

**Testimony of Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott  
Water Resources Development Act of 2024: Member Day  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
2167 Rayburn House Office Building  
January 11, 2023**

Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the priorities of Virginia’s third district in the upcoming Water Resources and Development (WRDA) Act.

I represent the 3<sup>rd</sup> congressional district of Virginia where the Chesapeake Bay meets the James and Elizabeth Rivers, and where water presents both challenges and opportunities. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work to keep America’s waterways and ports open to trade, while working with communities across Hampton Roads to ensure that we can continue to live with the water that surrounds us and shapes many aspects of our lives.

My district is home to the Port of Virginia which is one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard. With 95 percent of our nation’s

trade moving by water, it is essential that the port, which is the third largest container port in the country and supports nearly 1.3 million jobs nationally, is able to maintain operations. The 3<sup>rd</sup> district is also home to multiple shipyards and Naval Station Norfolk, the largest naval base in the world. These waterways are essential to our communities' continued prosperity as well as our national security.

It is also critical to our financial well-being that we ensure that the Port of Virginia is able to handle the increased number and size of container vessels. The Port and the Army Corps of Engineers have undertaken the dredging, widening and deepening of the Norfolk Harbor and Channels to enable safe and efficient two-way passage of the new larger container ships. I would like to take a moment to thank the Members of the Committee for their work with the Port of Virginia which allowed it to continue operations, especially at a time when shipping delays plagued many other ports across the country.

As the committee begins drafting the 2024 Water Resources Development Act, I respectfully request the committee include a modification of the Norfolk Harbor and Channels navigation project to include deepening Anchorage F. This modification is consistent with the recommendations of the Army Corps of Engineers and will ensure the Port's reliability and efficacy is not interrupted.

My district is also home to the City of Norfolk, which has been a leader in ensuring that the city can manage the surrounding rising water and is already serving as an example to other municipalities working to adapt. Unfortunately, due to climate-driven sea level rise, compounded by historic land subsidence in the region, inundation from these waterways poses a serious risk. High tides, nor'easters, and hurricanes exacerbate the risk of flooding in the City of Norfolk and the region. As the home of Naval Station Norfolk and numerous other federal and military facilities, this recurrent flooding also poses a national security risk. I would like to again thank the Committee for moving the Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk

Management project forward as well as the Virginia Peninsula Flood Study.

State and local elected officials in Virginia already appreciate the significant threat sea level rise poses to Hampton Roads. Unfortunately, the cost to proactively and aggressively address this problem head-on is far too great for any city to bear by itself. While Norfolk has already spent considerable sums of money to study its recurrent flooding issues and implement resilient infrastructure where feasible, the cost of the entire project is in the billions of dollars. Both the Commonwealth and the Federal government have been supportive of the need and I look forward to continued support and partnership.

To that end, I am requesting that the Committee add the City of Norfolk to the Temporary Relocation Assistance Pilot Program, due to the ongoing Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRМ) project. This would allow Norfolk to join other communities in extending temporary relocation assistance to those that are impacted by the nonstructural

program of the Norfolk CSRM project. These nonstructural adaptations are to individual buildings in communities that are vulnerable to flood risk.

Finally, I request that the Committee include language authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers to include federal lands in their coastal resiliency studies. As I have mentioned earlier in my testimony, Hampton Roads is an area surrounded by water and home to numerous federal facilities and military infrastructure and these areas should be included in these studies. Our region is a perfect example of why comprehensively addressing flooding is essential to coastal resilience. We can only solve the coastal resilience puzzle when we are able to consider all the pieces. Including all implicated land in a study is the only way to ensure the study is comprehensive, cost effective and accurate.

Chairman and Ranking Member, thank you again for the opportunity to share my priorities for the forthcoming Water Resources and

Development Act of 2024. I look forward to working with you to ensure that these priorities are included to allow for the critical work in Hampton Roads to continue.