

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

**WRITTEN STATEMENT  
OF**

**MR. R.D. JAMES  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
FOR CIVIL WORKS**

**AND**

**MAJOR GENERAL SCOTT SPELLMON, DEPUTY COMMANDING  
GENERAL CIVIL AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS**

**BEFORE**

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

**ON**

**OVERSIGHT ON THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS CIVIL  
WORKS PROGRAM**

**MAY 8, 2019**

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the oversight of the Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works program.

I have been in the Assistant Secretary of the Army position for 15 months and my goals today are the same as they were when I started, to focus on outcomes, over process, in order to make the best use of the available funds. Since last year I have had the pleasure to meet with most of you one on one to discuss your views on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works program. That input is appreciated and I remain committed to working with each of you.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Budget provides over \$4.8 billion for the Army Civil Works program, with a focus on investments that will yield high economic and environmental returns or address a significant risk to public safety. This Budget relies on a foundation of strong relationships between the Corps and local communities, which allow us to work together to help manage, develop, restore, and protect their water resources. The Budget focuses on the highest performing work within the three main mission areas of the Corps, which are:

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

The FY 2020 Budget supports a Corps program that has a diverse set of tools and approaches to working with local communities, whether this means funding projects with our cost-sharing partners, providing planning assistance and technical expertise to help communities make better informed decisions, or participating in the national and international conversations on how to best address future water resources challenges. The Budget helps us maintain and improve our efforts on resiliency and sustainability – one of the challenges associated with the ways that we have used our water and related land resources in the past.

The FY 2020 Budget includes approximately \$2.3 billion for the study, design, construction, and operation and maintenance of inland and coastal navigation projects. The Flood Risk Management program is funded at approximately \$1.0 billion in the Budget and includes funding to provide technical and planning assistance to local communities to enable them to understand and to better manage their flood risks. The Budget provides \$187 million to help restore several large ecosystems, which have been a focus of interagency collaboration, where the aquatic ecosystem structure, function, and processes have degraded.

Since the enactment of WRDA 2018, the Chief of Engineers has signed and transmitted 12 water resources project reports.

- Little Colorado River (Winslow), Arizona
- Three Rivers, Arkansas
- Sacramento-San Joaquin, Delta Islands and Levees, California
- San Joaquin River Basin, Lower San Joaquin, California
- Anacostia Watershed Restoration, Prince George's County, Maryland
- Espanola Valley, Rio Grande and Tributaries, New Mexico
- San Juan Harbor, Puerto Rico
- Pawcatuck River, Rhode Island
- Resacas at Brownsville, Texas
- City of Norfolk, Virginia
- Norfolk Harbor and Channels (55-foot deepening), Virginia
- Seattle Harbor, Washington

I would also like to touch on the widespread devastation and serious impacts this spring's Missouri River flooding has created for many people throughout the region. Major General Spellmon and I have both visited the area personally and saw the impacts. Most levees extending from near Omaha, Nebraska, to near Kansas City, Missouri, overtopped during the flood. We can assure this committee that the Corps' number one priority during this period was to help the affected communities reduce their flood risk, with emphasis on public safety. The extent of the damage to levees in this region, while large, remains unclear. As the flood levels recede, we will be able more accurately to estimate the extent of the damage to the Federal and non-Federal levees that participate in the Rehabilitation and Inspection Program of the Corps, under Public Law 84-99, as amended.

Since receiving my appointment to be ASA, I've focused on how the Corps executes its funds. This involves identifying the highest priority investments and ensuring that we finish that work in a more timely and efficient way. This approach will ensure a better return on taxpayer's investment and better the lives of Americans. Under my oversight and direction and with the help of General Semonite and his team, the Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program is committed to working on improving its performance. The Corps also is using its engineering expertise and its relationships with project sponsors to develop new approaches for some of the Nation's toughest water resources challenges.

I am committed to ensuring that the United States Army Corps of Engineers does what it does better than any other organization in the world – to identify the best ways to manage, develop, restore, and protect water resources. Our goal is to achieve a high economic, environmental, and safety return for the Nation, which will benefit all Americans.

Thank you for inviting me to be here today. I look forward to your questions.