

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

**COMPLETE STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL SCOTT A. SPELLMON
CHIEF OF ENGINEERS**

**BEFORE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS**

ON

**THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET
FOR THE CIVIL WORKS PROGRAM
OF THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT ACT 2022**

03 MAY 2023

Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and distinguished members of the Committee. I am honored to testify before you today along with the Honorable Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, regarding the President's Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024) Budget (Budget) for the Army Civil Works Program and our implementation of the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 (WRDA 2022).

Through the Army Civil Works program, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) works with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and local governments, as well as others, to develop, manage, restore, and protect water resources, primarily through the study, construction, and operation and maintenance of water-related infrastructure projects. The Corps also regulates development affecting waters of the United States including wetlands and works with other Federal agencies to help communities respond to, and recover from, floods and other natural disasters.

For FY 2024, the President recommended \$7.413 billion in discretionary funding for Civil Works activities – the largest budget request in the history of this program. This funding, along with the authorizations provided to us by Congress, will allow us to advance our three main missions of commercial navigation, flood and storm damage reduction, and aquatic ecosystem restoration, as well as support related project purposes, such as water supply, hydropower, and recreation. The Civil Works program is performance-based and focuses on high-performing projects and programs within these three main mission areas. The Corps uses its engineering expertise and relationships with project sponsors and stakeholders to develop innovative approaches to address some of the most pressing water resources challenges facing the Nation.

WRDA 2022 provided the Corps the flexibility to design projects that respond to a wider suite of impacts associated with climate change. WRDA 2022 also provided flexibility to address the water resources needs of urban and rural communities with environmental justice concerns. This is a high priority goal of the Administration. An important next step for Army Civil Works will be the adoption of procedures implementing the Water Resources Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines. In partnership with the Assistant Secretary for Army for Civil Works, we expect to formally initiate a rulemaking process on this issue later this year. This rulemaking will include a focus on securing environmental justice and spurring economic opportunity for disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized, underserved, or overburdened by pollution, and may have been left behind in the past in terms of infrastructure development.

The Corps Tribal Nations Program enables the Army to partner with Federally recognized American Indian and Alaskan Native tribal governments to identify solutions to their water resources challenges, which will substantially benefit the people who live in Indian Country or in Alaska Native villages. The Corps works with Native American Tribes as cost-share partners on Civil Works projects through its Tribal Partnership Program, under its Planning Assistance to States Program, as well as through specifically authorized Civil Works projects. WRDA 2022 supports our trust commitment to Tribal Nations by enhancing the breadth and reach of the Tribal Partnership Program,

strengthening tools to provide Tribal assistance, as well as establishing a framework for an advisory committee to further facilitate delivery of water resources projects to Tribal Nations. The Corps reaffirms its commitment to engage in regular, meaningful, and robust consultation with Tribal officials in the development of water resources projects and on regulatory actions that have Tribal implications.

In developing the FY 2024 Budget, the Administration gave consideration to projects that reduced climate risk to communities. For example, to advance community resilience, the Budget provided construction funding for Environmental Infrastructure and the Tribal Partnership Program. This is the first time that the Budget provided such funding. The Budget also includes \$35.5 million for our planning and technical assistance programs, where the Corps shares its expertise with local communities, including economically disadvantaged communities, to help them identify and understand their water resources problems and increase their resilience to, and preparedness for, flood risks.

Through the Army Civil Works research and development program, we are making investments to tackle future water resources challenges and advance related technological development in support of the three Army Civil Works main missions. The Budget includes a historic \$86 million investment in research and development activities, or over \$100 million including technology transition and data collection. This investment demonstrates the Administration's commitment to engineering innovation to deliver enduring water resource solutions for the Nation. This investment will allow the Corps to continue addressing the most pressing knowledge gaps that our practitioners face while doing their jobs in the field, such as operational, data-driven methods to improve navigation channel maintenance, the beneficial use of dredged material, and flood and storm risk management modeling. This investment also includes funding to advance longer-term research and development including: \$10 million to accelerate the Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations Assessment, which will further our understanding of atmospheric river impacts on flood risk management, water supply, and other water uses; and \$25.5 million to inform and improve our overall asset management strategy, with a focus on work that has the potential to achieve significant cost savings in the Civil Works program.

The FY 2024 Budget reflects a number of other priorities of the Administration. The Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration program is funded at \$653 million in the Budget, investing in the restoration of some of the Nation's most unique aquatic ecosystems, such as the Chesapeake Bay, the Upper Mississippi River, the Great Lakes, the Louisiana Coast, and the Everglades. This includes \$415 million for the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration (SFER) (Everglades) program — which is an \$8 million increase compared to the 2023 Budget level, as well as \$93 million to support salmon recovery efforts in the Columbia River basin.

The FY 2024 Budget includes \$235 million for the Sault Ste. Marie (Replacement Lock) project in Michigan and \$350 million for replacement of the Cape Cod Canal Bridges in Massachusetts along with a legislative proposal that would allow the Corps to transfer

funds to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to design and construct the replacement bridges. The largest request in the Construction Account is \$655 million for the construction of a critical dam safety project at Prado Dam in California.

The FY 2024 Budget also includes five new studies in the Investigations account — Klamath Basin, CA (Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration); Southeast Michigan, MI (Flood Risk Management); Tittabawassee River, Chippewa River, Pine River and Tobacco River, MI (Flood Risk Management); Fox Point Hurricane Barrier, RI (Flood Damage Reduction Coastal); and Morgantown, WV Lock and Dam Automation.

My top priorities include identifying the highest priority potential investments for the Army Civil Works Program, starting with the maintenance of our existing infrastructure, and ensuring that we deliver studies and finish quality projects safely, on time, and within budget. I am focused on delivering projects that will contribute to the effort to enhance the Nation's resilience to climate change. These priorities will ensure a better return on taxpayer investment and improve the lives of all Americans.

The FY 2024 President's Budget for the Army Civil Works Program represents a continuing, fiscally prudent investment in the Nation's water resources infrastructure and restoration of aquatic ecosystems. The Corps is committed to efficiently and effectively executing the Army Civil Works program.

Thank you, Chairman Carper and Members of the Committee. This concludes my statement. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.