

March 14, 2022

Dear Chairwoman Napolitano, Ranking Member Rouser, and members of the subcommittee, I thank you for allowing me to submit testimony for the record about my district's priorities for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2022. I also commend all the Committee's staff for all their work and help during the submission process of WRDA projects.

As climate change and rising sea levels continues to present enormous challenges for our communities, it is more important than ever to invest in resilient water resources infrastructure. As such, I would like to discuss two crucial projects that would be beneficial for my district and my constituents.

First, I would like to highlight the Newtown Creek Salt Marsh and Ecology Berm project. This new environmental infrastructure request seeks to restore wetland habitat and build an elevated shoreline for public access and provide protection for adjacent properties and roadways from sea level rise and future storm surges. Once surrounded by 1,200 acres of tidal salt marsh, industrial growth and urban development left the Newtown Creek totally devoid of all marsh environment by the twenty-first century. The native salt marsh grasses help improve water quality, improve dissolved oxygen levels, mitigate storm surges, and provide critical habitat for keystone marine species, including the native ribbed mussels which are tremendous filter feeders and already exist in small crevices along the Creek's shorelines. The Newton Creek Alliance is ready and able to be the project sponsor if this infrastructure request is accepted by the Committee.

Similarly, I also proudly submitted to this Committee, the Brooklyn Navy Yard Comprehensive Port Resiliency Plan as a new environmental infrastructure request. This Plan seeks to address flooding and sea level rise to keep critical maritime infrastructure functional including three of the last working dry docks on the East Coast which service U.S. Coast Guard and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) vessels and can catalyze development of offshore wind farms to generate renewable energy for the State. The Navy Yard's maritime infrastructure includes three of the last working dry docks on the East Coast. In just this current fiscal year, the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation is managing approximately \$150 million of FEMA funds to invest in improving berths, dry docks, bulkheads, and other waterfront infrastructure. The Navy Yard's working waterfront includes GMD Shipyard, which provides O&M for public and private vessels, including U.S. Coast Guard and NOAA vessels. The Navy Yard was designated a port eligible for NYSERDA port infrastructure investment by the Governor of New York, as part of the Governor's efforts to catalyze development of offshore wind farms that will generate 9.5 GW of renewable energy for the State. The Navy Yard is susceptible to flooding and sea level rise, and there will likely be new improvements required to protect it and this unreplaceable infrastructure. The sponsor for this project is the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation.

Finally, I would like to testify about the bipartisan request for a language in support for the Community of El Cano Martin Pena (CMP) in Puerto Rico. This year, environmental justice was delivered when the CMP was awarded with \$163 million as one of the projects to receive funding following the enactment of the Infrastructure and Investment Act. I have been a proud advocate of this project throughout the years and through different WRDA requests. I stand in support again to include language to allow the USACE Secretary to credit, toward the non-Federal cost share of the Cano Martin Pena Project authorized by Section 5127 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, any costs for provision of real property interests, performance of relocations, and demolition of structures that are determined by the Secretary to be required for the project, including such costs incurred prior to the effective date of the partnership agreement for the project.

Once more, I would like to thank Chairman Napolitano, Ranking Member Rouser, and the staff for the hard work through the WRDA process and for your consideration of these remarks.

Thank you for allowing me the time to provide testimony,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nydia Velázquez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.