

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to testify in front of the committee to discuss a few of my legislative initiatives. Overall, I seek the following bills be included in this year's Water Resources Development Act (WRDA): (1) the Water Quality & Environmental Innovation Act; (2) the Combat Harmful Algal Blooms Act; and (3) the Water Quality Oversight Act. Additionally, I seek that the Pre-Pilot Pathway Act be included in this year's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act.

To begin, I represent Florida's 19th District which covers Lee County and Collier County in Southwest Florida. Water is the lifeblood of FL-19 and I'm proud to say that water is my office's number one priority. With that being said, I wanted to provide a short overview of each of the water bills that I seek to be included in this year's WRDA.

First, I seek that the bipartisan Water Quality & Environmental Innovation Act be included in this year's WRDA bill. My creative piece of legislation repurposes unnecessary federal waste to ultimately provide funding for innovative projects that aim to combat our nation's water quality and environmental challenges. Specifically, this bill takes unused money that lacks a designated purpose from EPA's Motor Vehicle and Engine Compliance program to provide grants and contracts for projects that utilize innovative technologies—such as artificial intelligence (AI), quantum, eDNA, aquaculture, etc. This outside-the-box piece of legislation would provide vital funding—without raising the federal deficit—to combat various environmental challenges such as hydrologic alterations, sea-level rise, harmful algal blooms, etc.

Next, I seek that the Combat Harmful Algal Blooms Act be included in this year's WRDA bill. This bill is simple—to add harmful algal blooms to the applicability of a Major Disaster Declaration. My district is currently facing a devastating red tide/blue-green algae event—and these algal blooms aren't constrained to my district alone. The vast amount of bipartisan support on this bill speaks for itself, and I believe this commonsense piece of legislation could make a great difference for FL-19, the State of Florida, and the entire United States.

Finally, I seek that the Water Quality Oversight Act be included in this year's WRDA bill. This is another simple, commonsense bill that seeks oversight of federal funding provided to the Army Corp of Engineers (Corp.) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the purpose of

combatting water quality challenges. In other words, this bill seeks to understand whether certain federal water quality projects have met their previous intent and desired metric results. As our nation's debt continues to skyrocket out of control, it's important to understand how federal funds are being spent and whether they *actually have* achieved their desired result. Overall, my simple bill seeks to provide the necessary federal oversight to reign in unnecessary waste and abuse potentially occurring throughout the Corp. and EPA.

Finally, I seek that the Pre-Pilot Pathway Act be included in this year's FAA Reauthorization bill. As you know, America is currently facing a severe pilot shortage and there are major concerns about the future American pilot pipeline. Instead of raising the retirement age of pilots,

my bill takes a different approach to combat this concerning pilot predicament. Overall, it directs the Secretary of Transportation to establish a pilot apprenticeship program at Part 141 *flight schools* around the nation, and each flight school may select up to eight apprentices to participate in the program each year. My bill is unique because it seeks provides a pathway for pilots to attend their local flight school, receive a quality aviation education, without limiting the pilot's potential aviation opportunities later in life.

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to present my legislative initiatives to the committee. I welcome any questions that you may have, and I appreciate the committee's consideration. Thank you.