerely,



Jessie Ritter
Senior Director of Water Resources and Coastal Policy
National Wildlife Federation

Cc: The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio, Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking Member, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano, Chair, Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee
The Honorable David Rouzer, Ranking Member, Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee