



National Wildlife Federation

National Advocacy Center

1200 G Street NW, Suite 900 • Washington, DC 20005 • 202-797-6800

June 3, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Water Resources Development Act of 2022, H.R. 7776

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The National Wildlife Federation writes in support of provisions within the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 that would advance the development of equitable solutions to entrenched water resources challenges and protect and restore vital wildlife habitats. We thank Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for their bipartisan work in developing these provisions and advancing them through the Committee.

Coastal and riverine communities—and especially historic communities of color and Tribes—face immense and intensifying water resources challenges in the face of climate-fueled floods and disasters and decades of assaults on the natural systems that protect people and wildlife alike. These same assaults are also pushing the nation's fish and wildlife to the brink. While we continue to believe that addressing these problems will require bold action to infuse resilience across all Corps of Engineers projects, operations, and business lines, numerous provisions in the bill will help make progress towards this essential goal.

The National Wildlife Federation supports the provisions in H.R. 7776 that provide additional tools and direction to assist Tribes and frontline communities in obtaining equitable solutions for their water resource challenges (including §§109, 110, 111, 118, 119, 121, 126, and 224). We also support provisions that would: increase transparency regarding tools to reduce flood damages (§113) and potentially dangerous infrastructure (§117); expand consideration of forecast-informed reservoir operations (§303); improve analysis of the full extent of flood risks (§§104, 302); and improve the Corps' mapping and modeling capabilities (§§ 106, 216, 226).

The bill also advances critically important ecosystem restoration efforts, including by, among other things: facilitating construction of the essential Brandon Road Project, which will help block invasive carp from advancing from the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers through the Chicago Area Waterway System and into Lake Michigan; continuing to prioritize progress on Everglades restoration, and advancing an

effort to address restoration needs within Florida's east and west coast estuaries; clarifying the federal commitment to fully fund the Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Study; requiring a strategic plan for beneficial reuse of dredged material; and expanding the flood mitigation and riverine restoration continuing authority program to include protection and restoration of coastal shorelines.

The National Wildlife Federation does have concerns with a number of provisions and projects in the bill due to their potential for significant adverse implications for vital wildlife habitat, natural infrastructure, and communities—including authorization of the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration project, which requires significant additional analysis and study.

Thank you again for the bipartisan work on the provisions mentioned above. We encourage the House of Representatives to advance these improvements for more transparent, equitable and inclusive water resource planning processes and to support critical ecosystem restoration efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessie Ritter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessie Ritter
Senior Director of Water Resources and Coastal Policy
National Wildlife Federation

CC: The Honorable Peter A. Defazio, Chairman Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano, Chair, Subcommittee on Water Resources & Environment
The Honorable David Rouzer, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water Resources & Environment