

the Natural Infrastructure Initiative

July 17, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
U.S. Senate Environment
and Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Environment
and Public Works Committee
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

On behalf of the Natural Infrastructure Initiative, thank you for your efforts to advance America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWIA) in a timely manner. We commend the bipartisan efforts that you and your staff put into crafting a bill that unanimously passed the Environment and Public Works Committee and is proceeding to a vote by the full Senate.

The state of the world's natural infrastructure—the nature and nature-based systems that contribute services and material to enable life and sustain human well-being—face significant challenges from human activity and development. The Restoring Natural Infrastructure Summit was convened in 2015 to bring together over 150 attendees representing companies, non-governmental organizations, policy makers, equipment dealers and customers to discuss these challenges. At the summit we identified the need for and subsequently formed a coalition of parties interested in driving the changes necessary to develop and restore natural infrastructure. That coalition, named the Natural Infrastructure Initiative, is made up of representatives from AECOM, Brown & Root, Caterpillar Inc., Dawson & Associates, Great Lakes Dredge & Dock, and The Nature Conservancy.

Following the coalition's previous letter to you in May expressing support for natural infrastructure provisions in WRDA, we are pleased to learn that an amendment sponsored by Senators Corey Booker and Shelley Moore Capito is included in the proposed time agreement for floor consideration of AWIA. As part of our coalition's efforts, **we respectfully request that you support the Booker-Capito amendment which would amend the Army Corps' existing ecosystem restoration continuing authority program to allow funding for flood control projects that use nature-based solutions alone or in combination with grey infrastructure.** Currently, the program does not fund flood risk reduction projects, even those that provide important environmental benefits. This amendment would come at no additional cost and allow the continuing authority program to support projects that achieve multiple benefits such as flood risk reduction and ecological restoration.

Thank you again for your consideration of this request and for your efforts to develop a bill that invests in our nation's water infrastructure to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and supply, and enhance our environment. We are grateful for your dedication and commitment to this important issue

Sincerely,

The Natural Infrastructure Initiative

Members: AECOM, Brown & Root, Caterpillar Inc.,
Dawson & Associates, Great Lakes Dredge & Dock, and
The Nature Conservancy

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works