

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

January 13, 2020

Mr. Rickey Dale James
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Mr. James:

We write to strongly urge you to select the Caño Martín Peña project as a New Starts project in your FY 2020 Work Plan. As we are sure you are aware, we worked tirelessly along with our colleagues in Congress to secure new starts funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in H.R.1865 - Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020. It is now our hope that, in addition to the important priorities in New York State, you will utilize this opportunity to accomplish long-time Army Corps projects critical to flood damage reduction, public health, and environmental restoration in Puerto Rico.

The Caño Martín Peña flood and storm damage reduction and environmental restoration project is critical to alleviating the ongoing public health risks and environmental problems caused by the blocked Martín Peña Channel, affecting the lives of nearly 30,000 residents. The once navigable channel connecting San Juan Bay to the San Jose Lagoon is severely polluted from years of accumulated debris, mismanaged residential and commercial development, and continued discharge of raw sewage directly into the water. The resulting blockage of natural water flow has degraded habitat in the San Jose Lagoon, and poses a public health threat exacerbated by the channel's frequent flooding of the surrounding communities.

As you know, the Caño Martín Peña project was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 under Section 5127 and is now shovel ready. We write today to urge you to utilize one of the FY 2020 authorized new starts to move forward with this important project that will restore the ecosystem and simultaneously provide flood protection for the surrounding community. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact my staff.

Sincerely,



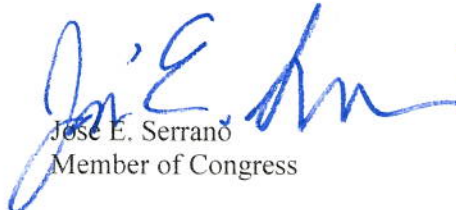
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress