

**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

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEXT
WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT**

12 JANUARY 2022

Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to testify before you today and I thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Army Civil Works program. I look forward to discussing the status of implementation of recent Water Resources Development Acts as well as any questions the committee may have. Most importantly, I look forward to continuing to work with this committee, the Congress, and the Administration to help address the Nation's water resources challenges.

The Army Civil Works Program is the Nation's largest water resources program, and has three main missions, which are: commercial navigation, flood and storm damage reduction, and ecosystem restoration. The Congress has authorized many of our reservoirs for multiple purposes, including ancillary purposes such as hydropower, recreation, and water supply. We implement our main missions consistent with the applicable Congressional authorizations, which include legislative initiatives and reforms, as well as the authorization of the studies and projects that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) undertakes.

The infrastructure authorized by the Water Resources Development Acts and implemented by the U.S. Army benefits the well-being of American citizens by contributing to the Nation's economic growth, restoring aquatic ecosystems, and addressing significant risks to public safety.

While the focus of this hearing may be on the prospective legislation being considered by this committee, it is important to acknowledge the recent, significant increase in funding for the Army Civil Works program over the past several years. Less than four years ago, the Army received a significant infusion of capital from the 2018 Bipartisan Budget Act (\$17.4 billion), which was followed 16 months later by the 2019 Disaster Relief Act (\$3.26 billion). These supplemental appropriations will allow the Army to help reduce flood and coastal storm risks in communities across the Nation, as well as address damages to existing projects. The program has also received several consecutive years of record-high annual appropriations in Fiscal Years 2018-2021 (spanning from \$6.830 billion to \$7.795 billion). Within the past several months, the Congress also passed the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2022 (\$5.711 billion) and the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (\$17.089 billion), representing well over \$22 billion for additional Corps investments. This funding provides the Army with a once-in-a-generation window of opportunity to deliver water resource infrastructure programs and projects that will positively impact the lives of our communities across the Nation. Additionally, these funds will be used to maintain our existing Corps infrastructure to ensure that its key features remain operational while continuing to provide benefits to the Nation.

The Corps has been providing engineering solutions to address our Nation's toughest challenges since 1775 and we fully understand the risks with executing our current workload. The Corps is being proactive in its efforts to identify major risks to execution and develop measures to reduce, resolve, or eliminate these issues. Measures to prepare the workforce include efforts toward the acceleration of recruitment actions and the execution of workplace transformation initiatives to attract and retain top talent. The Corps is actively working to fortify our Real Estate expertise across the enterprise to enhance support to our non-federal partners with identifying and acquiring the land needed to construct our projects, as well as evaluating opportunities to identify needed properties earlier and reduce the risks with initiating acquisition efforts. The Corps continues to explore expanding upon the tenets of Integrated Water Resources Management principles in formulating, evaluating, displaying, comparing, and recommending alternative plans in water and related land resources implementation studies. The Corps is also developing additional contracting tools that will allow us to establish and maintain partnerships, and look at combining our traditional delivery methods like Design-Bid-Build with alternative delivery concepts like Design-Build and Early Contractor Involvement strategies. The Corps continues to monitor supply and demand trends for building materials and other products that will be needed for construction to provide more reliable and cost-efficient project delivery.

Under leadership of the current Administration, and in alignment with the authorities provided by this committee, the Corps is moving forward, along with other Federal agencies, to help address the vast water resource challenges posed by global climate change, including water scarcity, sea level rise, and observed increases in severe weather events. The Corps continues to develop, evaluate, and implement changes to programs and projects to incorporate and enhance resilience to climate change and particularly to help disadvantaged communities to reduce their risks, and to adapt, to a changing climate. The Corps continues to provide meaningful engagement opportunities for these disadvantaged communities, including in rural areas, to encourage and enable them to adopt solutions to the impact of climate change in their communities.

Under leadership from the Administration, the Corps continues to seek opportunities to identify and document the full spectrum of economic, environmental, and other benefits to the Nation, including how we address environmental justice concerns. This focus on economically disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, or overburdened by pollution, including those in rural areas, will provide an opportunity to invest in these areas, which may have been left behind with past infrastructure development and construction. We can leverage these tools to enhance opportunities for these communities where our studies and projects can provide solutions to their water resources challenges.

Our 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 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. 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. The Corps also can provide technical assistance to Native American Tribes under its Flood Plain Management Services Program. The Corps can also leverage interagency Silver Jackets teams established in each state to identify water resource challenges affecting Tribes and determine the best suited agency and program to assist Tribes, where possible, in addressing those challenges, including the aforementioned programs.

The Corps uses its engineering expertise and its relationships with project sponsors and stakeholders to develop innovative approaches to address some of the most pressing water resources challenges facing the Nation. 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. Under my oversight and direction, and with the leadership of Assistant Secretary Connor and his team, the Corps is committed to efficiently and effectively executing the Civil Works program.

I feel strongly that in order to achieve our vision, we will need to continue to invest in our Research and Development (R&D) program. We are working to further inform our R&D initiatives and strengthen our partnerships with academic institutions to benefit from the enormous capacity of our Nation's scientists, so we will know how best to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Investments in research and development help us find solutions for today's and tomorrow's challenges like those posed by extreme rainfall events and the impacts due to severe floods and coastal storms. We also look to R&D solutions to further inform the development of our sustainability strategies including Engineering With Nature (EWN). The Corps EWN initiative supports sustainable infrastructure systems and embraces the intentional and substantial use of natural systems in providing water resources solutions. Through EWN, the Corps aspires to implement nature-based solutions for civil works projects in partnership with cost-sharing sponsors.

I am committed to ensuring that the Corps continues to identify the best ways to manage, develop, restore, and protect water resources in collaboration with sponsors and partners. Our goal is to achieve a high economic, environmental, and public safety return for the Nation, which will benefit all Americans.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.