

Proposals for a *Water Resources Development Act of 2024*:
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Member Day Hearing
Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher
January 11, 2024

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- As a former member of this Committee, I am proud of and excited about the work we have accomplished in previous *Water Resources Development Acts*, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify today about my community's priorities for water infrastructure investment in Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County in the *Water Resources Development Act of 2024*.
- I have submitted to the Committee several priorities, including project-specific policy changes and authorizations and those with broader implications for how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates.
- There are two main drivers for our priorities, and I know they are priorities of this Committee and of this Congress: (1) to make our communities safer and more resilient through infrastructure investment and (2) to support economic growth through infrastructure investment.
- In that first category, I have asked for language to ensure the Corps' continued focus on completing the Buffalo Bayou and Tributaries Resiliency Study.

- Congress authorized this study after Hurricane Harvey hit the Gulf Coast in 2017, killing at least 68 people and causing more than \$125 billion in damage. The Study focuses on the viability of different flood control projects along Buffalo Bayou and surrounding the Addicks and Barker reservoirs.
- Last Congress, I advocated for an extension of the study so that the Corps would have time to be able to consider all potential solutions fully. With financial support from Harris County and the Corps, and an extension granted, the study was able to continue.
- Now, as we face the need for an additional extension, I urge the Corps to continue its focus and complete this study so that it can move forward with a project that aligns with community objectives, minimizes adverse environmental and community impacts, and prioritizes resilience.
- Hurricane Harvey made landfall nearly seven years ago. It is crucial that we utilize the full expertise and resources of the Corps to complete this study before our next *Water Resources Development Act* in 2026.
- The Buffalo Bayou and Tributaries Resiliency Study has been possible because of the ongoing collaboration between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Harris County Flood Control District, local and federal leaders, and the public. I look forward to continuing this collaboration and

finding resilient water conveyance solutions for Houston and Harris County.

- In the second category, I have asked for study authorization for the Houston Ship Channel's Project 12 and policy modifications so that ports and waterways can maintain necessary depths and remain competitive in the global marketplace.
- As many on the Committee may remember, I advocated for the authorization of the Houston Ship Channel's Project 11 in the *Water Resources Development Act 2020*. This project widens and deepens the Houston Ship Channel, promoting global trade at the busiest port in the country by total tonnage.
- This project is expected to be completed ahead of schedule next year. While this is a cause for celebration, we must begin to look ahead to future deepening projects to meet the growing size and depth of vessels.
- In order to begin that process, I have asked the Committee to authorize a study on Project 12. Starting this process now will ensure that our federal investments are proactive and timely.
- This critical project will impact not just the Houston region but the entire country.

- I have submitted several other requests to the Committee, and I appreciate your consideration of these important requests. I look forward to working with the Committee on these projects and much more, and to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.