

September 9, 2016

The Honorable James M. Inhofe  
Chair, Committee on Environment &  
Public Works  
United States Senate  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6175

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Ranking Member, Committee on  
Environment & Public Works  
United States Senate  
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6175

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Ranking Member Boxer:

On behalf of the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, I write in support of S.2848, the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA) and for its provisions to protect our vital water resources and for the inclusion of the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act in your managers amendment.

The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed unites organizations working throughout the region to enhance their capacity to effectively advocate and work towards our shared goal of protecting and restoring the Delaware River Basin. Our coalition represents over 90 watershed associations, land conservancies, outdoor recreation and sporting interests, national organizations, and other stakeholder groups working in the four states of the Watershed.

The Delaware River Basin Conservation Act, which was approved by the Committee on May 18, 2016, would establish a non-regulatory Delaware River Restoration Program that would be administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The program will develop a coordinated approach to identify, prioritize, and implement restoration and protection activities across the Basin. The bill also authorizes a competitive grant and technical assistance program to support on-the-ground work by state and local governments, non-profit organizations, and universities. The Delaware River Basin Restoration Program will enhance the efficiency and efficacy of public and private efforts aimed at improving the health and resources of the Watershed for generations to come.

A dedicated federal program would affirm the nationally and historically significant Delaware River Watershed as a resource worth protecting. Not only does the Basin provide drinking water to over 15 million people (5% of the U.S. population), it also generates \$25 billion annually in economic activity and contributes \$21 billion worth of ecosystem goods and services each year. These waters flow through nearly a dozen National Parks and historic sites, feed the economies of riverside communities, and provide world-class recreational opportunities.

Additionally, we support the many provisions in WRDA that will promote and advance sustainable water resources management, specifically those efforts aimed at restoring and

protecting the nation's rivers and surrounding watersheds. In particular, we are pleased to see the bill:

- modernizes the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan programs
- supports advanced mitigation with consideration for habitat connectivity
- includes consideration of nature-based solutions in emergency flood response
- improves the use of green infrastructure
- includes a new program for addressing safety in high-hazard dams
- authorizes the WaterSense program

We greatly appreciate your leadership in protecting our nation's water resources through the Water Resources Development Act of 2016, and thank you in for including authorization of the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program. Please contact me at (609) 447-2401 or [madeline.urbish@njaudubon.org](mailto:madeline.urbish@njaudubon.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Madeline Urbish', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Madeline Urbish  
Director, Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed

CC:

The Honorable Cory Booker  
United States Senate

The Honorable Bob Casey  
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Carper  
United States Senate

The Honorable Chris Coons  
United States Senate

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senate

The Honorable Robert Menendez  
United States Senate

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
United States Senate

The Honorable Patrick Toomey  
United States Senate