



Advocacy partner of Environmental Defense Fund

The Honorable Jared Huffman, Chair
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Committee on Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

1/20/22

Re: Support for the New York-New Jersey Watershed Protection Act (H.R. 4677)

Chair Huffman and Ranking Member Bentz,

Thank you for your consideration of the following comments. The New York-New Jersey Harbor watershed is one of the most urban in the nation and provides clean water to more than 15 million Americans, opportunities for tourism and recreation, hosts one of the busiest ports, and is home to hundreds of species of endemic and migratory wildlife. And yet, the region has faced extensive and growing environmental impacts. In the past century alone, the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary has lost 85% of its coastal wetlands. These and other losses have resulted in many of the vulnerabilities to climate change that regional ecosystems and communities face today. As Hurricanes Sandy, Ida, and others made clear, we must redress these vulnerabilities today to prevent tomorrow's disasters.

I am writing on behalf of EDF Action to express our support for the New York-New Jersey Watershed Protection Act (H.R. 4677). H.R. 4677 will protect this critical natural and economic resource and provide enormous benefits to the region and the nation. The bill provides investments that will pay dividends in improved public health; increased habitat for fish and wildlife; and protections of businesses, communities, and vital infrastructure from flooding and extreme heat. Investing in resilience measures alone can reap a return of 6:1 or more in benefits.

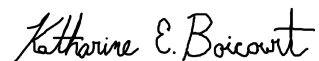
Federal partnerships in the watersheds of Chesapeake Bay, Delaware River, Long Island Sound, Lake Champlain, the Great Lakes, and others have successfully demonstrated how such a program can deliver direct benefits to the environment, local communities, and state economies. To date, the New York-New Jersey Hudson River watershed region has no federal environmental restoration program of comparable scale despite serving millions of people and important habitats.

H.R. 4677 would provide such an opportunity to begin to put federal investments in the region on equal footing with others, toward restoring some of the nation's most impaired and degraded waters and promoting environmental justice through a progressive cost-share formula. Due to

legacy environmental impacts and density, the watershed is a center of elevated demand for ecosystem services. Investments will quickly be absorbed into strategic projects that provide multiple benefits – enhancing quality of life, improving public health, and building resilience to climate change. Decades of planning, partnership development, consensus-building, and community engagement has prepared the region to build projects that will have real benefits that span across the watershed and beyond.

I urge you to support H.R. 4677 as an act of equitable investment in people and nature,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katharine E. Boicourt".

Kate Boicourt
Director, Climate Resilient Coasts & Watersheds, NY-NJ
EDF Action

CC: heather.pacheco@mail.house.gov
The Honorable Raul Grivalva, Chair, Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Paul Tonko, Member, Committee on Natural Resources