

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 16, 2011

Lieutenant General Robert L. Van Antwerp, Jr.  
Commanding Engineer  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Government Accountability Office Building  
441 G Street, NW, Attn: CECS-C  
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Lieutenant General Van Antwerp:

This spring has brought yet another wave of flooding to the communities in the Passaic River Basin, devastating homes and communities and straining the finances of local municipalities. While flooding has long been a problem in the region, the frequency and intensity of the events has only increased in recent years. These communities are in need of a long term solution to this annual cycle of destruction. To that end, we ask that the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) include the Reevaluation of the Passaic Mainstem River Basin in its Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request.

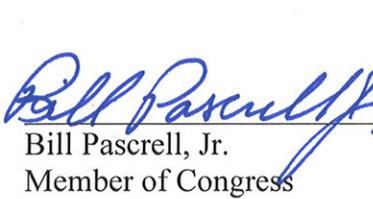
Since 1900, at least 26 lives have been lost in floods in the Passaic River Basin, and economic losses total over \$4.5 billion dollars. Twelve events have been of sufficient scope to warrant Presidential Disaster Declarations. Most recently, flooding in March and April of 2010 and 2011 has resulted in widespread destruction of homes and property. For years, the USACE has sought long term solutions to flooding in the Basin. While some aspects of the Corps' original study have been implemented, such as limited buyouts of homes in the flood plains, the region still lacks a feasible, long term and comprehensive solution to the flooding problems.

In order to develop this solution, in January of 2009, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) requested that USACE initiate a reevaluation of the Passaic River Study, which was put on hold for several months while a Commission appointed by Governor Christie studied flooding in the Basin. The Commission returned with several recommendations, one of which was to continue with the reevaluation of the study. This study, when completed, would allow USACE and the NJDEP to determine which flood management plan is most appropriate and would both best mitigate the risk of flooding and protect the environment.

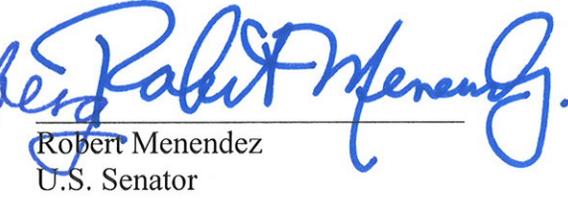
USACE currently has \$300,000 set aside for the Reevaluation, which will allow them to complete a Project Management Plan and prepare to sign a cost-sharing agreement with NJDEP within a year. The full cost of the reevaluation study is estimated to be \$15 million. Based on USACE guidelines for feasibility studies, the NJDEP has agreed to the 50-50 cost share requirement, and the State has indicated it would appropriate \$1.4 million for the first year of the study. We therefore respectfully ask that you include the matching \$1.4 million in the Army Corps FY2013 Budget Request and such appropriate amounts in subsequent years to satisfy the cost-sharing requirements.

We thank you for your attention to this request and look forward to continuing to work with you on our shared goal of mitigating flooding in the Passaic River Basin.

Sincerely,

  
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Frank Lautenberg  
U.S. Senator

  
Robert Menendez  
U.S. Senator

CC: Jacob Lew, Director, United States Office of Management and Budget  
Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)  
Col. John Boulé II, Commander, Army Corps of Engineers New York District