



June 6, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader

Chairman Peter DeFazio
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Ranking Member Sam Graves
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Chairman Grace Napolitano
Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

Ranking Member David Rouzer
Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

Re: Support for the House 2022 Water Resources Development Act

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Chairman Peter DeFazio and Grace Napolitano, and Ranking Members Sam Graves and David Rouzer,

American Rivers writes to support the House 2022 Water Resources Development Act. The safety and environmental provisions in this bill will help to protect the people and waterways of the U.S. and we applaud your dedication to these efforts.

We are pleased to see section 105, authorizing the removal of man-made obstructions for aquatic ecosystem restoration projects. We believe this is an important step in restoration projects as obstructions left in-stream pose hazards to both the ecosystem and human safety.

The support of outreach for underserved communities is an imperative provision in this bill, one that we also fully support. We appreciate the Corps striving for better transparency in processes, website access, and contacts for projects as outlined in section 110.

With climate change impacting the nation, assessing the levees of the nation is more critical than ever. Our floodplain restoration team has identified that levee setback or the inclusion of natural or nature-based features can contribute to better flood control and ecosystem resilience and we are pleased to see section 114 directing the Corps to assess their levees for implementing these modifications where appropriate.

The assessment of the Corps of Engineers Dams is another vital provision in WRDA, we support this section 116 that compels the Corps to identify dams not meeting their authorized purposes, that have been abandoned or not adequately maintained, or have reached the end of their useful life. We especially support the provision to be able to remove such structures when appropriate for the benefit of public safety and environmental health.

We enthusiastically support the inclusion of section 117, the National Low Head Dam Inventory. We worked with American Whitewater and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership in getting

support for this important provision. This inventory will contribute significantly to public safety as low-head dams are known public safety hazards, and yet not inventoried nationally, one of which took the lives of two young women just this past Memorial Day in Richmond, VA. We hope that this inventory will contribute to promoting public safety at identified low-head dams through public education, signage, or removal where appropriate.

We are encouraged to see that a new provision on the Columbia River Basin has been added to the WRDA bill, and while we have concerns that it does not act quickly enough to protect endangered salmon, we look forward to working with the Committee as it goes through conference on the bill.

We thank you again for your dedication to ensuring the public safety through provisions in the Water Resources Development Act.

For further information, please contact Ted Illston, American Rivers (tillston@americanrivers.org).

Sincerely,



Tom Kiernan
President and CEO
American Rivers



Ted Illston
Senior Director, Policy and Government Relations
American Rivers