

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5400

October 25, 2021

Mr. Jamie Pinkham
Acting Assistant Secretary
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Pinkham,

We write in strong support of the Caño Martín Peña- Ecosystem Restoration Project (CMP-ERP) and its selection as a New Start for Construction under the ecosystem restoration business line of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The Caño Martín Peña is a 3.75 mile-long tidal channel located in San Juan, Puerto Rico, that connects the San Juan Bay to the San José Lagoon. The eastern portion of the channel is currently clogged due to the accumulation of sediments, waste and debris across multiple decades, which challenges public health and safety, economic development and environment protection in the metropolitan area. In addition, its current conditions exacerbates flood risk for communities near the CMP and the San José Lagoon.

Section 5127 of the 2007 Water and Resources Development Act (WRDA) authorized the CMP-ERP. Since then, Congress has showed support for CMP-ERP through the approval of report language in multiple appropriation bills, multi-member letters to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and by increasing the authorized cost from \$150 million to \$255.8 million included in Section 402 (e) of WRDA 2020. Most recently, report language approved by the House Subcommittee on Energy and Water and Related Agencies for Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations includes \$2.15 million for the CMP-ERP under the Investigations account.¹ This funding is intended to cover expenses related to updating plans and specifications for the Pre-Construction, Engineering and Design (PED) phase, and this work is expected to conclude by the Summer of 2022.

Upon completion of PED, the following step is construction. The CMP-ERP has three construction contracts, with the first one currently shovel ready, and failure to begin construction-related work puts the CMP-ERP at risk by threatening to potentially halt project activity. To avoid this, we respectfully urge you to include the CMP-ERP as a New Start for construction in the pending 2022

¹ Report 117-98. Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2022. Page 225
<https://www.congress.gov/117/crpt/hrpt98/CRPT-117hrpt98.pdf>

Work Plan. A separate alternative could also be to advocate for this same action in the FY23 President's Budget Request. Either of these two proposed options would support ongoing work at CMP-ERP, as well as related economic and other investments headed by the Federal government and the non-Federal sponsors.

As you are aware, the CMP-ERP impacts 8 communities and close to 26,000 (2010 US Census) constituents in Puerto Rico. The selection of CMP-ERP as a New Start will lead to greater storm and flood protection in the San Juan area and neighboring municipalities, create approximately 4,725 direct and indirect construction jobs, promote greater economic activity, and support the health and wellbeing of residents in one of the most densely populated areas on the Island.

Please consider this request in accordance with applicable laws, rules and regulations. We appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



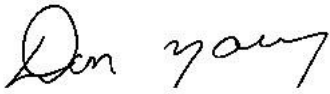
Carlos Gimenez
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



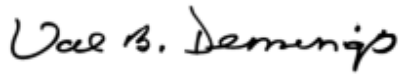
John Katko
Member of Congress



Don Young
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Val Demings
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