

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Gibbs
Subcommittee on Water Resources
and Environment
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
Subcommittee on Water Resources
and Environment
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, Chairman Gibbs, and Ranking Member Napolitano:

We appreciate your past leadership on water resources policy and infrastructure. As the Committee writes a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) for 2016, we are offering a short provision to include in the Committee's bill that will encourage greater coordination among all levels of government faced with water resources management as well as a place a greater focus on holistic planning for this vital resource.

Water resources management is becoming an increasingly complex challenge for local communities as they confront issues such as severe and persistent drought in the West and extreme wet weather events in the Midwest and East, which are causing drinking water supplies to diminish, water quality to be impaired, or both. Increasingly, communities are integrating management of local water resources – taking an integrated look at water supply, wastewater treatment, and stormwater management – to ensure optimization of storm events for water supply and minimization of water quality impacts.

The Army Corps of Engineers' water resources development program has as its primary purposes flood risk management, navigation, and aquatic ecosystem restoration. Water supply and water quality are local responsibilities and the Corps does not plan projects solely for those purposes. While the Corps typically is focused on moving flood water quickly through a watershed, local communities often have water supply and water quality plans that could be adversely impacted by the Corps' flood control plans. Recognizing that high flows can be both a risk and an asset, we believe that enhanced coordination between the Corps and municipalities during the Corps' planning process for flood control projects could identify potential conflicts

with local water resources plans and identify opportunities for integrating water resources management that could improve water supplies and water quality outcomes.

We believe that including some language in WRDA requiring enhanced coordination between the Corps and municipalities would cause the Corps to look more carefully at local water quality, aquifer recharge, and/or water reuse plans and, where feasible, incorporate those plans into the federal effort, or at least not adversely impact the local plans. At the same time, such language would encourage local communities with water quality and water supply plans to contact their Corps district office and open a dialog that could lead to more integrated planning and better management of water resources. We suggest the following language as a WRDA provision:

“sec.xxx.—INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES PLANNING. In carrying out a water resources development feasibility study, the Secretary shall coordinate with local governments in the watershed covered by such study to determine if local water management plans exist or are under development for the purposes of stormwater management, water quality improvement, aquifer recharge, or water reuse. When such local water management plans do exist in the watershed, the Secretary, in cooperation with affected local public entities, shall seek opportunities for mutually beneficial management of water resources.”

This is a commonsense provision that will encourage local and federal officials to manage water as one resource with multiple purposes. It enjoys bipartisan support in the Committee and we ask that it be included in the introduced WRDA bill.

Sincerely,