

**Testimony of the Honorable Frank J. Mrvan, U.S. Representative, IN-01
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
May 3, 2021**

I would like to thank Chairwoman Kaptur and Ranking Member Simpson for holding today's Member Day hearing. I appreciate the opportunity to engage with all members of this Subcommittee and advocate for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects that are essential to strengthening the economy of Northwest Indiana, the entire Midwest, and our nation.

I have the great honor and privilege of representing Indiana's First Congressional District, following in the footsteps of my mentor and friend, Chairman Pete Visclosky. Our district is at the center of vital road, rail, air, and port networks and home to major manufacturing industries. This infrastructure – coupled with our incredible workforce and adjacency to the great city of Chicago – enables our region to continue to attract new businesses and talent. Northwest Indiana is proud to have the largest concentration of steel production and the largest inland oil refinery in our country. These industries foster economic activity and provide good-paying, union jobs to thousands of workers in my district.

From maintaining the federal navigation depths of our commercial harbors to ensuring Northwest Indiana residents have clean drinking water, the Chicago District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a true hero and an unparalleled, long-standing partner when it comes to facilitating economic development and promoting environmental stewardship in Northwest Indiana. Chairman Visclosky would often state that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects serve as an economic driver in Indiana's First Congressional District, and I agree wholeheartedly.

I appreciate that Community Project Funding is an important step in re-asserting the constitutional prerogatives of the Legislative Branch, and I fully understand the importance to

this Subcommittee to thoughtfully scrutinize Member requests. I believe it is critical that we exercise our constitutional authority to direct funding to our districts, and it is incumbent for us to submit project requests that are beyond reproach and focused on the criteria set forth by this Subcommittee.

For the First District of Indiana, I have asked this Subcommittee to appropriate \$10 million in Community Project Funding to the Corps' Construction account for the specific purpose of undertaking Environmental Infrastructure projects in the Calumet Region. I would note that the requested amount is equal to the Chicago District's demonstrated capability for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. Authorized by Section 219 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992 and subsequent laws, Environmental Infrastructure projects have had a transformational impact in my district, aiding local communities in making necessary, overdue improvements to water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater sewer infrastructure.

With respect to the appropriate transparency measures that this Subcommittee has put in place, I would emphasize for the Calumet Region Section 219 that the evidence of local community support is overwhelming, with local sponsors consistently contributing 25 percent of their projects' costs. These projects have also had a vital benefit to local communities, and attracted new economic activity to our region. In partnership with the Chicago District, this cost-sharing approach has served as a model of federal-local cooperation and delivered a strong track-record of proven results, included, but not limited to: sanitary sewer interceptors and lines that benefit residents by reducing flooding; improved operations of local wastewater treatment facilities by eliminating inflow and infiltration of groundwater into sewer systems; and stormwater projects constructed in areas where no previous stormwater infrastructure existed to protect homeowners from costly flooding events. I firmly believe that we must build on such

models of cooperation and continue to appropriately distribute federal assistance through the annual appropriations process to communities that are depending on us.

Additionally, I have requested approximately \$18 million in Community Project Funding to complete Corps' Construction activities of the Confined Disposal Facility and assist Indiana Harbor, one of the most commercially active harbors in the Great Lakes and the 43rd most active port in the country. Navigational dredging resumed in Indiana Harbor in 2012 – having last been dredged in 1972 – and has substantially enhanced the harbor's commercial viability, as well as improved environmental and health conditions for local communities. We must provide the Chicago District with additional resources in FY 2022 in order to build upon these gains and further increase the harbor's commercial capacity. I would note that, in part due to ongoing navigational dredging, Indiana Harbor is directly or indirectly generating nearly \$1 billion in annual business revenue and supporting approximately 100,000 jobs, many of them good-paying, union jobs.

Finally, I have requested approximately \$1.6 million in Community Project Funding for Operation and Maintenance activities in Burns Waterway Harbor. Continuing to fund this project in FY 2022 ensures the operations and economic activity at the Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor continues uninterrupted. This port accepts international shipments entering from the St. Lawrence Seaway into the Great Lakes and is also the connection from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. The importance of the Burns Waterway Harbor and this port cannot be understated as it provides access to two major waterways – the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway and the Inland Waterway Systems – and annually, the port accounts for 100 ships, 400 barges, 300,000 trucks, 1,200 railcars, and 200 lake vessels moving cargo throughout the region. As with the other projects I have outlined, the economic benefits to local communities

are apparent. Burns Waterway Harbor is directly or indirectly generating more than \$15 billion in business revenue and 80,000 jobs, including union jobs with the International Longshoremen's Association.

In closing, I would like to again take a moment to recognize my predecessor, Chairman Visclosky, who served on this Subcommittee with distinction for many years. Mr. Visclosky showed me and Northwest Indiana the incredible value of the House Appropriations Committee and what responsible federal investments can do to transform local communities. Chairwoman Kaptur, Ranking Member Simpson, and all members of this Subcommittee, I look forward to building on Mr. Visclosky's positive legacy and developing strong relationships with all of you so that we may work in a collaborative and productive manner to deliver for Northwest Indiana and all of the American people. I thank you once again for the opportunity to testify today.