

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

March 25, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20200

Dear President Biden,

We write to thank you for your leadership in calling for a national infrastructure plan to repair our country's deteriorating transportation, water, and energy systems. We also applaud your commitment to building resilient, sustainable infrastructure that will protect vulnerable communities, put our nation on a path to achieving net-zero emissions, and ensure an equitable clean energy future.

You have already taken important steps toward this end via your "Executive Order on Protecting Health & Restoring Science to Tackle Climate Crisis,"<sup>1</sup> released on your first day in office and "Executive Order (EO) on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad,"<sup>2</sup> released on January 26, 2021. We are thankful that the EOs reinstated the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and created a National Climate Task Force to plan and implement Federal actions to combat the climate crisis. We appreciate that one of the Task Force's major priorities will be increasing our nation's resilience to the impacts of climate change. We look forward to working with you and your Administration to meet this bold and necessary goal.

As members representing regions vulnerable to significant flooding, we have seen rising sea levels, increasingly severe storms, and changing weather patterns overwhelm our flood protection systems. As you know, rising global temperatures have been changing our standard weather systems, increasing the occurrence of severe storms. Cities like Sacramento and New Orleans, built around significant waterways that carry snowmelt and rain runoff, have seen shorter, more intense water drainage from shifting weather patterns. Rising sea levels are increasingly threatening coastal cities and regions. Current projections show that sea levels surrounding New York City, Charleston, and Miami will rise to six feet by 2100.<sup>3</sup>

Flooding is the most common and expensive natural disaster in the United States, devastating businesses, uprooting families, and straining governments' resources at all levels. The economic cost of major flood damage since 2015 totals over \$46 billion.<sup>4</sup> Major flooding is also an existential threat to constituents' safety and prosperity. The number of lives lost due to floods in the U.S. has

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01765/protecting-public-health-and-the-environment-and-restoring-science-to-tackle-the-climate-crisis>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/01/2021-02177/tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad>

<sup>3</sup> <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/23102017/nyc-sea-level-storm-surge-climate-change-building-codes-sandy/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/events/US/2015-2020>

been rising sharply. According to the National Weather Service, major flooding has led to at least 734 fatalities in the U.S. since 2015.<sup>5</sup> Flood damage is also a looming threat for millions of U.S. homeowners. An estimated four million houses and small apartment buildings across the contiguous U.S. have a substantial risk of expensive flood damage. Additionally, the cost of flood damage to homes nationwide is estimated to increase by more than 50 percent over the next 30 years.<sup>6</sup>

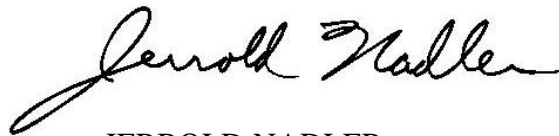
As you know, our nation's crumbling infrastructure is in desperate need of improvement. According to The American Society of Civil Engineers 2021 scorecard, our U.S. dams, roads, levees, and stormwater systems earned a "D" grade, reflecting their poor condition. Last year, the House moved to address this issue by passing the bipartisan *Moving Forward Act*. This transformative infrastructure package would have invested \$500 billion in roads, transit, and rail and created millions of jobs. We are proud that the *Moving Forward Act* also contained robust funding to create new climate resilience projects and strengthen existing ones. The bill included \$15 billion for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to carry out its backlog of vital resilience and rehabilitation projects, \$3 billion in coastal restoration funding, \$1 billion for watershed resiliency, and \$50 million annually for living shoreline projects.<sup>7</sup> This bill would also have established a hazard mitigation loan program to assist local governments in funding resilience projects that reduce the risks and costs of natural disasters.

The climate resilience measures in the *Moving Forward Act* would have significantly enhanced our constituents' safety and prosperity. We ask that your Administration continues to prioritize addressing climate resiliency and enhancing flood resilience by including similar provisions in your infrastructure plan. Please know that we, the undersigned, stand ready to support your call for a modern, sustainable, and equitable infrastructure plan. We thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you to ensure its realization.

Sincerely,



DORIS MATSUI  
Member of Congress



JERROLD NADLER  
Member of Congress

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.weather.gov/arx/usflood>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/22/966428165/a-looming-disaster-new-data-reveal-where-flood-damage-is-an-existential-threat>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/2/text>

/s/

Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

/s/

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

/s/

Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

/s/

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

/s/

Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

/s/

Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

/s/

Mike Levin  
Member of Congress

/s/

Nydia M. Velazquez  
Member of Congress

/s/

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

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Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress

/s/

Debbie Wasserman-Schultz  
Member of Congress

/s/

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

/s/

Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

/s/

Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress

/s/

Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress

/s/

Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress

/s/

Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress

/s/

Al Lawson  
Member of Congress

/s/

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress