

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 14, 2024

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

The Honorable Michael Connor
Assistant Secretary for Civil Works
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-0108

Dear Director Young and Secretary Connor,

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Work Plan for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), we write to request continued funding for the Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project, an urgent flood risk reduction project along the central coast of California. We are grateful for the \$149 million in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, but request that you include an additional \$200 million from the USACE Construction General account to provide for the utilization of design-build techniques to expedite protection for the disadvantaged communities in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, which are still recovering from extensive flooding in 2023.

In partnership with USACE and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA) is actively constructing a flood risk reduction project that has been decades in the making. PRFMA is seeking additional FY24 Work Plan funding to utilize design-build techniques to accelerate the next phase of construction. Furthermore, it is notable that USACE has certified the ability to expend these additional funds and the non-federal match is in place. Thanks to SB 489 signed into law by Governor Newsom, DWR is committed to providing 100% of the non-federal share for this project.

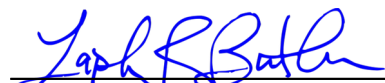
The residents and businesses of Watsonville and Pajaro have been waiting for decades for urgent flood protection and during that time have suffered significant damage and loss of life due to flooding. Today, the Watsonville and Pajaro communities are over 80% Hispanic with per capita incomes that are well below the state and national averages. Many of these residents are employed as agricultural workers and are vital contributors to a \$750 million annual industry in the area. This often-unseen agricultural workforce helps to provide food security for the nation and in turn we have a responsibility to provide security for their lives and livelihoods through reducing well-known flood risks.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure this project continues to progress and provide the protection the people along the Pajaro River deserve.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Raphael Butler
United States Senator



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress