DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

WRITTEN STATEMENT
OF

MR. ADAM TELLE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
FOR CIVIL WORKS

BEFORE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ON

OVERSIGHT OF THE ARMY CIVIL WORKS PROGRAM AND ONGOING EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT PREVIOUS WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACTS

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Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the implementation of the Water Resources Development Acts.

My name is Adam Telle, and I am honored to serve as the fourteenth Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and as President Trump's, Secretary Hegseth's, and Secretary Driscoll's top official responsible for overseeing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' civil works mission. I was nominated by President Trump on March 24 of this year, and confirmed by the Senate on August 2. I began work in this role immediately and have been on the job for five-and-a-half weeks. During this time, I have been working alongside General Graham and his team to ensure that the Army Civil Works program is positioned to deliver on President Trump's vision for our country and on its critical mission, which this Committee has had an important role in defining. I will say that I am pleased that I was able to spend a significant amount of time with the Senate throughout my career and during the confirmation process.

When I moved to Washington in 2005, I worked as a staff member in the United States Senate. 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. This is

the reason I am honored to be a part of the Army Civil Works mission. It touches small and large communities and everyday Americans across the country. 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.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers originated in 1775. The America we know today developed, in part, as a result of the work of the Corps. Congress has given the Corps two main missions in addition to its original navigation mission: flood damage reduction and ensuring the future availability of our aquatic ecosystem resources.

Because the Civil Works program is important to the American public and their elected representatives here in Washington, during my first weeks, I have been working to establish greater consistency and accountability across the four layers of this enterprise, which consist of: My office, and the Corps headquarters, divisions and districts. The Corps supports commercial navigation, helps reduce flood risks, restores aquatic ecosystems, and provides stewardship of the natural resources on Corps lands to benefit the American public as effectively as possible, as quickly as possible, and as efficiently as possible. We must optimize our program for quality, speed, and cost if we want to do our part to protect lives and

commerce as President Trump is delivering on his vision to ensure that the United States remains the greatest Nation in the history of the world during the 21st Century.

Our partners here on Capitol Hill, and particularly on this Committee have been pivotal in supporting this enterprise, and I request your partnership as I work with General Graham to ensure the Civil Works enterprise evolves to become more efficient and consistent to meet our modern demands. To deliver against that workload, we must work in partnership with the Congress, throughout the Executive Branch, and with our stakeholders to drive efficiency, collaboration, and results in an environment that is necessarily resource constrained.

In addition to driving more efficiency into the Civil Works program, we must continue to lift the federal regulatory burden on the public. This Administration is committed to ending the last five decades of confusing and ever-changing definitions of the term "waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act of 1972. Together with Administrator Zeldin and President Trump's Environmental Protection Agency, the Army has already issued interim guidance that follows the Supreme Court's *Sackett* decision, and we will move quickly to issue a permanent definition that follows the post-*Sackett* law of the land, reduces red-tape, cuts overall permitting

costs, lowers the cost of doing business in communities across the country. And, continues to protect America's waters.

In July, my office made much-needed changes to our National Environmental Policy Act implementing procedures that will reform, modernize, and expedite the Corps' environmental reviews, eliminate unnecessary delays, and help ensure the growth of highly cost effective, reliable infrastructure projects across the Nation.

We also recognize the opportunities, provided through WRDA 2024, to address navigation, reservoir management, and beneficial use of dredged material.

As we spend time today reviewing WRDA 2024, I look forward to gaining insight about your views and interests so that, together, we can serve America's vital infrastructure interests.

Thank you, Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse and the Members of this Committee. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.