Thank you Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, members of the Committee, and the staff of the Environment and Public Works Committee.

It is an honor to have been nominated by President Trump to serve as the 14th Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. I would like to thank:

- President Trump, who I was honored to serve during his first administration.
- Secretary Hegseth
- Secretary Driscoll
- My family
    - My wife Shelby
    - My two beautiful children.
    - My mother Rita
    - My father Whitney

I would also like to thank the U.S. Senators, with whom I've worked the closest over the last 20 years.

- Chairman Capito
- Senator John Boozman
- Senator Richard Shelby
- Senator Thad Cochran
- Senator Roger Wicker, the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee

- And finally, to Senator Bill Hagerty, who I've had the privilege to serve over the last four years. Senator Hagerty, you've given me such incredible perspective over the last four years, and I'm so fortunate to have had a front row seat as you brought that same fresh perspective to the Senate. Thank you.

In 1802, as President Thomas Jefferson was contemplating how to expand our nation westward, he keenly understood that our nation's waterways would be the key. To harness the power of these waterways, he turned to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, which was producing our best engineers. No longer would we be reliant on European engineers. And the original civil works mission of the Army Corps of Engineers was born.

The America we know today, stretching from sea to shining sea, is a result of the work of the Corps of Engineers. And over time, Congress has given the Corps missions in addition to its original navigation mission: primarily flood control, flood fighting, enabling commerce and critical supply chains through dredging, and ensuring the future availability of our natural resources. These missions are also important to our current President.

Some of my earliest memories as a young child are of riding with my father, him pointing out the window as we were crossing some of our nation's waterways.

- The Black Warrior River
- The Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway
- The Mississippi River

He was always teaching, and he would turn my attention to the little tug boats pushing the big barges, brimming with natural resources, opening access from the small communities in our neck of the woods to the rest of the country, and the world.

Twenty years later I moved to Washington because I believed that I could make a difference—helping to represent the views and interests of the Americans I grew up with—who often felt ignored or forgotten by important people in Washington.

On August 29, 2005, exactly one month into my time working in the Senate, Hurricane Katrina made landfall along the Gulf Coast. This was the most devastating natural disaster in American history. I stayed up all night that night, didn't go to sleep, watching Katrina come ashore. A 28-foot storm surge, 1,800

American lives lost, and hundreds of billions of dollars in economic damage. Pretty soon, Senator Thad Cochran asked me to run point on Mississippi's recovery from Hurricane Katrina.

So my earliest memories as a young professional in Washington were of the utter devastation and tragedy that can occur, and that can be mitigated—or exacerbated—by those in positions of power whether at the local, state, or Federal levels of government.

My years of experience securing resources and untangling bureaucratic messes in the wake of Hurricane Katrina prepared me for my role as the top Homeland Security staffer on the Senate Appropriations Committee, where I was also given the top role, advising all Senate Republicans on disaster response and recovery.

These formative experiences are emblematic of why my personal experience and passion match the Corps of Engineers civil works' mission. Enabling commerce throughout our nation, mitigating floods, or responding to disasters by

removing debris in areas devastated by Hurricane Helene, and in areas around Los Angeles devastated by wildfires.

Few government agencies' missions capture the interests of American citizens, landowners, communities, states, job creators and their representatives here in Washington quite like this one.

These are real missions, with real outcomes, that matter deeply to Americans, in places that are very far away from Washington decision makers.

If I have the honor of being confirmed by the Senate, I commit to be responsive to our nation's politically accountable leaders: the President, the members of this Committee, and the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

If confirmed, I intend to aggressively tackle the critical issues that confront the Corps:

As it relates to permitting: We are at a moment in history where Americans of all viewpoints crave certainty from their government about whether or not

the rules apply to them. We must act with haste, transparency, and clarity to give them that certainty without delay.

Navigation was the original mission of the Corps. Today, maintenance and construction of our coastal ports and inland waterways will help define how competitive and resilient we are in the 21st Century.

Flood control. We must work together to maintain the investments that you have made and complete new projects as soon as humanly feasible to mitigate floods before they happen and to fight them when we must.

Coordination. Issues related to water are spread across federal entities and authorities, perhaps like no other. Getting it right for the American public will require an outsized focus on coordination among the dozens of entities across the government that deal with water. If confirmed, I intend to devote my attention to collaboration and coordination across the government.

And when it comes to being a member of the broader Army team, Army Engineers are delivering on President Trump's vision of Peace through Strength everyday. As a nation, we are fortunate to have an organization that is at the

ready to support civil and national security missions across the globe at a moment's notice. And we are also fortunate that during peacetime, this same cadre of professionals is spread out in communities across America that make us safer, more competitive, and prouder as a nation.

Again I am honored to be before you.

Thank you Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and members of the Committee. I look forward to your questions.