

Rep. Tlaib prepared testimony

Water Resources Development Act of 2022 – Member Day Hearing

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REMARKS (498 words - 5 minutes):

- Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today, and share four WRDA priorities that are critical to the communities I represent.
- The communities I represent in Southeast Michigan – communities like Romulus, Inkster, and Dearborn Heights – are on the front lines of the climate crisis.
- Last summer, these communities faced unprecedented flooding.
- We didn't merely experience 100-year rainfalls. We experienced a *1000-year* rainfall – our communities didn't even have projections for an event like this.
- Some homes flooded repeatedly over the span of just a few months. In some of these communities, raw sewage flowed through the streets.
- The flood maps and projections our communities rely on don't account for our rapidly warming planet and are simply out of date. And the water infrastructure in these communities is woefully inadequate for the extreme weather events we now face.
- I refuse to accept this as our new normal.

- As these catastrophic weather events increase in ferocity and frequency, our communities need the tools to be prepared. This year's WRDA presents an opportunity for my neighbors to better understand the threats that we face due to climate change, and to be equipped with resilient, modern water infrastructure.
- First, I encourage the Committee to offer support to the Detroit Division of the Army Corps of Engineers in planning and identifying flood resilience for communities along Ecorse Creek.
- I also encourage the Army Corps to conduct a feasibility study for flood risk management in Southeast Michigan.
- Third, I encourage the Committee to broaden environmental assistance for Michigan by committing 35 million dollars for projects like wastewater treatment, water supply, environmental restoration, and surface water resource protection.
- I'm very grateful to be joined by my good friend and neighbor Congresswoman Dingell in these three requests.
- Finally, while I applaud the Committee for their work on the 2020 WRDA bill, I encourage the Committee to truly incorporate environmental justice into the drafting of the 2022 WRDA bill.
- The most daunting water infrastructure challenges our nation faces are borne directly by so many of the nation's most vulnerable communities – including so many of the ones I represent.
- That means doing even more to ensure that the Army Corps of Engineers has the tools and capacity to advance community-supported solutions to these challenges.

- We should increase capacity and expertise within Army Corps, and give the public more meaningful opportunities to weigh in on the projects that affect their communities.
- We should continue increasing opportunities for assistance by building on and expanding the Pilot Program for Economically Disadvantaged Communities.
- Finally, we must maximize toxic remediation in ecological restoration, navigation and flood resilience projects; we must support minority-owned businesses; and we must continue developing and advancing environmental justice innovation.
- I thank Congressman Steve Cohen for joining me in this request, and for being a stalwart ally in the fight for environmental justice.
- I appreciate the opportunity to share my priorities before this Committee, and respectfully request their inclusion in the 2022 Water Resources Development Act. Thank you.