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Grace Meng

Congress of the United States

Sixth District, New York

Chairman Rouzer, Ranking Member Napolitano, and distinguished Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

I am honored to share with you all my priorities as the Committee considers reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024, that will support the safety and wellbeing of my constituents in Queens, New York.

2 years ago, I testified in front of this Committee about the horrifying impacts that Hurricane Ida had on New York City. The storm sadly took the lives of 13 New Yorkers, 6 of whom were my constituents. I told the Committee about how New York's 100+ year-old stormwater system is unable to keep up with increasingly powerful and frequent storms that cause deadly flooding and economic damage to Queens. And now I sit before you in 2024, which will mark the 3-year anniversary of Ida, to inform you that Queens is still at risk from these storms.

In Queens, we view terms like "100" or "500-year flood" with skepticism because we know from experience that these storms are occurring with greater frequency. A year after Ida, many of my constituents who were still recovering from storm damage were again hit by horrific flooding. During the storm, the City of New York sent out an emergency alert advising people who live in basement apartments to move to higher floors. And even in the two weeks before Ida, Tropical Storm Henri broke the existing record for rainfall in the city. I can go on, but the evidence is clear: these storms are occurring with greater frequency and New York City is not prepared.

In the Water Resources Development Act of 2022, I was proud to secure a \$119 million authorization for Queens. And now, I'm asking for that authorization to be increased to \$250 million in the 2024 Reauthorization. This would authorize the Army Corps of Engineers to spend up to \$250 million to work with the City of New York in upgrading environmental infrastructure in Queens. This could fund projects that directly address the devastating flooding my constituents face.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of this matter. I ask that the Chairman and Ranking Member consider my request for inclusion in this year's WRDA reauthorization to protect the people of Queens.

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