



Below is the [opening statement](#) of Chairman Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) as delivered.

“The purpose of today’s hearing is to help the Committee develop the next Water Resources Development Act. Yes, it’s that time again. We call that WRDA.

“WRDA not only authorizes water resources studies and projects but sets national policies for the US Army Corps of Engineers’ Civil Works Program. Since 2014, this Committee has kept to a biennial schedule of passing this bipartisan legislation, and I look forward to continuing that track record this Congress.

“Earlier this year, Ranking Member Whitehouse and I sent a letter to our Senate colleagues soliciting their requests for WRDA 2026. I am pleased to say that we received a significant number of requests—more than last time—which demonstrates the strong interest in, and the necessity of, this legislation.

“To help us kickstart the WRDA process, this hearing will allow the Committee to:

- *Learn more about the Trump Administration’s recently announced priorities for the Corps;*
- *Examine the agency’s implementation of prior WRDAs; and*
- *Discuss ongoing projects and programs of the Corps.*

“Secretary Telle, I appreciate and applaud your willingness to closely examine what changes need to be made to allow the Corps to better deliver water

resources solutions with our non-federal partners. I look forward to learning more about those changes today.

“The Corps does critical work across the nation through its navigation, flood risk management and ecosystem restoration missions. This work protects the lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans and facilitates commerce throughout our country and internationally.

“Last week actually, I visited the Winfield Locks and Dam to see the great work the Corps is doing on the Kanawha River there. There’s nothing like getting eyes on a project.

“As I have previously stated, it is important that any WRDA bill supports the timely and efficient delivery of water resources projects, while continuing to meet national missions. Flexibility is key to ensuring that the Corps can identify and carry out solutions that are tailored to the needs of each community.

“We must also continue to preserve the role of our non-federal sponsors in this process. To achieve this goal, WRDA 2026 will advance studies and projects, without forcing a one-size-fits-all solution.

“In September, I stressed the importance of the timely implementation of WRDA 2024 and prior WRDA, consistent with congressional intent.

“Secretary Telle, throughout your two decades as a Senate staffer and your confirmation process, you heard how important the Corps’ work and the policies enacted in WRDA are to communities across the country. Now that you’ve had more time on the job, I look forward to an update on the Corps’ implementation efforts.

“I also want to acknowledge and thank the staff across the Corps enterprise for their ongoing efforts to provide the Committee with technical assistance on the WRDA requests that we received from our Senate colleagues. Technical assistance

is a vital part of our legislative process, and we greatly appreciate timely responses from the Corps.

“The work of the Corps has and will continue to make a difference in communities, and that is certainly true in West Virginia. The Corps is actively working on a number of studies and projects that are critically important to my home state.

“The fifth and final phase of the Bluestone Dam Safety Assurance Mega-Project—it is a huge project—in the city of Hinton continues to make significant progress. Once completed, that project will protect more than 150,000 people and \$20 billion worth of infrastructure.

“I’m also pleased that work on the Lower Mud River Flood Risk Management project in Milton—where Secretary Telle joined us there—could resume last summer. Unfortunately, there is still more to be done. West Virginia continues to experience devastating flooding.

“I am thankful to the Corps, and the Huntington District in particular, for the progress they are making on the Kanawha River Basin and Upper Guyandotte feasibility studies. These studies are exploring potential solutions to manage the flood risk in these areas.

“I look forward to making sure that the next WRDA bill contains the necessary authorizations and authorities for the Corps to continue to carry out this important work.”

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