

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

**COMPLETE STATEMENT OF**

**THE HONORABLE R. D. JAMES**  
**ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (CIVIL WORKS)**

**BEFORE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ON**

**S. 2800 – America’s Water Infrastructure Act, 2018**

**May 17, 2018**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to be back before this Committee today to discuss the water infrastructure needs and challenges for the Nation, and S. 2800, America's Water Infrastructure Act, 2018. I am R.D. James, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. The Administration is continuing to review this bill and does not have a position at this time. Today, I would like to discuss the civil works program and some of the reforms I am already leading with the Corps or which the Administration has proposed to help meet the Nation's water resources challenges going forward.

As stated in previous hearings, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has played a significant role in the development of the Nation's water resources. The Civil Works program of the Corps has three main missions:

- commercial navigation,
- flood and storm damage reduction, and
- aquatic ecosystem restoration.

In this regard, the Corps works with our Nation's coastal ports to maintain their channels; operates and maintains the inland waterways; supports State and local flood risk management activities; works to restore significant aquatic ecosystems; and operates and maintains multipurpose dams, as well as the reservoirs behind them. There are about 250 million day-visits a year for recreation at Corps lands and reservoirs, making the Corps one of the top Federal recreation providers.

The infrastructure that the Corps maintains includes 13,000 miles of coastal navigation channels (including the channels of the Great Lakes), 12,000 miles of inland waterways, 715 dams, 241 locks at 195 navigation sites, 14,700 miles of levees, and hydropower plants at 75 locations with 353 generating units. These projects help provide risk reduction from flooding in our river valleys and along our coasts, facilitate the movement

of approximately two billion tons of waterborne commerce, and provide up to 24 percent of the Nation's hydropower.

Much of this infrastructure was constructed in the first half of the twentieth century and today requires a significant amount of resources to maintain. The current paradigm for investing in water resources development is not sustainable.

The Corps continues to work on policy and administrative changes that can improve infrastructure delivery. My staff and I are looking at the organization, authorities, policies, regulations, and procedures to expressly identify opportunities for increased efficiency and effectiveness. This includes efforts to reduce redundancy and delegate authority for decision-making to the most practical and appropriate level. Delegating decision-making authority for numerous programs, including Section 408 permissions, down to the district level has streamlined the process and shortened the time it takes to reach a decision. I am committed to positioning the Corps for success.

The way that we use our water resources affects our Nation's economy, its environment, and public safety. The Corps stands ready to help in addressing the water resource demands and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I look forward to working with the Committee on these very important issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of Committee. This concludes my statement. I look forward to answering any questions you or other Members of the Committee may have.