

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 5, 2024

Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon
Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20314-1000

Dear Lieutenant General Spellmon,

We write regarding our concerns with the impact of the dam removal process at Locks and Dam (LD) 3 on the Monongahela River near Elizabeth, Pennsylvania. As you are aware, there was a miscalculation of the projected interim water depth in the lock following the partial demolition of the dam by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This misestimate has resulted in significant limitations on commercial barge traffic along the Monongahela (Mon) River. The Mon River is a vital corridor for commercial barge traffic and recreational boating and the limited depth of water in the lock continues to have adverse economic impacts on local businesses and residents who rely on the river. While we understand the USACE is working to create a navigable path that can accommodate standard vessel depths, we write today to emphasize the need for USACE to act with urgency to rectify the issue on or before the Corps' internal deadline of August 28, 2024.

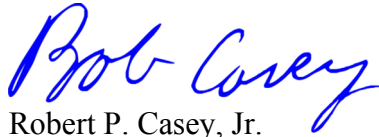
In 1992, Congress authorized the Lower Monongahela River Project, which includes the conversion of LD 2 (Braddock) into a gated dam, the removal of LD 3 (Elizabeth), and the new navigation lock at LD 4 (Charleroi). After years of delays and cost overruns, the project is near completion and is projected to boost our regional economy by \$200 million annually.

As a part of the modernization project, the USACE conducted their first controlled demolition to remove the dam on the river near Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, on July 10, 2024. Following the controlled demolition, the water level in the lock was too shallow to accommodate traditional commercial vessels. This insufficient water depth required the Corps to impose navigation restrictions that have scrambled barge traffic creating delays and trapping vessels above the lock, reduced the raw amount of commodities carried on many barges that do move through the lock by 25 percent, and cost industry several millions of dollars per week by early estimates.

To date, USACE has been responsive to federal officials and staff, local stakeholders, and industry partners in the aftermath of this incident. We continue to call on USACE to prioritize the return of the nine-foot draft for commercial barge traffic and request the Corps provide ongoing updates to the regional inland waterway community. Any additional delays will have steep economic costs for Southwestern Pennsylvania. Keeping this waterway safe and navigable in the long run is critical to the region's economy and way of life. At a later date, we look forward to a candid discussion of how this and other similar problems may be prevented in the future, but at present an immediate solution is our number one priority.

We trust you will continue to prioritize restoring the water to a depth that will accommodate the standard nine-foot draft on the Mon River and ask you keep our offices, industry, and other stakeholders apprised of your progress.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



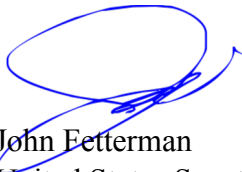
Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



John Fetterman
United States Senator