

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Michael L. Connor
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Assistant Secretary Connor:

We write today concerning the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Consolidated School Relocation Project, which is part of the Buchanan County Section 202 Nonstructural Flood Damage Reduction Project. The purpose of this project is to relocate and consolidate the existing Hurley High School and Buchanan County Career, Technology & Higher Learning Center from their existing locations in a floodplain onto one campus in Grundy, Virginia. We respectfully request that USACE act swiftly to finalize the Buchanan County Consolidated School Relocation Project, which is essential for our constituents in Southwest Virginia.

Over the decades, the community of Buchanan County has faced a number of severe flooding events – including two recent significant rainfall events in 2021 and 2022 that resulted in Major Disaster Declarations. As a result of these recurring flooding events, USACE has implemented flood risk management measures in Buchanan County since the early 2000s. In August 2003, USACE approved a conceptual/feasibility level Detailed Project Report package for the Buchanan County Nonstructural Project that identified Hurley High School and Buchanan County Career Center as “feasible for floodproofing by means of a ‘ringwall.’”

In 2019, the Buchanan County Nonstructural Project received significant supplemental appropriations to complete flood risk management activities pursuant to the Disaster Relief Act of 2019. Given the lapse of time, USACE was able to examine the feasibility of onsite nonstructural flood protection for Hurley High School and the Buchanan County Career Center. Following this review, USACE determined that the nonstructural floodproofing options for the high school were not feasible and converting to the nonstructural measure of acquisition by relocation was the most viable solution for providing flood protection. Although the ringwall was confirmed feasible for the career center, the Buchanan County Board of Education submitted alternative plans to relocate the career center to the same location as the high school, which was supported by a 2021 Supplemental Environmental Assessment produced by USACE.

It is our understanding that the Great Lakes & Ohio River Division transmitted the Draft Consolidated School Relocation Agreement Contract to USACE headquarters on October 26, 2022 for review and comment. At the request of USACE headquarters, we understand the Huntington District Office drafted a Letter Report and detailed responses to comments and questions posed by USACE headquarters intended to supplement the 2003 Detailed Project Report and document the considerations leading to the updated decision to achieve the most cost effective and implementable plan. We understand the Letter Report and additional materials

were transmitted to the Great Lakes & Ohio River Division for review on January 13, 2023, approved, and then transmitted to USACE headquarters on January 23, 2023 for final review. It is now our understanding that USACE headquarters is in the final stages of reviewing the Buchanan County Consolidated School Relocation Contract.

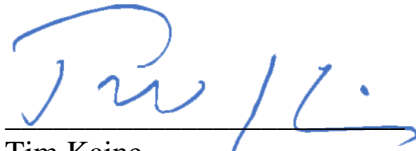
The relocation of Hurley High School and the Buchanan County Career Center will provide a safe and reliable facility for the communities of Grundy and Hurley, Virginia. Recent significant rainfall events in Buchanan County have showed that time is of the essence to complete this critical consolidation and relocation project. We urge USACE to prioritize finalizing the Buchanan County School Relocation Contract as quickly as possible so this critical project can get underway.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with USACE to advance this important project for Buchanan County, Virginia.

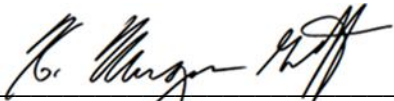
Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
U.S. Senator



Tim Kaine
U.S. Senator



H. Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress