

Thank you, Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger and Members of this Committee, for the opportunity to testify today on the importance of the Surfside-Sunset & Newport Beach Replenishment Project in my congressional district.

I represent California's 48th Congressional District, which includes the Orange County coastline and our incredible beaches. Seal Beach, Huntington Beach, Laguna Beach, and Newport Beach are all in the 48th District. More than 50 million people visited Orange County and our beautiful beach cities in 2019. We are proud of our community, our wildlife and our reputation as one of the most beautiful places in the whole country.

Our coastline has historically been replenished with sand from the San Gabriel and Santa Ana Rivers. This was a **naturally** occurring process until the 1940's when the federal government widened Anaheim Bay and constructed breakwaters and jetties to service the new military bases that opened to boost efforts for the Pacific Fleet. The Army Corps also created flood control projects along three local rivers, and breakwaters were constructed to create and protect the Los Angeles/Long Beach harbor. This new construction by the federal government created narrowed beaches that are now susceptible to extreme erosion.

In 1962, the Army Corps conducted a study and presented their findings to Congress. In that study, the Department of the Army proposed measures to "mitigate adverse effects of previously constructed projects" and "its views concerning responsibility for such mitigating measures."

House Document 602 acknowledged that the Federal government **was responsible** for the disruption to the naturally occurring replenishment process. Congress accepted the findings from the study and passed Public Law 87-874 which approved and authorized the Orange County replenishment. The law also declared that there would be “periodic beach nourishment with no time limit on federal aid authorized.”

The Army Corps began replenishing sand in 1964, placing approximately 18 million cubic yards of sand at Surfside and Sunset beach over 12 construction stages which occurred in 5–7-year intervals. In 1995, after planning Stage 10, the Army Corps abandoned their responsibilities to Orange County and decided to stop providing congressionally-mandated shoreline protection. In 2000, the Army Corps stated that it was no longer budgeting for future stages.

Stage 13 is long overdue and has a non-federal cost share agreement with local stakeholders. They stand ready with over \$7 million in funding. As this project continues to be delayed, it’s only adding more costs to taxpayers. Had Stage 13 been constructed in 2017, when the designs were completed, the total cost would have been approximately \$16 million. Now the Federal government’s cost share alone is \$15.5 million. Local stakeholders include the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Seal Beach, and the Surfside Stormwater District.

Before serving in Congress, I was an Orange County Supervisor. During my tenure, I pushed Congress and the Army Corps to fund and complete this vital project that is required by U.S. law. I am here today to urge, once again, for the funding of this project. Our community cannot

afford to wait any longer for these projects to restart. Every major and minor storm subsequently diminishes the protective buffer. Some areas have less than 100 feet of sand protecting them from the Pacific Ocean. Sadly, in July 2020 the area saw a flood event that caused a natural disaster. Newport Beach saw strong ocean waves overpower the coastline and flood surrounding areas including neighborhoods and automobiles. Officials had to rescue over one hundred people and worked fast to limit the destabilizing impacts. Had the beaches not been closed due to COVID, the outcome could have been more severe.

It is imperative that the Army Corps immediately move forward on this project. The federal government needs to fix the problem it caused – it is a no-brainer. The safety, security and health of our communities depend on it.

Thank you for your time today to address the urgent need for the Surfside-Sunset & Newport Beach Replenishment Project. I have local resolutions and support letters from Orange County, Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Seal Beach and photos from the July 2020 Flood I would like to submit for the record.