

Thank you, Chairwoman Napolitano (and Chairman DeFazio), for the opportunity to testify today and for your strong leadership throughout the WRDA process. I want to also recognize my New Jersey colleagues on the committee, Representatives Payne, Sires, and Malinowski, and Representative Malinowski particularly for his work on this subcommittee to advance New Jersey's priorities.

I'm here today because flooding has plagued my district in North Jersey for generations. Last September, the remnants of Hurricane Ida caused significant damage to the region, including the tragic loss of life around the Peckman River. And while I am deeply grateful to the Committee for authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers Peckman River Basin Project, and the Army Corps for providing the full \$146.2 million in federal funding to complete it, I wish I could tell you that the Peckman is the only source of flooding in my district.

Unfortunately, flooding is an all too frequent reality for my constituents. The banks of the Whippany River have deteriorated badly, and the flooding that results is felt throughout the surrounding communities. The oldest historically Black church in Morris County, Bethel Church in Morristown, which has stood for over 178 years, has faced consistent flooding from the Whippany, leading to significant damage to the building and grounds. In 2001, when Tropical Storm Irene caused the Whippany River to surge beyond its banks, it filled the basement of the church with four feet of water.

It doesn't stop there. I met recently with Mayors of four other impacted towns in the district- East Hanover, Hanover, Parsippany, and Florham Park. The flooding is such a regular occurrence that the towns now have water rescue units in place after the Mayors were regularly going out in rowboats to rescue residents. Hanover Township had to move the location of a fire house, and major roadways for business access are consistently flooded and closed at great economic cost to the community.

My community needs the Army Corps to help. That's why I am requesting a General Investigation Watershed Study of the Whippany River, to begin the process of a federally-funded mitigation and restoration effort.

I have also toured flood zones and spoken with Mayors and residents of towns including Pequannock, Montville, Lincoln Park, Wayne, Fairfield, Pompton Lakes, Livingston, Florham Park and Chatham about the impact of chronic flooding from the Passaic River. Flooding along the Passaic has caused twelve federal disaster declarations since 1968 and multiple Army Corps reports support the need for mitigation efforts. The Corps estimates that when viewed over time, the average annual flood damage in the basin is over \$160 million. Yet these towns are too often left to manage mitigation efforts on their own, without federal or state support - shouldering a regional issue in a piecemeal fashion that is both expensive and inefficient, not to mention an unfair burden for them to bear. To that end, I am here to request federal help. To begin this process, we need to authorize a feasibility study on desnagging, potential home elevations, and other mitigation opportunities under CAP authority around the Passaic River Basin.

The good work this committee can do extends beyond flood mitigation. To that end, I am grateful for the Committee's decision to restore the authorization of Environmental Infrastructure Projects and I request that you consider the following submissions:

First, several communities in my district, including Boonton Township and Montville have water treatment plants that are in urgent need of repair and updating. The poor condition and outdated technologies of these plants threaten the ability to maintain a safe and reliable supply of potable water. As such, I am requesting Army Corps investment to fund the needed improvements, repairs, and updates.

Second, fourteen municipalities in my district currently have at least one Public Water System with PFAS violations, according to the NJDEP. PFAS, also called "forever chemicals", are linked to negative health consequences including cancer, infertility, liver and kidney disease, hormone disruption, and damage to the immune system, especially in children. These towns, which have populations as small as 2,100 and as large as 50,000 people, do not have the resources to fix these issues on their own. As such, I am requesting Army Corps funding for a regional project in Essex, Morris, Passaic and Sussex Counties to install filters on municipal wells and elsewhere in the water infrastructure system to ensure clean drinking water for our communities.

Third, the impact of Harmful Algae Blooms on Lake Hopatcong has been an ongoing struggle in my district. The closure of the lake during the summer season of 2019, which was caused by a HABs outbreak, was devastating to the community, not just from a recreational perspective, but because the lake and the tourism associated with it are a major economic driver for the region. One of the biggest contributors to this issue is the lack of sewer infrastructure along the lake. That is why I am requesting Army Corps funding for the study and installation of public sanitary sewers in Jefferson Township to help address this chronic issue.

And while I have several other requests that I have submitted to the Committee, I know I am limited in my time here today. I also know that you are all committed to our job in Congress to make the government work for the people we represent. The Water Resources Development Act is a tremendous opportunity to make long-overdue progress, and I urge you to include these requests.

Thank you and I yield back.

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