



December 13, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader

Senator Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader

Senator Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader

Chairman Peter DeFazio
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Ranking Member Sam Graves
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Chairwoman Grace Napolitano
Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

Ranking Member David Rouzer
Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

Chairman Thomas Carper
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Ranking Member Shelley Moore Capito
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Chairman Ben Cardin
Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee

Ranking Member Kevin Cramer
Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee

Re: Support for the 2022 Water Resources Development Act

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Peter DeFazio, Chairwoman Grace Napolitano, Chairman Thomas Carper, and Chairman Ben Cardin, and Ranking Members Sam Graves, David Rouzer, Shelley Moore Capito, and Kevin Cramer,

The undersigned organizations write to support the passing of the 2022 Water Resources Development Act within the National Defense Authorization Act. These organizations have been collaborating for years to find balanced solutions to the 3Rs: dam rehabilitation, dam removal, and retrofit of dams for hydropower; we are excited to continue these efforts through our support of WRDA. The safety and environmental provisions in this bill will help to protect the people and waterways of the U.S. and we applaud your dedication to address these critical bipartisan and bicameral issues. This paramount piece of legislation protects our natural and engineered water infrastructure and the people that rely on it. As potentially the largest WRDA in history and coming in at a time when our nation needs it most, we urge you to see this bill through and pass it into law.

We are grateful for the valuable support of and outreach to Tribal and underserved communities. We are pleased to see *sections 8111-8115* address serving these communities more fully. The appointment of a Tribal liaison is especially important in improving outreach to, and engagement with, Tribal communities. We also support the initiative to build out the Corps of Engineers workforce through outreach in schools, colleges, and universities with a prioritization of recruiting from economically disadvantaged communities. We believe these steps will serve both the Corps and the communities well.

With climate change impacting the nation, promoting nature-based approaches on a project and watershed level scale is imperative to adapt to increasing floods and water scarcity, among other impacts. The WRDA bill includes several provisions that will help promote the use of nature-based approaches and better serve and protect our communities while promoting ecosystem resilience through forward thinking levee management.

We enthusiastically support the inclusion of *section 8122- National Low-Head Dam Inventory*. This inventory will contribute significantly to public safety as low-head dams are known public safety hazards, and yet not inventoried nationally.

In our partnership wherein we address hydropower, dam safety, and dam removal priorities across the nation, we support *section 8123- Expediting hydropower at Corps of Engineers facilities*, with the understanding that the structures in question are already serving their legislatively authorized purpose and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Where a dam is already serving such a purpose, retrofitting it with hydropower can increase our nation's renewable energy capacity. We look forward to working with Congress to ensure the Corps expeditiously implements an efficient, consistent process for reviewing applications to retrofit non-powered Corps dams with hydropower generation.

Recognizing that retrofitting a non-powered Corps dam with hydropower is not always feasible, we also encourage the diligent assessment of non-powered Corps projects to determine if they would better serve the taxpayers, community, and local ecosystem by being disposed of instead of extending their life solely for non-power purposes.

We are pleased to see the *section 8140 – Policy and technical standards* directing the Secretary to update policy and technical standards. This directs the Corps to update the standards across the agency to include climate change and nature-based solutions in their practices. We also look forward to the report on the Corps of Engineers reservoirs under *section 8153* so that Congress may further evaluate the operation, utility, and future of these reservoirs.

We thank you again for your dedication to ensuring the public safety, and river restoration and protection through provisions in the Water Resources Development Act.

Sincerely,

American Rivers
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Whitewater
Appalachian Mountain Club
Association of State Dam Safety Officials
Foothill Conservancy
Hydropower Reform Coalition
Inter-Fluve, Inc.

Low Impact Hydropower Institute
Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes
National Hydropower Association
North Fork Mono Tribe
Union of Concerned Scientists