

Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Water Resources Subcommittee
Water Resources Development Act of 2022 Member Day Hearing
March 16, 2022

Chairwoman Napolitano and Ranking Member Rouzer, thank you letting me testify in support of my Water Resources Development Act priorities. I want to thank Congressman Malinowski, and also recognize Representatives Sires and Payne as senior members of the full committee. They are tireless advocates for New Jersey.

As a former member of this subcommittee, I have been a strong proponent of the Army Corps of Engineers. They have a dedicated workforce who do a job critical to address our nation's infrastructure challenges.

Within Paterson Great Falls Park there is the historic water raceway system. The raceways once diverted water from the river into a series of channels that ran throughout the city, bringing waterpower to the industrial mills. I hope the Committee will honor my request for a needed Army Corps study on how to make the raceway system operable. This would include the impact of removing sedimentation in front of the raceway dam and the upstream flooding conditions to the hydroelectric plant.

Tragically, residents of multiple municipalities in my district are repeatedly impacted by flooding of the Saddle River. This flooding harms residential and commercial property in the Township of Saddle Brook, the City of Garfield, the Township of South Hackensack, and the Borough of Wallington. Major storms such as Floyd, Irene, Sandy, and Ida all cause extensive damage throughout the area. I strongly encourage the Committee to support an Army Corps study of the Saddle River flooding to protect these communities.

Due to low elevation and poor drainage along River Road in Edgewater, flooding is a repeated hazard during periods of heavy rainfall. Edgewater is often forced to suspend travel during these events. Outfall pipes simply cannot handle the volume of water. To better protect residential and commercial properties along River Road, I hope the Committee will support my Army Corps study request to devise potential solutions.

Impacting the communities of South Hackensack, Hasbrouck Heights, Little Ferry, Teterboro and Moonachie, the drainage of Risers Ditch has been rerouted numerous times. During flooding and rain events like Hurricane Ida, there are severe water flow problems that cause sediment and debris buildup that narrow the channel. This backup limits the ability of towns in my district to effectively remove water from their neighborhoods. An Army Corps study is needed to improve the capacity and efficacy of the ditch as an outlet for storm water.

The Borough of Cresskill was devastated by flooding from Tropical Storm Ida. The heavy rain fall caused Tenakill Brook to be clogged with sediment and debris. The storm inflicted over \$20 million in damage to the local middle and high school alone. This school remains closed, all the more devastating after the education challenges Cresskill students faced during this pandemic. Hundreds of students continue to being adversely impacted. I am asking the Committee to ensure the Army Corps conducts a study so that we can avert future damage in Cresskill.

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Finally, the Town of Kearny is saddled with five outdated combined sewer overflows. Their infrastructure dates back more than a century. Mandated by the Clean Water Act to replace and update their combined sewage system, Kearny has adopted a Long-Term Control Plan. However, the cost to update this infrastructure to be in compliance with the law is a staggering \$70 million.

I am asking the Committee to ensure funding is allocated for Kearny's environmental infrastructure so the town can comply with the Clean Water Act and that we have a timely response to aging and compromised infrastructure.

Thank you very much for your time and attention to my requests. I look forward to working with the Committee to ensure the priorities of New Jersey's Ninth Congressional District are addressed.

I yield back.