

Congressman Jeff Van Drew (NJ-02)

Testimony on the Mouth of the Maurice River Navigation Dredging Project

Madame Chair and Ranking Member,

Thank you for having me today to testify before the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Energy and Water.

I am here to advocate for a long overdue and much needed Army Corps of Engineers Project, the dredging of the Mouth of the Maurice River on the Delaware Bayshore in New Jersey. This project will generate high economic, operational, and environmental returns in a cost-effective and innovative manner.

The Maurice River has been federally authorized for dredging for over a century. Maintenance dredging should be done every 5 to 8 years, but it has been nearly 25 years since the Maurice River was last serviced. As it stands, vessels must idle and wait until high tide to access the river channel.

The neglect of the Maurice River channel has limited the ability of local industry, mostly small businesses, to flourish and expand. It has lost them large contracts.

It also has increased costs for government agencies, including the U.S. Army, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Army Corps, and the NJ state police. Government vessels that would otherwise be serviced at the Maurice River must instead travel to Rhode Island or Virginia, which increases the time and monetary costs of operation.

The proposed dredging will open the channel to larger vessels and more frequent navigation, which will increase the river's capacity for commerce across the Mid-Atlantic. Facilitating interstate commerce by keeping the Nation's waterways open and safe is one of the Army Corps of Engineers' original and most vital missions.

This project has outstanding community support. It has received letters of support from the surrounding municipalities, the county, the state legislative delegation, and the entire local business community. The local and regional community is totally united in its support for this project.

Most notably, this project has received a rare letter of capability from the Army Corps of engineers, which I have submitted to the committee.

The Army Corps has an innovate "beneficial-use plan" to execute this project in a cost-effective manner, amplify the benefits of the project, and utilize the dredge spoils for environmental resilience.

This project, if funded, will open a new world of opportunity for the Delaware Bayshore community. This is a community that is near and dear to my heart, and sadly one that is too often left behind. We can truly make a positive impact on this community.

I urge you to grant this request for \$4,010,000 in community project funding to the Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia District to conduct this one-of-a-kind project.

Thank you for your time.