



Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

The National Audubon Society writes in support of a number of important provisions in the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (S. 3021). We thank Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper for their bipartisan work in developing this legislation that will protect people, birds and the places they need. We ask that the Senate take up the legislation and proceed to a floor vote without delay.

S. 3021 advances important investments and policy changes that impact critical water and other conservation resources, including:

- **A requirement that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers consider natural infrastructure alternatives in projects that manage risks from flooding, hurricane and storm damages.** Hurricane Florence is a reminder of the vulnerability of our coasts, which can be made more resilient with "natural infrastructure" such as wetlands and restored barrier islands.
- **Authorization of the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir.** This project will help store fresh water south of Lake Okeechobee in the Everglades and recreate a more natural water flow that mimics the historic ecosystem. When the more than \$3 billion restoration feature is completed, the reservoir can hold water that is currently discharged to sensitive coastal estuaries and move that water south where it is needed rather than allow it to continue to contribute to devastating algal blooms.
- **A two fold increase in the number of beneficial use of dredged materials pilot projects.** Audubon has worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and states to use dredged material to restore habitat that is important to birds and outdoor recreation economies. This work has created islands that provide excellent nesting habitat for birds such as Black Skimmers, Snowy Plovers, and Least Terns, and is leading innovations in thin-layer dispersal of dredged sediment to protect tidal marsh habitat in the face of sea-level rise.

- **Authorizes the Long Island Sound Program in the Environmental Protection Agency.** The Long Island Sound is a vital place for an enormous variety of birds and other wildlife: over 1,200 species of invertebrates, 170 species of fish, and dozens of species of migratory birds, including the federally endangered Roseate Tern and federally threatened Piping Plover and Red Knot. It also supports 54 Important Birds Areas and is home to Great Gull Island, one of the most important tern nesting sites on earth with approximately 10,000 pairs of Common Terns and nearly 2,000 pairs of Roseate Terns. This program funds projects that restore and preserve the Sound and its ecosystems, including wastewater treatment plants updates, wetlands protection and restoration, and abatement of widespread pollutants such as fertilizer, pesticides and oil.
- **Extension of the Safe Drinking Water Act** The bill reauthorizes the Safe Drinking Water Act for the first time in 20 years and doubles funding over three years for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. Continuing these important programs will help ensure safe drinking water for millions.

Audubon looks forward to continue to work with the committee to advance important water infrastructure measures in the future.

Sincerely,



Julie Hill-Gabriel
VP, Water Conservation
Audubon