

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Chairman DeFazio:

Thank you for your commitment to transformational infrastructure investment. As the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure works to develop its portions of the budget reconciliation bill, we write to urge you to prioritize funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and its flood mitigation projects.

According to the Congressional Research Service in January 2021, USACE faces a backlog of almost \$100 billion in projects, more than 10 times its appropriation for the most recent fiscal year. While the total in outstanding projects can be quantified, the human cost of incomplete projects is incalculable.

We can also see the human benefits of this investment. When Hurricane Ida struck the coast of Louisiana—causing significant infrastructure damage, heavy flooding, and power outages throughout the southeastern part of the state—the more than \$14 billion USACE investment in the New Orleans levee system prevented a mass flooding event like the city experienced during Hurricane Katrina.

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey hit the Texas coast, dropping 9 trillion gallons of water, killing 68 people, and causing more than \$125 billion in damages. It was the third 500-year flood in three years. In response, USACE committed nearly \$5 billion in funding to disaster recovery projects in Texas. These ongoing projects will be vital to the safety and security of our region as we prepare for storms that scientists tell us will continue to increase in size, frequency, and duration as a result of climate change.

We appreciate the inclusion of almost \$17 billion for USACE resiliency and waterway infrastructure projects in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*. When viewed in context of the demonstrated need reflected in approved projects, however, it would take six of these

infrastructure packages to cover the costs of the current project backlog alone. To that end, we ask that you prioritize flooding mitigation projects in reconciliation discussions and support investment in this essential infrastructure. Our country and communities cannot afford to wait.

Sincerely,



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress



Colin Allred
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



Filemon Vela
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress