

May 23, 2022

Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon
Chief of Engineers and Commanding General
United States Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314

Major General William Graham
Deputy Commanding General for Civil
and Emergency Operations
United States Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314

Lieutenant General Spellmon and Major General Graham,

I write to you today to urgently request you dedicate any remaining funding previously set aside for risk reserve from the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (BBA '18) to the Lower Mud Flood Risk Reduction Project in Milton, West Virginia. Due to unexpected and uncontrollable cost increases, this crucial project is now estimated to cost nearly \$200 million, a \$66 million increase over the 2019 project cost estimate.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) set aside funding for a risk reserve for situations just like this. While the majority of the BBA '18 risk reserve was prioritized for states affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, it is my understanding that sufficient funding remains available to assist with the increased federal share for the Lower Mud project. Currently, the Lower Mud project has secured about \$153 million in total funding. This includes a significant \$49 million investment from the State of West Virginia.

The Army Corps team at the Huntington District has worked diligently to limit project costs without compromising the flood risk reduction goal, but some factors are simply unavoidable. Skyrocketing costs associated with real estate acquisition, cultural resources recovery, river channel relocation, and the construction of the levee and two pump stations all contributed to the increased price tag of the project, but they are no excuse for inaction. It has been almost 30 years since the federal government determined that this community needed a large-scale solution to address historic and systemic flooding. The people of Milton cannot wait any longer.

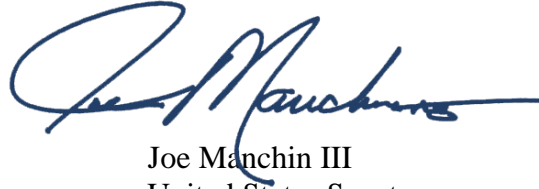
As you may be aware, Milton, West Virginia has an extensive history of severe flooding that puts not only lives at risk, but also livelihoods of those living in the community. In 1993, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) completed a study of the Mud River that identified Milton as the focus area for flood risk reduction. Three years later, that study was taken over by the USACE. It was then determined that the best course of action would be to construct a levee to protect the community.

In the ensuing years, Milton continued to experience significant flood events. The major flood of record, in 1997, was a 27-year flood event that at the time caused \$23 million in damage. In today's dollars it is estimated that damages from the 1997 event would cost upwards of \$63

million. More recently, in March 2021, the community suffered a 12-year flood event that resulted in tens of millions of dollars in damages.

I again urge you to use all available risk reserve funding to address the increased federal share associated with the Lower Mud project. I appreciate your full and fair consideration of this request, and look forward to working with you to ensure this project is completed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

CC. Mr. Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works