

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

COMPLETE STATEMENT

OF

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COMMANDING GENERAL AND CHIEF OF ENGINEERS**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ON

“Water Resources: the Role of the Public and Private Sectors”

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Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Cardin, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Lieutenant General Todd Semonite, Commanding General and Chief of Engineers. I am pleased to be here today to discuss the role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Civil Works program in the development, management, protection, and restoration of water resources across the Nation. The three main missions of the Corps are commercial navigation, flood and storm damage reduction, and aquatic ecosystem restoration.

The Corps has played a significant role in the development of the Nation's water resources. 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.

The Corps constructed much of this infrastructure in the first half of the twentieth century. Some of it is experiencing various stages of degradation and disrepair. The Corps dedicates a significant amount of its resources to maintain the key features of this infrastructure.

The Corps has been improving its ability to focus on the work that will provide the highest economic, environmental, and safety returns to the Nation. For example, the Corps Infrastructure Strategy focuses on managing the Corps infrastructure projects more efficiently. This strategy utilizes lifecycle portfolio management based on an assessment of the risk reduction and other consequences of a proposed investment.

Approximately 98% of U.S. overseas trade by weight, and 99.6% by volume, enters or leaves the United States through a U.S. coastal port. The Corps maintains the principal navigation channels of these ports, and works with them on proposals to deepen, widen, or otherwise improve their Federal channels, for example, in order to accommodate larger vessels.

Another primary mission of the Corps is flood and storm damage reduction. The Corps operates dams, reservoirs, and levees to reduce flood risks; it has also constructed levee systems that local authorities operate and maintain. The Corps works with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other Federal agencies, to support States and local communities with emergency flood fighting and flood recovery

activities, and provides floodplain management technical services directly to States and local communities in support of their flood risk management objectives. Additionally, the Corps has constructed projects to reduce flood risks along 240 miles of the nation's 2,700 miles of shoreline.

The Corps also helps restore significant ecosystems under its aquatic ecosystem restoration program, another primary mission area. This program includes work to address damage to aquatic ecosystems caused by the way in which the Corps and others have developed the Nation's water resources, such as in the Everglades, and in the Upper Mississippi River, the Missouri River, and the Columbia River basins.

The Corps maintains recreation facilities at 403 of its multi-purpose projects. The Corps has a long history with developing partnerships within existing recreation authorities. It leases about one-half of the 5,000 recreation sites at these 403 projects to other public and private entities, including private sector commercial operators, States, and local governments. Private recreation sites include approximately 562 privately owned marinas, resorts, campgrounds, boat ramps, fuel docks, convenience stores, and other public use areas.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for allowing me to testify about the Corps role in sustaining the Nation's water resources infrastructure and economic opportunities associated with our Civil Works program. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.