

June 6th, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

CC:

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano
Chair
Subcommittee on Water Resources and
Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
1610 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Rouzer
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water Resources and
Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
2439 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP), representing hunting, angling, outdoor recreation, and conservation organizations from across the nation, writes today in support of numerous provisions contained in the 2022 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Such policies and programs will commit much-needed resources to improving the health of our aquatic ecosystems via conservation-positive funding solutions and policy changes.

Our community has long advocated for investments in natural infrastructure, water quality, and drought resilience as a means of building resilience and restoring and protecting our nation's wildlife, landscapes, and the people that enjoy them. We believe that the following proposals are well-suited to address the needs of our nation's aging or obsolete water infrastructure network and will expand access to and storage of clean water.

Sec. 223. Western Infrastructure Study

Natural hazards, such as drought and wildfire, are placing increasing stress on critical, but aging, western water storage, and delivery infrastructure. Post-fire sedimentation, for example, contributes to degraded water quality and a loss of storage capacity. Traditional approaches to managing post-fire sedimentation such as dredging, and sluicing can be cost-prohibitive and

damage important downstream fisheries. Natural infrastructure approaches, such as restoring wetland and riparian ecosystems upstream of critical infrastructure, holds significant promise in terms of reducing risk to built infrastructure, promoting natural water storage, and sustaining fish and wildlife habitat. This section would require the Corps to conduct a study evaluating the benefits of using natural infrastructure approaches to enhance the resilience of Western water supplies and infrastructure to drought and wildfire, while maximizing co-benefits, and to use the results to inform ongoing Corps programming and operations.

Sec. 314 Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Project, Brandon Road, Will County, Illinois

Lowers the local cost burdens for the Mississippi River Interbasin Project and the Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Study from 20% to 10%.

Sec. 114 Assessment of Corps of Engineers levees

Requires the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA) to conduct an assessment of levees to identify opportunities for the modification (including realignment or incorporation of natural and nature-based features) of levee systems to increase the flood risk reduction benefits of such systems; achieve greater flood resiliency; and restore hydrological and ecological connections with adjacent floodplains

Sec. 202. Expedited Completion

Expedites a feasibility study for western Everglades ecosystem restoration

Sec. 213. Report on South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Plan Implementation

Requires a report from the ASA that provides an update on Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan projects, Lake Okeechobee, and the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration plan

Sec. 117. National low-head dam inventory

Low-head dams are engineered structures built into and across streams and rivers for a variety of purposes, including flood control and industrial use, however many of these structures are abandoned or no longer serve a public purpose. These structures are also significant public safety threats to anglers and those floating rivers for recreation and frequently present barriers to fish passage and aquatic connectivity. Several states and other stakeholders are working to map these structures, but a national database of these structures does not currently exist. This section would establish a National Low-Head Dam Inventory that can be used to provide valuable information such as improved angler and boater safety and guiding low-head dam rehabilitation efforts to improve fish and boating passage.

The inclusion of these provisions is an important step in ensuring that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can meet the needs of our communities and natural resources. We look forward to working with you to ensure that these priorities are passed into law.

Sincerely,

Whit Fosburgh

President & CEO

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership