

**Rep. Matsui**  
**T&I Committee Member Day Testimony – WRDA 2020 Priorities**  
**February 27, 2019**  
**5 minutes**

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**Thank you...Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to come before the Committee and lay out my key priorities for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020...comprehensive legislation that addresses navigation and flood risk management issues across the nation.**

**First and foremost – I want to be clear: our top priority should be in proposing policies that consider the impacts of climate change in our country. We are facing the consequences of climate change now and we absolutely must incorporate climate resiliency strategies into our policies on infrastructure, water resources, energy, the environment, and defense.**

**As the Representative of Sacramento, California, WRDA [wur-duh] is uniquely meaningful to me and to my constituents, who live in the second most flood-prone city in the country, after New Orleans.**

**We need to thoughtfully prioritize projects that consider the long-term consequences of climate change...an existential threat that will impact this country for years to come.**

**The catastrophic flooding we have seen across the country in just the last year is telling and I fear that severe flooding will no longer be 100 or even 500-year events, but a new norm for my constituents.**

**One area where I think we can truly make progress on this is through further federal support to improve the safety and reliability of the Yolo Bypass and the surrounding region.**

**While the Yolo Bypass was originally constructed as a single-purpose federal flood facility...the State and local stakeholders in California have been working for years to begin looking at it in a fresh, new way...by comprehensively addressing factors such as flood risk management, water supply, agricultural enhancement, and habitat protection.**

**Unfortunately, because of the way in which the benefits of federal flood control projects are calculated, it has been difficult to receive federal recognition and**

**support for initiatives that could raise the level of flood protection higher than is possible under the current Corps of Engineers rules.**

**WRDA 2020 represents an opportunity to fix this. By including provisions that will direct the Corps to study the region closely and develop a plan for coordinating with nonfederal partners, such as the Central Valley Flood Control Board, the California Department of Water Resources and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA)...the Committee can allow the Corps to remain consistent with its intent to revolutionize its Civil Works activities while also giving this forward-looking project much-deserved recognition and resources.**

**This change will help advance proposals for needed projects in the region that will protect California's residents and dramatically improve safety and sustainability.**

**SAFCA has been particularly effective in looking at climate change and how it is impacting weather patterns. We should be taking a similar approach.**

**Additionally, the plan developed in my proposed language will establish a framework that both the Corps and relevant nonfederal stakeholders can follow to provide for smooth coordination of permitting and reviews.**

**I also urge the Committee to include language in its WRDA bill that will endorse a regional partnership – the Yolo Bypass-Cache Slough Partnership – that brings together relevant stakeholders to ensure the Yolo Bypass Initiative represents the priorities, interests, and needs throughout the region.**

**We've seen it across the country: severe natural disasters, including devastating flooding, are becoming more and more common. In the face of a changing climate, we must begin taking a new look at federal flood control projects and we should start with WRDA 2020.**

**For years, SAFCA has put forward flood control efforts that have become a model for the nation in providing the highest level of flood protection while remaining good environmental stewards. This latest effort is a continuation of their superb work and I urge the Committee to recognize this by providing federal support for the Yolo Bypass Initiative.**

**I also request that the Committee extend the authority of Section 1020 of WRDA 2014, which allows for nonfederal contributions exceeding cost-sharing requirements to be transferred to other projects.**

**The Committee has been supportive of this authority in the past and I appreciate T&I working with me in 2016 to further clarify that credits could be transferred to a project prior to completion.**

**Certainty in the ability to transfer excess credits to other projects will be critical in the ability for flood control agencies across the country to plan for the future.**

**Lastly, I also support the extension and improvement of the so-called “1043” authority that allows for nonfederal sponsors to take over implementation of authorized federal projects under certain circumstances. For instance, in West Sacramento...a city within my district that lies just to the west of the Sacramento River...the West Sacramento Flood Control Agency – or “WSAFCA” – is working closely with the Corps to implement the West Sacramento Project – yet another part of the systemwide approach to comprehensive flood control in our region.**

**WSAFCA has taken great initiative to achieve substantial progress in moving forward with the design work and we aim to proceed with construction as soon as possible.**

**While we are currently proceeding with the project under the Corps’ traditional civil works process, we would consider implementing the balance of the project under 1043 if the program’s authority were extended in WRDA 2020 and if improvements were made to how the Corps implements the program.**

**Thank you for your time and consideration today. For 15 years, I have worked tirelessly with dedicated stakeholders in my district to make the Sacramento region as safe as possible for all residents.**

**During these 15 years, we’ve seen with our own eyes how climate change is reshaping the way we plan our infrastructure needs. The wildfires in my state, severe droughts and flooding...all of this requires bold, fresh ideas that encourage our federal agencies to look at the big picture.**

**WRDA 2020 represents a tremendous opportunity to move forward and achieve even greater strides to protecting my constituents, both through responsible**

**and resilient flood control projects and forward-looking ideas for America's water infrastructure that will account for the climate crisis we are all faced with. Thank you.**