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The Honorable Frank A. Lobiondo
United States Congressman
5914 Main Street Suite 103
Mays Landing, NJ 08330

Re: Second Interim Report Disaster Relief Appropriations Act 2013
Reeds Beach/Pierce's Point/ Lower Township Army Corp Berm Project

Dear Congressman Lobiondo;

I am writing to you because I am in receipt of an advanced copy of the US Army Corps "Second Interim Report to Congress." The Board and Staff of The Wetlands Institute are devastated to see that neither the Middle nor Lower Township projects to restore a significant portion of the Delaware Bayshore are listed as funded projects. We understand that this project can still come to fruition as this is neither the final list of projects nor the only vehicle for funding the Reeds Beach/ Pierce's Point/Lower Township beach restoration project. This report deals only with the 100% federal funding from the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 and the following talking points state in pertinent part:

"The report does not represent an exhaustive list of projects, meaning inclusion on this list does not necessarily mean they will be funded and not being included does they not mean that are excluded from funding."

This language inspires hope that this project is not necessarily precluded. The Reeds Beach/Pierce's Point beach renourishment and berm is critical to our ecosystem, economic development and the long term sustainability of the Delaware Bayshore communities in both Middle and Lower Township. If the project is not completed, the ecosystem and community face increased risks and vulnerability from future storms. The health and well-being of the natural resource is vital to a health local economy. Each spring the migration along the Delaware Bayshore is also accompanied by a migration of nature-based tourists that are a critical underpinning to the area's economy.

This spring a committed group of conservation organizations including The Wetlands Institute, Middle Township, and the Cape May Mosquito Commission came together to implement an emergency ecological restoration project to rebuild critical horseshoe crab and shorebird beaches. In 5 months, the team achieved what normally takes years. As a result, horseshoe crabs spawned in large numbers throughout the restored beaches and long-distance migratory shorebirds were well-fed by horseshoe crab eggs. The NJ Endangered Red Knot fared well this year with most birds reaching critical weight to complete their journey to the high arctic to breed. It was an amazing success! This project provided the scientific basis to protect and restore critical ecosystems that also serve to protect and preserve our bayshore communities inextricably linking ecosystem well-being to the well-being of people, their communities, and the economy.

The emergency restoration project worked to restore portions of a 2.5 mile section of Delaware Bay shoreline – and supplied 38,000 cubic yards of sand to portions of the bayshore. This is less than 10% of

a typical beach renourishment on the Atlantic beaches. The gains made by the described ecological restoration project were a first step, but they are not enough. The project provides a template for the larger restoration project and has set the stage for establishing a resilient Delaware Bayshore that is critical for our people and our treasured natural resources. However, the entire project, extending from Reeds Beach to Villas, needs to be implemented to provide lasting protection and resilience.

Given that the Second Interim Report to Congress is not the final word on funding for restoration projects, we ask that you continue to press for the funding of this critical restoration project – a project that will secure a significant section of the Delaware Bayshore communities and the associated critical ecosystems. It is essential for horseshoe crabs, migratory Red Knots, and the people who depend on a resilient bayshore for their livelihoods. It has never been more important than now to protect this area.

Sincerely,

Lenore P. Tedesco, PhD
Executive Director