

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE DONALD G. DAVIS OF NORTH CAROLINA

Thank you, Committee Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, Subcommittee Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, and all other Members of this distinguished Committee for allowing me to speak on issues within the Water Resources Development Act that matter to residents of North Carolina's First Congressional District.

Since assuming office last January, one of the top issues voiced by constituents has been the significant impact of flooding throughout eastern North Carolina.

This issue underscores the need to develop effective flood risk management and mitigation tools. Addressing these challenges is essential in safeguarding our communities and enhancing the resilience of eastern North Carolina against the detrimental effects of flooding.

Flooding is a recurring issue in eastern North Carolina due to frequent hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rainfall. Our region consistently ranks in the top ten for yearly rainfall, making flood management a pressing concern.

Flooding across eastern North Carolina often ruins crop fields, destroys homes, and tears apart roads. Families have had to rebuild their lives time and time again.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been, and remains, an invaluable ally in combating the water overflows affecting our East communities. I want to express my support for two projects under their administration and oversight in North Carolina's First Congressional District—the Tar-Pamlico River Basin project and the Princeville, North Carolina project.

These initiatives play a crucial role in enhancing our resilience and strengthening our region against the challenges posed by water-related issues.

The Tar-Pamlico River Basin project centers around a specific study area; encompassing river reaches along the Tar River and its major tributaries. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommends efforts to elevate or dry floodproof 160 structures within the four major population centers of Greenville, Tarboro, Rocky Mount, and Nashville. This initiative aims to reduce the impact on structures and infrastructure while mitigating the associated life safety risks.

The ongoing Princeville project seeks to mitigate flood risks in Princeville, North Carolina. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prioritizes minimizing damage to structures and infrastructure and reducing the risks to life safety associated with flooding.

Princeville faced frequent and severe flooding until it initiated a levee project in 1967 under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 205 Continuing Authorities Program. The project is rooted in the "Design Event," referencing back to the historic flood of 1919. Unfortunately, Hurricanes Floyd in 1999 and Matthew in 2016 surpassed this threshold, resulting in catastrophic flooding for the town and the substantial loss of residences and other structures.

Princeville is essential to the historical roots of eastern North Carolina. It was the first town in the United States founded by formerly enslaved people and was the first independently governed African American community chartered in the United States. For these reasons, we need to protect Princeville and its residents.

While the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 does not require reauthorizing these projects, it is essential to emphasize their importance in protecting communities across eastern North Carolina.

I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Committee today on the critical issues impacting my constituents. I look forward to continued partnership with the Members of this Committee.

I yield back.