



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Floor Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
In Support of En Bloc Amendment to H.R. 3080  
(includes Pierluisi Amendment #14)  
*Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2013*  
*October 23, 2013*

Mr. Chairman: I rise in support of the en bloc amendment, which includes an amendment I filed. I thank the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the full Committee and the Subcommittee for working with me on this important matter.

Since 1986, the four other U.S. territories have been given partial relief—up to \$200,000 dollars—from the local cost-sharing requirements for Army Corps projects. The base bill increases this amount to approximately \$430,000 dollars to account for inflation.

My amendment simply extends this waiver provision to the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico.

There are about 20 authorized flood protection, harbor dredging and other Army Corps projects pending in Puerto Rico, some of which are stalled due to the constrained ability of the local government sponsor to provide for its share of the project cost.

The two principal reasons that justified enactment of this waiver provision for the other territories three decades ago also justify its extension to Puerto Rico today.

Puerto Rico is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters like hurricanes and floods. In 2011, for example, many island municipalities were declared federal disaster areas in the wake of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm María, with FEMA assistance totaling \$95 million dollars.

In addition, Puerto Rico faces severe economic, fiscal and public financing challenges. At nearly 14 percent, our unemployment rate is higher than all 50 states and three of the other territories. The island government is in the midst of a debt crisis that owes in large part to the fact that Puerto Rico, as a territory, is shortchanged under key federal programs.

I thank the Committee for recognizing that critical Army Corps projects in Puerto Rico should not be deferred or deauthorized because of the unique challenges faced by the territory government.

I yield back the balance of my time.