Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. President,

We write to ask you to support increased federal funding for nature-based infrastructure, such as living shoreline coastal resiliency projects. We commend your administration's acknowledgment in the American Jobs Plan that rebuilding America's infrastructure is an opportunity to meet and respond to the climate crises while creating jobs. Shovel-ready living shoreline projects are one of the most economic ways to achieve these objectives. We urge you to support increased funding for living shorelines in budget documents and as you work with Congress to craft legislation to enact the American Jobs Plan.

Federal funding is needed to help communities along the ocean and Great Lakes invest in coastal resiliency projects to protect against increased flooding, erosion, and stronger storms. Traditionally, federal funding for coastal resiliency has been targeted at infrastructure created from manmade materials that can create challenges for coastal economies that are dependent on healthy ecosystems and shore environments, such as the recreation, tourism, and fishing industries. While these projects should remain an option for coastal management, newer nature-based alternatives can provide flood protection services while restoring wildlife habitats and the natural beauty of and economic strength of coastlines.

Nature-based resiliency projects like living shorelines have a multitude of environmental benefits that can be achieved simultaneously. First, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), living shoreline projects deliver environmental benefits that can "improve water quality, provide fisheries habitat, increase biodiversity, and promote recreation".[1] Additionally, some kinds of living shorelines projects can deliver incredible blue carbon benefits. For instance, just one square mile of salt marsh stores 76,000 gallons of carbon each year, aiding in our fight against climate change. Living shorelines are also adaptive in the face of environmental change like sea level rise, and even have the ability to regenerate.

The economic benefits of coastal restoration are also significant. Many Americans can be put back to work after this difficult pandemic building oyster reefs and restoring dunes and wetlands to protect against coastal hazards. NOAA has found that every $1 million invested in

[1] "What is a Living Shoreline?" U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Retrieved from https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/living-shoreline.html.

coastal restoration creates 15 jobs on average.[2] Additionally, living shoreline projects are often cheaper than concrete alternatives. Living shorelines projects typically cost between $1,000-$5,000 per square foot to install and $100 per square foot to maintain. Conversely, concrete projects can cost up to $10,000 per square foot to install and over $500 to maintain.[3] Coastal restoration also has an excellent cost-benefit ratio. According to an analysis of three coastal restoration projects funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, every dollar that taxpayers invested returned an average of $15 in net economic benefits.[4] The U.S. shoreline is 95,471 miles long, presenting no shortage of living shoreline construction opportunities.[5]

Funding living shorelines has strong support in Congress. We have worked to build awareness about this dynamic type of infrastructure in Congress through our *Living Shorelines Act*, which would authorize the creation and funding of a NOAA grant program for living shorelines with key scientific data collection provisions to help monitor coastal environments and the functioning of projects. Last Congress, the House passed our *Living Shorelines Act* as part of the Moving Forward (H.R. 2) infrastructure package and again through the Coastal and Great Lakes Community Enhancement Act (H.R. 729). It was also included in House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raul Grijalva's Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act of 2020. Finally, then-Senator Kamala Harris worked to negotiate and pass a version of this bill through the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee.

In conclusion, we urge you to support increased federal funding for nature-based coastal resiliency efforts, like living shoreline infrastructure. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with your administration to advance this proposal.

Sincerely,

Frank Pallone, Jr.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Christopher S. Murphy
U.S. SENATOR

CC:
Vice President of the United States Kamala Harris
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer

[2] "6 things to know about coastal habitat restoration," U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, February 2017, Retrieved from https://www.noaa.gov/stories/6-things-to-know-about-coastal-habitat-restoration.
[3] Natural and Structural Measures for Shoreline Stabilization, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, February 2015, https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/living-shorelines.html.
[4] Michael Conathan, Jeffrey Buchanan, Shiva Polefka, "The Economic Case for Restoring Coastal Ecosystems," *Center for American Progress*, April 2014.
[5] "How long is the U.S. shoreline?" U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Retrieved from https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/shorelength.html.