

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2021

Walter Mugdan
Acting Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region II
290 Broadway New York, NY 10007-1866

Dear Acting Regional Administrator Mugdan:

We write in support of the July 23, 2021 request submitted by Governor Phil Murphy and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to include the Lower Hackensack River on the National Priorities List (NPL) and commence the Superfund cleanup process. Including the Lower Hackensack River on the NPL will enable the comprehensive investigation and remediation of hazardous substances infecting the River and resources in the watershed that are essential to protect our region.

The Lower Hackensack River ecosystem is important to northern New Jersey and its restoration will significantly benefit the communities we represent. We remain grateful for the thorough and lengthy analysis NJDEP conducted that was bolstered by EPA Region II. We agree with the State that now is the time to act to protect the river. Thanks to the hard work of the EPA Region II, we have a sense of the complex remediation that is needed. We expect that this endeavor would complement the ongoing work in the nearby Lower Passaic River, and that the agency has learned lessons from that other site which can streamline the process.

We are encouraged the NJDEP intends to be a supportive partner in the process to designate the Lower Hackensack River. As Members of Congress who represent impacted communities, we too intend to support a process that would allow for an expeditious and robust cleanup of the dangerous and hazardous chemicals contaminating the river. We stand ready to work with EPA and the NJDEP to hold the responsible parties accountable.

The remediation, restoration and ultimate protection of this essential watershed depends on a robust partnership from all levels of government. Initiating the Superfund cleanup process to address the dangerous levels of mercury and other contaminants in river sediment that continually impair water quality, aquatic life, and other natural resources should begin with haste.

We appreciate your continued commitment to protecting the environment we represent and look forward to working together to clean up the Lower Hackensack River.

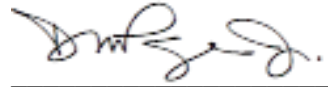


Sincerely,

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress