

Statement for Rep. Derek Kilmer (WA-06)
House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Member Day Hearing
January 11, 2024

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee, thank you for hosting today's Member Day hearing and for the opportunity to share a few of my priorities related to the forthcoming Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA).

First, I would like to draw attention to the Ediz Hook Beach Erosion Control Project near Port Angeles, where I grew up. Originally authorized in WRDA 1974, this project supports our national security goals by helping to maintain access to the U.S. Coast Guard Station at Port Angeles, while also protecting Port Angeles Harbor from erosion. I was pleased that, last year, historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding was delivered in my region for Ediz Hook. Through \$1.5 million provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for revetment repair, this funding will ensure that facilities on Ediz Hook, including the U.S. Coast Guard base, can benefit. While this funding development is exciting, we've learned that this project is the only navigation project overseen by the Seattle District without a 100% federal cost-share for these purposes. Given the significant national security importance of this project, and the needed support it would bring to the City of Port Angeles, my priority request would bring the federal cost share for Ediz Hook into line with other O&M navigation projects.

I'd also like to highlight the Duckabush Estuary Restoration project. This project was identified as a part of the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project, which was authorized in WRDA 2016. I'm proud that the first project to be put into action from this initiative is in my district! The Duckabush Estuary Restoration Project will remove a large amount of fill that was placed in the river floodplain to support U.S. Highway 101 and replace it with an estuary-spanning 1,600-ft-long bridge, reconnecting the Duckabush River to the neighboring wetlands and distributary channels. Not only will this project improve the habitats of fish and wildlife, including ESA-listed Hood Canal Summer Chum, but it will also enhance the lives of constituents through reduced seasonal flood risk, safer roads, and job creation. This is a WRDA success story.

However, restoring the Duckabush Estuary will change how local Tribes and the public can access tidelands and the shellfish resources they support. One positive but unintended consequence of the original highway at Duckabush is that it created direct foot access to shellfish

tidelands and stable conditions favorable for shellfish growth. The Duckabush tidelands are important to several local Tribes and the public. When the restoration project is completed and the river flows freely, access to the tidelands will be more limited. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and their partners are committed to ensuring tideland access opportunities for Tribes and the public are available within Hood Canal. They are considering other locations nearby that can provide a similar experience for local Tribes and other users, and I am requesting federal language to provide the flexibility needed to allow for creative solutions as part of their partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration.

I appreciate your leadership and consideration of these requests, and I am happy to provide additional information as you review them. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the Committee today.