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House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3813

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NOAA Office of General Counsel for Natural Resources, GCNR
1315 East-West Highway, Room 15103
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Public Comment for the Draft DARP/EA for the Athos Oil Spill

To Whom It May Concern:

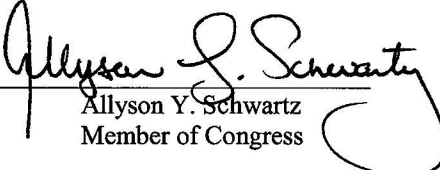
I am writing to express my support for the implementation of the mitigation projects in the Draft DARP/EA for the Athos Oil Spill, specifically the Lardner's Point Project in Philadelphia, which is located in my congressional district. It is clear that the trustee agencies, including NOAA, USFWS and the extensive state organizations in Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania have completed an exhaustive assessment of the damage and have compiled a list of projects that meet the requirements for mitigation.

The Lardner's Point Project is an element of a much larger plan for the Philadelphia waterfront. My office is working closely with the Delaware River City Corporation, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and the City of Philadelphia to implement an 11-mile riverfront greenway in northeast Philadelphia that stretches through five different city neighborhoods and includes 274 acres of public open space, 11 miles of recreation trail, 2 miles of new roadway, and improvements to 13 neighborhood connector streets. This plan will revitalize an underutilized industrial section of Philadelphia by strategically inserting new recreation and encouraging new private development. The greenway will act as an economic development tool for the region. It will also reconnect people to the Delaware River—a connection that was severed by 200 years of heavy industrial use and the construction of Interstate 95 in the 1970s. The Lardner's Point project is a 4.5-acre park and will be a signature park on the greenway with spectacular views, walking trails, a fishing pier, interpretive signage, and of course the restored shoreline and wetlands which are included in the Draft DARP.

Lastly, the restoration of the shoreline at Lardner's Point is an important project in Philadelphia because it will act as a pilot project for removal of bulkheads and wetland construction in a highly urbanized setting. Most of the Delaware riverfront in Philadelphia has been drastically disturbed and degraded by almost 300 years of industry and development. Lardner's Point is a perfect example of the city taking the initiative to clean up its industrial shoreline, restore public access, and create more natural habitat in a location that will serve the adjacent densely-populated neighborhoods.

I am pleased that Lardner's Point was included in the DARP/EA, and I fully support the implementation of this project, as well as the other projects in the document.

Sincerely,


Allyson Y. Schwartz
Member of Congress