

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0913

July 18, 2016

Lieutenant General Todd Semonite
Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20314-1000

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army
Department of the Army, Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear General Semonite and Assistant Secretary Darcy:

In response to the public notice to reissue the nationwide permits (NWP) that was published in the Federal Register on June 1st, we commend and support your proposal to issue the new NWP, "Living Shorelines" (NWP B).

A recent analysis of shoreline hardening—that is, the addition of built infrastructure—in the U.S. found that fourteen percent, or about 14,000 miles, of the nation's tidal shoreline is already hardened leading to loss of wetlands and natural habitats that people and nature rely upon. Without intervention, this figure is expected to grow. The proposed new living shorelines permit is a welcome development given our increased understanding of nature-based solutions. Living shorelines are the environmentally- preferred bank stabilization method where feasible.

The Corps' existing permits that address bank stabilization and aquatic ecosystem restoration do not cover most living shoreline activities. Thus, living shoreline projects are subject to greater federal scrutiny and longer permit reviews than hard infrastructure projects such as bulkheads and seawalls that have little review because they qualify under a NWP. The nationwide permit for living shorelines will help level the playing field by streamlining the federal permitting reviews for nature-based bank stabilization methods and offer the regulated community a much needed alternative to bulkheads and seawalls.

We appreciate the Corps' efforts to provide landowners with a more efficient authorization option which reduces time and costs associated with living shoreline project approval.

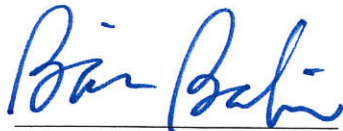
As you finalize the new permit, it is critical to ensure nature-based approaches to bank stabilization are not held to higher review standards than hard infrastructure.

Once issued, the new nationwide permit for living shorelines will offer the regulated community a much needed alternative to bulkheads and seawalls, help level the playing field for natural shoreline protection, and enable increased adoption of natural shoreline-protection methods.

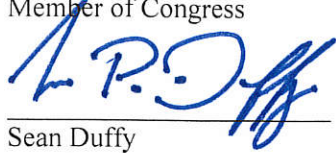
Sincerely,


David W. Jolly
Member of Congress



David Vitter
United States Senator



Brian Babin, DDS
Member of Congress



Sean Duffy
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



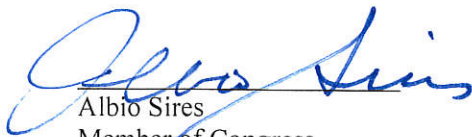
Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



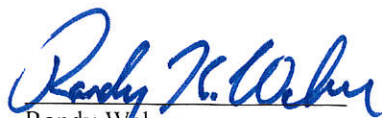
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



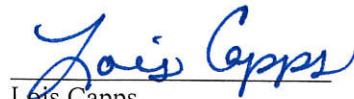
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



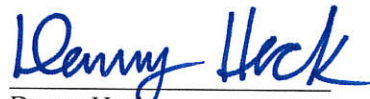
Randy Weber
Member of Congress



Lois Capps
Member of Congress



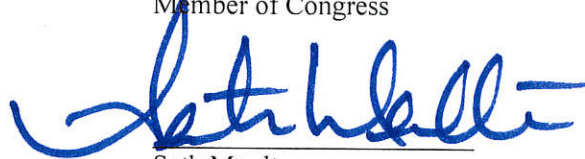
Blake Farenthold
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



William Keating
Member of Congress



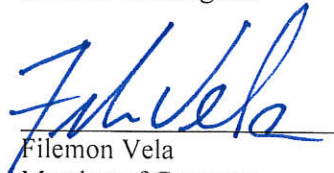
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Filemon Vela
Member of Congress