

**PROPOSALS FOR A WATER RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2026—
ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES**

(119–38)

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

FEBRUARY 24, 2026

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CONTENTS

Summary of Subject Matter	vii
STATEMENTS OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE	
Hon. Mike Collins, a Representative in Congress from the State of Georgia, and Chairman, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, opening statement	1
Prepared statement	2
Hon. Hillary J. Scholten, a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan, and Vice Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, opening statement	3
Prepared statement	4
Hon. Rick Larsen, a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington, and Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, opening statement	5
Prepared statement	7
Hon. Brian J. Mast, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida, prepared statement	54
WITNESSES	
Hon. Adam R. Telle, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Department of the Army, oral statement	8
Prepared statement	10
Lieutenant General William H. “Butch” Graham, Jr., Chief of Engineers and Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, oral statement ...	11
Prepared statement	12
SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD	
Submissions for the Record by Hon. Mike Collins:	
Letter of February 24, 2026, from Brandon Farris, Executive Vice President, Steel Manufacturers Association, to Hon. Mike Collins, Chairman, and Hon. Frederica S. Wilson, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment	53
Prepared Statement of Hon. J. French Hill, a Representative in Congress from the State of Arkansas	54
Letter of February 27, 2026, from Colonel Brandon L. Bowman, District Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, to Hon. Brian J. Mast, Member of Congress, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Brian J. Mast	55
APPENDIX	
Post-Hearing Questions for the Record to Hon. Adam R. Telle, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Department of the Army, from:	
Hon. Mike Collins	57
Hon. Eric A. “Rick” Crawford	57
Hon. Jared Huffman	58
Hon. Hillary J. Scholten	59
Post-Hearing Questions for the Record to Lieutenant General William H. “Butch” Graham, Jr., Chief of Engineers and Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, from:	
Hon. Mike Collins	59
Hon. Eric A. “Rick” Crawford	59
Hon. Laura Friedman	60

	Page
Post-Hearing Questions for the Record to Hon. Adam R. Telle, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Department of the Army, and Lieutenant General William H. "Butch" Graham, Jr., Chief of Engineers and Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, from:	
Hon. Eric A. "Rick" Crawford	62
Hon. Greg Stanton	63



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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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FEBRUARY 20, 2026

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment
FROM: Staff, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment
RE: Subcommittee Hearing on “*Proposals for a Water Resources Development Act of 2026—Administration Priorities*”

I. PURPOSE

The Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will meet on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. ET in 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building to receive testimony at a hearing entitled, “*Proposals for a Water Resources Development Act of 2026—Administration Priorities*.” The hearing will provide Members with an opportunity to ask the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) and the Chief of Engineers about the status of the *2026 Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development*, upcoming and prior Chief’s Reports, and receive testimony and proposals for WRDA 2026 from the Administration.

At the hearing, Members will receive testimony from the Honorable Adam R. Telle, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) and Lieutenant General William H. “Butch” Graham, Chief of Engineers and Commanding General, United States Army Corps of Engineers.

II. BACKGROUND

THE UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS-CIVIL WORKS

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is the Federal Government’s lead water resource development and management agency.¹ Its mission is to deliver “vital engineering solutions, in collaboration with [their] partners, to secure our Nation, energize our economy, and reduce disaster risk.”² The Corps’ water resource program dates back to 1824 when it was established for the purpose of improving river navigation.³ The role of the Corps has evolved and expanded since then to include other main water resource responsibilities.

Today, the Corps’ primary civil works responsibilities are to support coastal and river navigation, address flood risk management and storm damage, and protect

¹ CORPS, *About Corps Water Resources Planning*, (last accessed Feb. 4, 2026), available at <https://planning.erdc.dren.mil/toolbox/guidance.cfm?Id=0&Option=Planning%20Fundamentals&Type=About#:~:text=The%20U.%20S.%20Army%20Corps%20of>.

² CORPS, *Mission and Vision*, (last accessed Feb. 4, 2026), available at <https://www.usace.army.mil/About/Mission-and-Vision/>.

³ *Id.*

and restore aquatic ecosystems.⁴ Specifically, through its eight divisions and 44 district offices, the Corps manages over 14,000 miles of levees, 740 dams, 12,000 miles of inland and intercoastal waterways, and 218 lock chambers.⁵

The Corps also provides outdoor recreation opportunities, offers water supply storage to state and local partners, assists in emergency response, and is a leading producer of hydropower in the United States.⁶ Many Corps projects are multipurpose, incorporating navigation, flood risk management, and/or ecosystem restoration in conjunction with water supply and conservation, recreation, and/or hydropower into their design, construction, and operation.⁷ The Corps, at its sites, sees 269 million recreational visitors a year, provides 25 percent of the country's hydropower output, and manages 135 reservoirs with municipal and industrial water supply.⁸ The Corps also provides support in responding to natural disasters by supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) when requested or through the Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies program (often referred to as "P.L. 84-99").⁹

The Corps' infrastructure portfolio is currently valued at \$227 billion.¹⁰ This valuation is referred to as its "capital stock" and includes all water resources infrastructure built by the Corps since 1928.¹¹ The estimated capital stock value increased \$7.1 billion on average each year until 1982 when it peaked at \$393 billion.¹² The Corps has reported that deterioration, general wear and tear of infrastructure needs, and asset retirements have contributed to a decline in the value of the capital stock.¹³ Furthermore, the Corps has a growing construction backlog in addition to various authorized but unfunded studies and operation and maintenance activities.¹⁴

To achieve its civil works mission, the Corps plans, designs, and constructs water resources development projects, typically in partnership with, and utilizing the financial support of non-Federal interests, commonly referred to as project sponsors. The Corps' planning process requires that Federal water resources investments reflect national priorities, encourage economic development, and protect the environment, and that the Corps seek to maximize net public benefits to society.

WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ACTS

Congress generally authorizes Corps studies, projects, and programs and makes changes to agency policies through legislation referred to as Water Resources Development Acts (WRDAs). Congress has developed and enacted WRDAs intermittently since the 1980s and has biennially enacted a WRDA since 2014.¹⁵

Authorizing provisions in WRDAs can be project-specific, programmatic, or general directives for the Corps. Project-specific authorizations most often fall into one of three broad categories: project studies, construction projects, or modifications to existing projects. Furthermore, water resource projects typically require two types of Congressional authorization: (1) authority to study the feasibility of the project and (2) authority to construct (and operate and maintain, as applicable) the project.¹⁶

Most recently, WRDA 2024 was signed into law as Division A of the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-272) in January 2025.¹⁷ WRDA 2024 authorized 17 new construction projects, four project modifications, one project for construction based on a feasibility study carried out by a non-Federal interest, and over 200 new or modified feasibility studies.¹⁸

WRDA 2024 made policy reforms to empower the non-Federal sponsors of projects, increase transparency, and improve project delivery. For example, WRDA 2024 fa-

⁴ See generally, ANNA NORMAND & NICOLE CARTER, CONG. RSCH. SERV. (IF13112), WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACTS: PRIMER AND ACTION IN THE 119TH CONGRESS (Sept. 25, 2025), available at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF13112> [hereinafter CRS REPORT IF13112].

⁵ CORPS, *Value to the Nation*, (last accessed Feb. 4, 2026), available at <https://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Value-to-the-Nation/>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ CRS REPORT IF13112, *supra* note 4.

⁸ CORPS, *Value to the Nation*, (last accessed Feb. 4, 2026), available at <https://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Value-to-the-Nation/>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ CORPS, *Capital Stock: Summary*, (last accessed Feb. 4, 2026), available at <https://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Value-to-the-Nation/Fast-Facts/Capital-Stock/Summary/>.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ CRS REPORT IF13112, *supra* note 4.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ WRDA 2024, Pub. L. 118-272, 138 Stat. 2996.

¹⁸ *Id.*

cilitated the creation of Continuing Authorities Program (CAP), a new pilot program for alternative project delivery. Additionally, the legislation amended sections 203 and 204 of WRDA 1986 to clarify and enhance the responsibilities of non-Federal interests in conducting studies and construction activities for authorized projects.¹⁹ WRDA 2024 also improved transparency and consistency to assist non-Federal entities achieve compliance with the P.L. 84–99 program and the process to modify existing projects under Section 408.²⁰

Further, WRDA 2024 included the Grace F. Napolitano Priority for Water Supply, Water Conservation, and Drought Resiliency Act, which emphasizes the Corps' role in water supply and water resiliency efforts.²¹ WRDA 2024 instructed the Corps to prioritize and maximize water supply, water conservation, and drought resiliency efforts that are in alignment with the authorized purposes of water resources development projects.²²

For WRDA 2024, the Corps held a series of listening sessions and a 60-day public comment period on implementation, which were completed by the end of April 2025.²³ Through the process, the Corps determined which provisions of WRDA 2024 require specific implementation guidance, and which provisions may be implemented without specific guidance. As of February 10, 2026, the Corps has released implementation guidance for three sections of WRDA 2024.²⁴

IDENTIFYING WATER RESOURCE NEEDS

Generally, the first step in developing a project through the Corps is to study the feasibility of the proposed project, which typically requires Congressional authorization. Once authorized, the Corps enters into a cost-sharing agreement with a non-Federal project sponsor to initiate the feasibility process. The cost of a feasibility study is usually split evenly between the Federal Government, which is subject to appropriations, and the non-Federal project sponsor.²⁵

Under current law, the feasibility reports should generally be produced within four years with a Federal cost of no more than \$5 million.²⁶ Waivers of the feasibility criteria for project studies are available under section 1001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014.²⁷

During a feasibility study phase, the Corps' district office prepares a draft study report containing a detailed analysis on the economic costs and benefits of carrying out the project and identifies any associated environmental, social, or cultural impacts. The feasibility study typically describes, with reasonable certainty, the economic, social, and environmental benefits and detriments of project alternatives being considered, and identifies the engineering features, public acceptability, and the purpose, scope, and scale of each.²⁸ It also contains the views of other Federal and non-Federal agencies on project alternatives, a description of non-structural alternatives to the recommended plans, and a description of the anticipated Federal and non-Federal participation in the project.²⁹

In July 2025, the Corps released a revised Engineering and Construction Bulletin that established a new design maturity threshold before feasibility studies are submitted to Congress for authorization.³⁰ Under this new policy, the Corps will no longer request authority to build a new project before reaching an approximately 35 percent design threshold.³¹

After a full feasibility study is completed, the results and recommendations of the study are submitted to Congress in the form of a *Report of the United States Army Corps of Engineers Chief of Engineers* (more commonly referred to as a Chief's Re-

¹⁹ *Id.* at § 1107(a), 1109, 1110.

²⁰ *Id.* at § 1105, 1146.

²¹ WRDA 2024, *supra* note 14, at Subtitle B, Title I, Division A, 138 Stat. 3046.

²² *Id.* at § 1161, 1162, 1108.

²³ See CORPS, *Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2024*, available at https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Project-Planning/Legislative-Links/wrda_2024/.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ CRS REPORT IF13112, *supra* note 4.

²⁶ WRDA 2024, Pub. L. 118–272, 138 Stat. 2996.

²⁷ 33 U.S.C. 2282c.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ CORPS, *Engineering and Construction Bulletin*, (last updated July 29, 2025), available at https://www.wbdg.org/FFC/ARMYCOE/COEECB/ecb_2023_9_rev_1.pdf.

³¹ James Leggate, *Army Corps Will Advance Designs Further Before Seeking Congress' OK to Build*, *Chief of Engineers Says*, ENR (Sept. 25, 2025), available at <https://www.enr.com/articles/61429-army-corps-will-advance-designs-further-before-seeking-congress-ok-to-build-chief-of-engineers-says>.

port).³² If the results and recommendations on the proposed project are favorable, then the next step is Congressional authorization for construction of the project, which is typically given in a WRDA.

Section 902 of WRDA 1986, as amended, generally allows for increases in total project costs of up to 20 percent (after accounting for inflation of construction costs) without additional Congressional authorization.³³ A Post-Authorization Change Report (PACR) is developed when an authorized project encounters a cost increase greater than 20 percent of the authorized amount, changes in scope of the project, location, or design modifications.³⁴ Typically, Congress will then consider the PACR for inclusion in a WRDA.

ADDITIONAL CORPS AUTHORITIES

The CAP program enables the Corps to undertake small-scale projects with limited scope and cost without requiring project-specific Congressional authorization.³⁵ These projects typically require a cost-share with a non-Federal project sponsor.³⁶

There are currently nine CAP categories:

- Streambank erosion and shoreline protection;³⁷
- Beach erosion control;³⁸
- Navigation improvement;³⁹
- Mitigation of shore damage by Federal navigation projects;⁴⁰
- Regional sediment management/beneficial use of dredged material;⁴¹
- Flood control;⁴²
- Aquatic ecosystem restoration;⁴³
- Removal of obstructions and clearing channels for flood control;⁴⁴
- Project modifications for improvement of the environment or drought resiliency;⁴⁵ and
- Stormwater management projects.⁴⁶

Congress has also provided authority for the Corps to assist with the planning, design, and construction of drinking water and wastewater projects in specified areas, known broadly as Environmental Infrastructure (EI) assistance.⁴⁷ The EI programs support publicly owned and operated facilities, such as distribution and collection works, stormwater collection and recycled water distribution, and surface water protection and development projects.⁴⁸

III. OUTLOOK FOR WRDA 2026

PENDING CHIEF'S REPORTS AND DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Currently, the Committee is in possession of two Chief's Reports for possible inclusion in WRDA 2026: Surf City, NC Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRM) study and the Columbia River Turning Basin. The Committee has also received one Director's Report on the Port Royal Harbor Disposition Study, SC.

³² CORPS, *Planner's Library*, (last accessed Feb. 4, 2026), available at <https://planning.erdc.dren.mil/toolbox/library.cfm?Option=Direct&Group=Main&Item=Chief%20Report&Sub=None&Sort=Default>.

³³ ANNA NORMAND & NICOLE CARTER, CONG. RSCH. SERV. (R47946), PROCESS FOR U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PROJECTS (Aug. 29, 2025), available at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47946>.

³⁴ Wes Coleman & Jeremy LaDart, Post Authorization Change Reports (PACRS)—Myths, Mysteries, and Legends, UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, (May 20, 2021), available at <https://planning.erdc.dren.mil/toolbox/webinars/20May21-PACRS.pdf>.

³⁵ See generally ANNA NORMAND, CONG. RSCH. SERV. (IF12635), CONTINUING AUTHORITIES PROGRAMS OF THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, (updated Aug. 6, 2025), available at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12635>.

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ See the Flood Control Act of 1946, 33 U.S.C. 701r § 14.

³⁸ See the Act of August 13, 1946, 33 U.S.C. 426g § 3.

³⁹ See the River and Harbor Act of 1960, 33 U.S.C. 577 § 107.

⁴⁰ See the River and Harbor Act of 1968, 33 U.S.C. 426(i) § 11.

⁴¹ See the WRDA 1992, 33 U.S.C. 2326 § 204.

⁴² See the Flood Control Act of 1948, 33 U.S.C. 701s § 205.

⁴³ See the WRDA 1996, 33 U.S.C. 2330 § 206.

⁴⁴ See the Act of August 28, 1937, 33 U.S.C. 701g § 2.

⁴⁵ See the WRDA 1986, 33 U.S.C. 2309a § 1135.

⁴⁶ See section 1108 of the WRDA 2024, 33 U.S.C. 2289b.

⁴⁷ WRDA of 1992, Pub. L. No. 102–580, 106 Stat. 4835, § 219.; WRDA of 1999, Pub. L. No. 106–53, 113 Stat. 352, § 552.; WRDA of 2022, Pub. L. No. 117–263, 136 Stat. 3819, § 8376.

⁴⁸ CORPS, *Environmental Infrastructure*, (last accessed Feb. 4, 2026), available at <https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Environmental-Infrastructure/>.

7001 REPORT

Section 7001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014) (P.L. 113–121) requires the Corps to transmit an annual report to the authorizing committees that identifies, for potential Congressional authorization, completed feasibility reports, proposed feasibility studies submitted by non-Federal interests through a public comment period, proposed modifications to authorized water resources development projects or feasibility studies, and proposed modifications to environmental infrastructure program authorities. This report is entitled “Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development” and is due by February 1st of each year. As of February 20, 2026, the Committee has not officially received the 2026 7001 report. The non-Federal proposal submission period for the 2026 Report to Congress was open from April 17, 2025 through August 15, 2025.⁴⁹

IV. WITNESSES

- The Honorable Adam R. Telle, Assistant Secretary, United States Army (Civil Works)
- Lt. Gen. William H. “Butch” Graham, Jr., Chief of Engineers and Commanding General, United States Army Corps of Engineers

⁴⁹Proposals by Non-Federal Interests for Inclusion in the Annual Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development, 90 Fed. Reg. 16114 (April 17, 2025).

**PROPOSALS FOR A WATER RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2026—
ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENT,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mike Collins (Chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. COLLINS. The Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that the chairman be authorized to declare a recess at any time during today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

I also ask unanimous consent that Members not on the subcommittee be permitted to sit with the subcommittee at today's hearing and ask questions.

Without objection, so ordered.

As a reminder, if Members wish to insert a document into the record, please also email it to DocumentsTI@mail.house.gov.

I now recognize myself for the purposes of an opening statement for 5 minutes.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE COLLINS OF GEORGIA,
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. COLLINS. I would like to thank Assistant Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham for joining us today as we discuss the administration's priorities for the Water Resources Development Act of 2026.

The biennial WRDA bill is the primary way that Congress guides the Corps' projects and priorities. It is important for the committee to hear directly from the Corps' leaders at the beginning of the WRDA process. By authorizing projects and studies and providing direction on programmatic changes, WRDA bills improve the ability of the Corps to achieve its Civil Works missions of navigation, flood control, and ecosystem restoration.

WRDA 2026 will be the seventh WRDA bill since the committee returned to the biennial structure in 2014. A dependable 2-year WRDA cycle provides the Corps and its non-Federal sponsors an

opportunity to keep critical water infrastructure projects moving forward and respond to local water resource needs more effectively.

An efficient response to the evolving water resource needs across the country is vital for our security, safety, and economic stability. Our Nation's ports and inland waterways move essential goods, support local economies, and provide the marine infrastructure that contributes over \$500 billion to the Nation's GDP. A consistent WRDA process helps to improve and maintain our ports and waterways to meet growing needs.

As I proudly shared last fall, in my home State of Georgia, the Port of Savannah achieved its second busiest year ever in 2025, serving nearly 1,700 containerships and handling around 15,000 truckload moves daily. This growth and success are supported by a consistent and reliable WRDA process.

I was happy to hear that dredging is finally underway at the Port of Brunswick's inner and outer harbor, but it has been several years since this vital port received routine maintenance dredging. Similar routine dredging projects across the country are burdened by an undue regulatory process and environmental windows that seems to prevent the consistent maintenance of Federal channels. I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses to get a better understanding of how we can prevent such delays.

In addition to our Nation's ports, the inland waterways are critical arteries for transportation and commerce. Since becoming chairman of this subcommittee, I have been able to visit several of the Corps' projects across the country, including the Wilson and Chickamauga locks in Alabama and Tennessee. These critical assets that serve our Nation's economic national security are in need of rehabilitation. The necessary maintenance for these projects is taking too long and costing taxpayers too much.

In Congress, we have a responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayer money. The Corps must do better to complete projects on time and on budget. I look forward to hearing about ways this can be done from our panel this morning.

With that, I want to welcome Assistant Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham here today to discuss their priorities for WRDA 2026.

[Mr. Collins' prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Mike Collins, a Representative in Congress from the State of Georgia, and Chairman, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

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The biennial WRDA bill is the primary way that Congress guides the Corps' projects and priorities. It is important for the Committee to hear directly from Corps leadership at the beginning of the WRDA process. By authorizing projects and studies, and providing direction on programmatic changes, WRDA bills improve the ability of the Corps to achieve its key civil works missions of navigation, flood control, and ecosystem restoration.

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Mr. COLLINS. I now recognize Ranking Member Scholten for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HILLARY J. SCHOLTEN OF MICHIGAN, VICE RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Thank you, Chair Collins, and welcome to our witnesses. Thank you for your commitment to working with the committee as we develop what I hope will be a bipartisan, robust Water Resources Development Act of 2026.

At a time when the affordability crisis is affecting every corner of our country, and our communities are navigating the threats of climate change, it is incumbent on Congress to prioritize keeping water resource projects affordable and resilient.

Back home in west Michigan, water is a way of life, and our waterways are critical to our regional economies and culture. A strong WRDA is absolutely essential for Congress to meet our local communities' economic and environmental needs.

Passing WRDA 2026 is a first step toward granting the Army Corps the authority that they need to carry out water resource projects and studies. However, we need the funding to back up our action.

It was devastating to see the President's fiscal year 2026 budget request proposed a nearly 25-percent slash to the Corps' budget. Fortunately, Congress rejected this funding cut, but we still need to meaningfully address the Corps' backlog of WRDA project and maintenance needs, which is currently estimated to be over \$100 billion, with a "B."

The Trump administration has also been less than diligent about the law regarding the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and those

investments. Our ports are critical to our local economies as well as our national supply chains.

Time is not on our side here. The longer we wait, the more expensive these projects will become, and our ports will start to fall behind. Failing to meaningfully invest in port and harbor maintenance and upgrades will threaten job growth, reliable supply chains, and global competitiveness.

We also need full cooperation from our Corps partners to navigate the inherently collaborative effort of a new WRDA. That is why it is so frustrating that the administration has decided that the Corps needs Department of Defense approval before district offices can share project details and updates with congressional offices.

We don't need this kind of bureaucratic obstacle. We cannot allow partisanship and bureaucracy to undercut this process, and I encourage the administration to reverse this policy so Congress can best serve the American people.

I need to warn you, gentlemen, as we look ahead to WRDA 2026, this subcommittee will be keeping the pressure on you two, our Corps leaders, to promptly and effectively implement previous WRDA policies, effectively and promptly.

The pace of implementation is going to be key. When we were passing WRDA 2024, we heard nonstop about the glacial pace of implementation under the previous administration, but this administration, this administration is even slower. What happened to the pressure for the pace on implementation?

We have yet to see guidance on dozens of critical provisions, such as to reduce cost share for communities in need, to utilize new Continuing Authority Programs, to address dredging needs in smaller communities, and to maximize opportunities for water supply and conservation where possible.

It is unacceptable. The Corps must implement the law and hold up its end of the bargain to best safeguard our water resources.

I sincerely hope that our conversation today will include ideas and solutions on what the Corps needs to execute past WRDAs, as well as how we can work together to continue to deliver for Americans across the Nation through this year's legislation.

Thank you again for your time. I look forward to the conversation.

I yield back.

[Ms. Scholten's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Hillary J. Scholten, a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan, and Vice Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

Thank you, Chair Collins, and welcome to our witnesses. Thank you for your commitment to working with the Committee as we develop what I hope will be a bipartisan, robust Water Resources Development Act of 2026.

At a time when the affordability crisis is affecting every corner of our country and communities are navigating the threats of climate change, it is incumbent on Congress to prioritize keeping water resource projects affordable and resilient.

Back home in West Michigan, water is a way of life, and our waterways are critical to our regional economies and culture. A strong WRDA is absolutely critical for Congress to meet our local communities' economic and environmental needs.

Passing WRDA 2026 is the first step towards granting the Army Corps the authority they need to carry out water resource projects and studies.

However, we need the funding to back up our action.

It was devastating to see that the President's Fiscal Year 2026 budget request proposed a nearly 25 percent slash to the Corps' budget.

Fortunately, Congress rejected this funding cut; but, we still need to meaningfully address the Corps' backlog of WRDA project and maintenance needs, currently estimated to be over \$100 billion.

The Trump Administration has also been less than diligent about the law regarding harbor maintenance trust fund (HMTF) investments. Our ports are critical to our local economies as well as our national supply chains.

Time is not on our side: the longer we wait, the more expensive these projects will become and our ports may start to fall behind. Failing to meaningfully invest in port and harbor maintenance and upgrades will threaten job growth, reliable supply chains, and global competitiveness.

We also need full cooperation from our Corps partners to navigate the inherently collaborative effort of a new WRDA. That's why it is so frustrating that the Administration has decided that the Corps needs the Department of Defense's approval before district offices can share project details and updates with Congressional offices.

We cannot allow partisanship and bureaucracy to undercut this process, and I encourage the Administration to reverse this policy so Congress can best serve the American people.

As we look ahead to WRDA 2026, this subcommittee will still be keeping the pressure on you two, our Corps Leaders, to promptly and effectively implement previous WRDA policies.

We have yet to see guidance on dozens of critical provisions, such as to reduce cost share for communities in need; to utilize new Continuing Authority Programs; to address dredging needs in smaller communities; and to maximize opportunities for water supply and conservation where possible.

This is unacceptable; the Corps must implement the law and hold up its end of the bargain to best safeguard our water resources.

I hope our conversation today will include ideas and solutions on what the Corps needs to execute past WRDAs, as well as how we can work together to continue to deliver for Americans across the nation through this year's new legislation.

Thank you, I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. I now recognize the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. Larsen, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICK LARSEN OF WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thank you, Chair Collins and Vice Ranking Member Scholten, for holding the hearing. And welcome back, Assistant Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham. Thank you for being here this morning.

Since 2014, this committee has honored its commitment to meet local water resource needs across the country through bipartisan and biennial enactment of the Water Resources Development Act.

Predictable WRDAs support Corps projects while creating good-paying jobs in the construction industry and supporting countless more jobs in the U.S. industries and businesses that benefit directly from these projects. Regular enactment of WRDAs also provides critical policy reforms that improve the function and flexibility of the Corps to respond to local challenges. Failure to implement WRDA on time results in delays and denies critical economic, environmental, and societal benefits to communities across the country.

Each Presidential administration wants to put its own mark on the management of Federal agencies, and based on your ideas for

reducing paperwork at the Corps, we are starting to understand your priorities.

However, no administration gets to ignore the law and to manage Federal agencies as they please, untethered from the legal obligations that Congress mandates.

For example, as of yesterday, this administration has formally implemented only three provisions from the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 enacted in January 2025. Three. This means that bipartisan benefits that an overwhelming majority of Republican and Democratic Members of the House and Senate enacted are not reaching their communities.

Failure to implement WRDA 2024 denies the country the benefits of 21 Chief's Reports that had authorized benefits such as upgraded navigation, flood risk reduction, and storm protection projects, as well as ecological restoration and the societal benefits associated with these projects.

Failure to implement WRDA 2024 means that small, rural, Tribal, and other communities will continue to struggle to meet local challenges as these projects remain unaffordable.

Failure to implement WRDA 2024 increases the vulnerability of America's navigational capacity, both through its coastal and inland ports, as well as the vulnerability of communities to the challenges of climate change and drought. This administration needs to do better.

At today's hearing, I expect to hear you recognize Congress as an essential partner in directing and scoping how the Corps implements its missions.

I also expect to hear that you will work diligently to make sure that every enacted provision of existing WRDAs is fully implemented in a timely fashion and that you will provide the committee with periodic updates on your progress.

This committee recently closed its Member portal that contains roughly 2,400 project, policy, and environmental infrastructure requests for the upcoming WRDA for 2026.

Based on Member requests, my top-line priorities for WRDA 2026 will be: ensuring that we authorize the next generation of local water resource projects and studies; ensuring that all communities, including rural, small, and Tribal communities, can affordably partner with the Corps to resolve local challenges; and ensuring that all Corps projects are designed to meet the challenges of climate change and make communities more resilient to stronger storms, rising sea levels, and severe droughts.

I look forward to today's testimony and my continued partnership with the chair of the full committee, the chair of this subcommittee, and the ranking member and vice ranking member to develop a bill in our traditional bipartisan fashion.

With that, I yield back.

[Mr. Larsen of Washington's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Rick Larsen, a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington, and Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Thank you, Chairman Collins and Vice Ranking Member Scholten, for holding this hearing.

Welcome back, Assistant Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham. Thank you for being here this morning.

Since 2014, this Committee has honored its commitment to meet local water resources needs across the country through the bipartisan and biennial enactment of Water Resources Development Acts (WRDAs).

Predictable WRDAs support Corps projects while creating good-paying jobs in the construction industry and supporting countless more jobs in the U.S. industries and businesses that benefit directly from these projects.

Regular enactment of WRDAs also provides critical policy reforms that improve the function and flexibility of the Corps to respond to local challenges.

Failure to implement WRDA on time results in delays and denies critical economic, environmental and societal benefits to communities across the country.

Each presidential administration wants to put its own mark on management of federal agencies—and based on your ideas for reducing paperwork at the Corps, we are starting to understand your priorities.

However, no administration gets to ignore the law and to manage federal agencies as they please, untethered from their legal obligations mandated by Congress.

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Failure to implement WRDA 2024 means that small, rural, Tribal, and other communities will continue to struggle to meet local challenges as these projects remain unaffordable.

Failure to implement WRDA 2024 increases the vulnerability of America's navigational capacity—both through its coastal and inland ports—as well as the vulnerability of communities to the challenges of climate change and drought.

This administration needs to do better.

At today's hearing, I expect to hear that you recognize Congress as an essential partner in directing and scoping how the Corps implements its missions.

I also expect to hear that you will work diligently to make sure that every enacted provision of existing WRDAs is fully implemented in a timely fashion and that you will provide this Committee with periodic updates on your progress.

This Committee recently closed its member portal that contains roughly 2,400 project, policy and environmental infrastructure requests for the upcoming WRDA 2026.

Based on our member requests, my top-line priorities for WRDA26 will be:

- Ensuring that the next generation of local water resources projects and studies is authorized;
- Ensuring that all communities, including rural, small and Tribal communities, can affordably partner with the Corps to resolve local challenges; and
- Ensuring that all Corps projects are designed to meet the challenges of climate change and make communities more resilient to stronger storms, rising sea-levels and severe droughts.

I look forward to today's testimony and my continued partnership with Chairman Graves, Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Wilson and Vice Ranking Member Scholten to develop this bill in our traditional bipartisan fashion.

Mr. COLLINS. I would now like to welcome our witnesses and thank them for being here today. Briefly, I know I don't need to, but I am going to take a moment just to explain our lighting system.

There are three lights in front of you. Green means to continue, yellow means you are running out of time, and when it turns red, please conclude your remarks.

I ask unanimous consent that the witnesses' full statements be included in the record.

Without objection, so ordered.

I ask unanimous consent that the record of today's hearing remain open until such time as our witnesses have provided answers to any questions that may be submitted to them in writing.

Without objection, so ordered.

I also ask unanimous consent that the record remain open for 15 days for any additional comments and information submitted by Members or witnesses to be included in the record of today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

As your written testimony has been made part of the record, the subcommittee asks that you limit your oral remarks to 5 minutes.

With that, Mr. Telle, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ADAM R. TELLE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY; AND LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM H. "BUTCH" GRAHAM, JR., CHIEF OF ENGINEERS AND COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

TESTIMONY OF HON. ADAM R. TELLE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Mr. TELLE. Thank you, Chairman Collins.

Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Larsen, Ranking Member Scholten, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the development of the proposed Water Resources Development Act of 2026.

Before I get started, I want to recognize the passing of Congressman Doug LaMalfa, who was an outstanding member of this committee, someone who was a passionate advocate for California's water issues and someone who taught me, as I am sure he did many members of this committee, all about California water. And so we miss him.

I am eager to share with you my perspective after 6 months as the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, including what the Corps of Engineers is doing well and where significant reform is warranted. I hope my perspective is valuable to you as you develop proposals for WRDA 2026.

I also wish to share an update on the implementation of past WRDAs, which was just raised. It remains a topic of critical interest to members of this committee. Since my last appearance before this committee, the Army Civil Works program has finalized implementation guidance for the remaining provisions of WRDA 2020 and WRDA 2022, with the exception of provisions modified further by WRDA 2024.

WRDA is the law. We are following it. The last three WRDAs included 552 provisions, and we are developing guidance for the remaining 19 of those provisions. I just signed implementation guid-

ance for two of them yesterday. We are going to make sure they are consistently implemented through this guidance.

I remain committed to completing the implementation guidance as soon as practicable and look forward to working with this committee to identify opportunities to improve the process for implementing future WRDAs.

One thing I have observed to this point is that the Army Corps of Engineers is at its very best when it is responding to emergencies, where it is unburdened by redtape, and enters what we like to call Army mode. Specific examples of that come to mind, including the Corps' execution of assignments to clear and remove debris after Hurricane Helene throughout Appalachia, particularly in western North Carolina, and after the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires.

Last August, the Corps successfully supplemented State and local efforts in anticipation of glacial outburst flooding in Juneau, Alaska. And finally, just last month, the Corps executed assignments in response to Winter Storm Fern across the Southeastern United States. And we are currently responding to the disaster in the Potomac River.

But when it comes to our primary missions, our everyday missions, for decades the Army Civil Works program hasn't really had a plan. The status quo has been to execute everything all at once, moving each project down the yellow brick road of redtape 1 inch at a time, resulting in inexplicable delays, including to projects that are of strategic national importance. Meanwhile, reaching paperwork milestones is elevated as evidence of achievement.

This is simply unacceptable for an agency that is so important to the safety and prosperity of the American people. Stacks of important Government paperwork have never saved an American life or community except perhaps in very cold weather when no other fuel is available.

We have to change the way the Army Civil Works program conducts its business or the next decades will be more of the same. The stars are aligned under President Trump's leadership to change this now.

We have in hand \$45 billion that the Congress has previously appropriated to our programs, but the Corps has not yet executed. Shockingly, \$15 billion of this funding is more than 6 years old.

We also have many ongoing projects that the Congress has authorized and that the Corps is building, but that require significant additional funding to complete. The status quo approach is insufficient, meaning we will never deliver on what you expect of us without fundamentally changing our behavior.

To meet this challenge, yesterday we unveiled a plan that we call Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork. It is a plan that was partially inspired by members of this committee and particularly the chairman of this subcommittee.

It is comprised of approximately 27 individual but complementary initiatives to start to reimagine and rejuvenate the Army Civil Works program. And with your support, this will be the most significant transformation of the program since at least 1986.

Through this suite of strategic initiatives, it is my goal to harmonize the Army Civil Works program and to realign and rightsize

the incentive structures of the Corps of Engineers, with an emphasis again on building infrastructure and not paperwork.

This new plan is driven by a sense of urgency. Our strategy is centered on a fundamental cultural transformation to enhance our effectiveness and restore discipline. We are sharpening our focus on our primary missions under a strategic plan that will deliver on the mandate you have given us.

To accelerate project delivery, we are implementing smarter contracting practices, upholding higher design standards, and reforming our partnership pipeline to build what America needs faster and more cost-effectively.

A key component to this transformation is overhauling our internal processes. But as President Trump has directed and as bipartisan members of this committee have directed, cutting bureaucratic redtape by reforming our entire regulatory permitting system is important to provide fast, clear, and consistent decisions to the public.

I see I am running out of time, so I will submit the remainder of my statement for the record, but I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[Mr. Telle's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Adam R. Telle, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Department of the Army

Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Wilson, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the development of the proposed Water Resources Development Act of 2026. I am eager to share with you my perspective after six months as the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, including what the Corps of Engineers is doing well and where significant reform is warranted. I hope my perspective is valuable to you as you develop proposals for WRDA 2026.

I also wish to share an update on the implementation of past WRDAs, which remains a topic of critical interest to members of this committee. Since my last appearance before this committee, the Army Civil Works Program has finalized implementation guidance for the remaining provisions of WRDA 2020 and 2022 that warranted such guidance, with the exception of provisions from WRDA 2020 that were modified in WRDA 2024. WRDA is the law, and we are implementing the law. Of the 552 provisions included in those three laws, we are developing additional guidance for 19 provisions to ensure consistent implementation across the Corps. I remain committed to completing the implementation guidance as soon as practicable and look forward to working with this committee to identify opportunities to improve the processes for implementing future WRDAs.

One thing I've observed in my short tenure is that the Army Corps of Engineers is at its very best when responding to emergencies, where it is unburdened by red tape, and enters Army mode. Specific examples that come to mind include the Corps' execution of Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) assignments to clear and remove debris after Hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina and throughout Appalachia and after the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires. Last August, the Corps successfully supplemented state and local efforts under PL 84-99 in anticipation of glacial outburst flooding in Juneau, Alaska. Finally, just last month, the Corps executed FEMA assignments in response to winter storm Fern.

But when it comes to our primary missions, for decades, the Army Civil Works Program hasn't really had a plan. The status quo has been to execute everything all at once, moving each project down the yellow brick road of red tape one inch at a time, resulting in inexplicable delays, including projects that are of strategic national importance. Meanwhile, reaching paperwork milestones is elevated as evidence of achievement. This is simply unacceptable for an agency that is so important to the safety and prosperity of the American people. Stacks of important government paperwork have never saved an American life or community, except perhaps in very cold weather when no other fuel is available. We have to change the

way the Army Civil Works Program conducts business, or the next decades will be more of the same.

We have in hand \$45 billion that the Congress has previously appropriated, but the Corps has not yet delivered. Shockingly, \$15 billion of this funding is more than six years old. We also have many ongoing projects, which the Congress has authorized and the Corps is building, which will require significant additional funding to complete. The status quo approach is insufficient, meaning we will never deliver on what you expect of us without fundamentally changing our behavior.

To meet this challenge, we have unveiled a plan comprised of approximately 27 individual but complementary initiatives to reimagine and rejuvenate the Army Civil Works program. This will be the most significant transformation of the program since at least 1986, which was a watershed year for the authorities of the Program.

Through this suite of strategic initiatives, it is my goal to harmonize the Army Civil Works Program and to realign and right-size the incentive structures of the Corps of Engineers, with an emphasis on building infrastructure, not paperwork.

This new plan is driven by a sense of urgency. Our strategy is centered on a fundamental cultural transformation to enhance our effectiveness and restore discipline. We are sharpening our focus on core missions that serve the national interest under a strategic plan that will deliver on the mandate you've given us. To accelerate project delivery, we are implementing smarter contracting practices, upholding higher design standards, and reforming our partnership pipeline to build what America needs, faster and more cost-effectively.

A key component of this transformation is overhauling our internal processes. As President Trump has directed, and bipartisan members of this committee have called for, we are cutting bureaucratic red tape by reforming the entire regulatory and permitting system to provide fast, clear, and consistent decisions. This will eliminate costly delays and accelerate our economy at a time that we find ourselves in a global competition that will determine whether the United States of America remains the greatest nation in the history of the world. Internally, we are making the organization leaner and more effective by optimizing our assets, modernizing operations, and ensuring all messaging aligns with our primary missions.

Finally, we are instilling a new culture of fiscal discipline and operational excellence by fundamentally overhauling our financial and operational practices to attack waste and inefficiency. We are committed to executing our mission with a higher standard of integrity, ensuring every dollar is spent with purpose to achieve clear, measurable results for the American people.

President Trump, Secretary Hegseth, and Secretary Driscoll want to deliver infrastructure now, and our partners in Congress are tired of decades-long delays and cost overruns. The time is right for this change, and we have a unique opportunity to transform the way the Corps of Engineers conducts its business to meet this moment in history.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you.

Next, General Graham, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM H. "BUTCH" GRAHAM, JR., CHIEF OF ENGINEERS AND COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

General GRAHAM. Chairman Collins, Vice Ranking Member Scholten, Ranking Member Larsen, I am honored to testify before you today in regard to the 2026 Water Resources Development Act.

Through the Civil Works program, the Army Corps works with our partners to study, build, and operate water resource projects focusing on our three main mission areas of commercial navigation, flood and coastal storm damage reduction, and aquatic ecosystem restoration.

Breaking those down, the navigation program, which consists of our coastal Great Lakes channels as well as the inland rivers and intercoastal waterways, underpins much of the national economy, ensuring that commodities can move reliably and efficiently.

Our flood and coastal storm damage reduction program maintains 746 dams, over 13,000 miles of Federal levees, and 450 miles of shore protection that provide, on average, \$200 billion per year in flood damages avoided.

To continuously maintain and improve these mission areas, I want to thank this subcommittee for supporting the Corps Civil Works program. Your commitment, as we heard from the chair, since 2014 to pass biennial Water Resources Development Acts, has provided us with the authorities necessary to address the changing needs of the Nation's water resources infrastructure.

We deeply value the authorities you have entrusted to us. Our pledge is to put them to work to deliver for the American people. To that end, the Army Corps' objective each and every day is to safely and efficiently deliver quality studies and projects on schedule within budget.

Our current on-schedule rate, as I measured it this morning, for the Civil Works portfolio is 86 percent. That is an improvement from the 80 percent that I reported to this subcommittee back in September.

So by focusing on the basics of getting the engineering right, of getting the project management right, and of getting the project delivery team right, we are making our cost estimates more reliable and our project delivery more efficient.

That said, there is more work to do, more improvements to make. To that end, we are very excited about the Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork initiative that Mr. Telle outlined. These improvements, delivered by district engineers who are empowered to manage risk, not avoid it, will allow the Army Corps to make the changes necessary to best deliver our important infrastructure mission for the Nation.

Finally, I, too, would also like to take a moment to express our deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Congressman LaMalfa of California. We will do our best to honor his passion, his absolute passion for the Federal water resources mission by continuing our efforts to optimally balance our flood risk management responsibilities with growing water supply needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I look forward to addressing your questions.

[General Graham's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Lieutenant General William H. "Butch" Graham, Jr.,
Chief of Engineers and Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Wilson, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Before I proceed with my testimony, I would like to take a moment to express my deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Congressman Doug LaMalfa of California, who passed earlier this year. He was not only an esteemed member of this committee, but also a dedicated public servant whose contributions to water resources policy will have a lasting impact on our Nation.

I am honored to testify before your committee today, along with Mr. Adam Telle, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, regarding the development of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2026. I look forward to continuing our work with this committee, the Congress, and the Administration to help address the Nation's water resources challenges.

Through the Civil Works Program, the Corps works with other Federal agencies, and with state, Tribal, and local agencies and others, to develop, manage, restore, and protect water resources, primarily through the construction, operation and maintenance, and study of water-related infrastructure projects. The Corps focuses on work that provides high economic, environmental, and public safety returns to the Nation. The Corps also regulates development in waters of the United States and works with other Federal agencies to help communities respond to, and recover from, floods and other natural disasters.

The authorizations and funding that Congress provides to the Corps 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 other stakeholders to develop innovative approaches to address some of the most pressing water resources challenges facing the Nation. Since 2014, the Congress has passed a WRDA bill every two years to address evolving water resources issues.

WRDA 2024 advances the Corps' principal Civil Works missions. The legislation reinforces the Corps' partnership with non-federal sponsors by refining existing programs, while introducing new tools to enhance coordination with non-federal partners, improve project delivery, and address evolving national priorities.

To promote long-term infrastructure resilience and to support coastal and riverine communities, WRDA 2024 provides expanded authority for forecast-informed reservoir operations and supports beneficial use of dredged material for shoreline restoration and flood risk reduction. It also authorizes recurring coastal mapping activities to ensure timely data for navigation safety and storm preparedness. Across all mission areas, WRDA 2024 includes provisions to streamline project implementation, facilitate crediting for non-federal contributions such as technical models, and improve transparency in project prioritization, strengthening the Corps ability to deliver safe, high-quality water resources infrastructure that supports both local communities and national economic interests.

My primary commitment is the successful execution of the Army Civil Works Program, ensuring projects are completed safely, on schedule, and within budget. I remain focused on implementing strategies to make our project delivery more efficient and our cost estimates more reliable. By improving our initial planning and design phases and applying rigorous risk management, we are enhancing the accuracy of our timelines and budgets. Furthermore, we are boosting our engagement with industry partners through early collaboration and market research to align our goals and secure more competitive proposals.

A successful Civil Works program depends on efficient project delivery and close partnerships with stakeholders at all levels. We are actively refining the early stages of our projects and managing risks to ensure every infrastructure investment delivers net national benefits cost-effectively. Ultimately, these priorities mean a better deal for the taxpayer and a better future for all Americans.

Thank you, Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Wilson, and Members of the Subcommittee. This concludes my statement. I look forward to answering any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have.

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a statement from the Steel Manufacturers Association dated February 24, 2026.

Without objection, so ordered.

[The information is on page 53.]

Mr. COLLINS. I want to thank you both for your testimony. We will now turn to questions from the panel, and I will recognize myself for 5 minutes for questions.

Assistant Secretary Telle, when you were here last September, you stated that you supported the idea of delegating some authorities to improve efficiency in the Corps' process, especially when it comes to the recreation mission of the Corps.

Does the Corps have the authority in the law to do this now, and, if anything, what do you need from Congress to carry this out?

Mr. TELLE. Chairman Collins, thank you for the question. Absolutely, the Corps has the authority to do this now. It is something that we should be taking advantage of.

As an update on recreation, we are in a good spot in terms of hiring our organic employees for the coming spring and summer seasons, 188 individuals on board, which is 59 percent of our goal. We have gotten after it early.

But delegation of these missions can be a critical way to expand our throughput and ensure we don't have future mishaps.

Mr. COLLINS. Don't you think it would also help with some of the things that you are looking at internally to help improve efficiency and productivity and focus on what the Corps really needs to be focused on?

Mr. TELLE. Chairman Collins, you are absolutely right. This committee has given us authorities. I think about section 203, section 204, section 1043. This committee has spoken loud and clear that the Corps ought to take advantage of capable non-Federal partners.

If you think about the backlog that was mentioned earlier, the projects we have been authorized to perform that we are not performing, we need to expand our throughput. We have a limited amount of throughput. We need to reserve Corps of Engineers' engineering excellence for the largest challenges that confront our country. We need to take advantage of the capabilities of our non-Federal sponsors to expand the number of people in our country that are getting after all of these challenges that you all address.

You have given us the authorities to do that. Unfortunately, to date, in my view, we have not taken full advantage of them. There has been a cultural challenge related to districts wanting to hold onto work for themselves. And, in my view, we have got to get everybody in the business of building America's infrastructure and reducing paperwork.

Mr. COLLINS. Right. I think in so doing that, it also is going to speed up the time that the project is going to take, and it also helps save money.

Mr. TELLE. Mr. Chairman, you are absolutely right. I have seen instances at projects across our country where the price we are paying for dredging, for instance, may be 40, 50 or 60 percent higher than the price that one of our ports might be paying for that dredging.

And so, as often as we can delegate our responsibilities with oversight, of course, to meet the standards that this committee has put forth, we can expand our capability and often get a better price and better schedule by utilizing our non-Federal sponsors.

Mr. COLLINS. Right.

And having said that, General Graham, section 8133 of WRDA 2022 established the inland waterways regional dredge pilot program to award contracts up to 5 years for these dredging projects.

Can you speak about the cost-effectiveness, the reliability, and the performance of this program?

General GRAHAM. Chairman Collins, thank you for that question. Absolutely. By looking regionally, we can get, well, put simply, a much better deal. And we also provide much more flexibility on when and where we dredge.

Under Secretary Telle's guidance, we are looking to expand that beyond just a regional look to take advantage of all of the dredging that the Corps does.

We are the largest buyer of dredging services in the Nation, and we ought to use that market power to get the best deal possible for the American taxpayers.

Mr. COLLINS. Yes. I always have said the customer is king. So, I mean, I think if you look at it from that angle, then you have the upper hand and can negotiate not just maybe one dredging project, but multiple dredging projects. And let your dredging organization or the company that gets it, let them set their schedule, as long as it falls within our guidelines.

All right. Do you consider multiyear contracting as an effective way to reduce these dredging costs?

General GRAHAM. Chairman Collins, absolutely. And as we discussed earlier, by looking nationwide, putting in broad multiyear contracts, we believe we will be able to get the best deal for the American taxpayers.

Mr. COLLINS. Yes. I know when we were talking not too long ago about just the fact of how much it costs to actually—when you have to move a dredge off of a project and they could have been moving towards another project, but then you've got to pay them to move to that project. So you are actually saving a lot of money.

And, Assistant Secretary, I don't know if you want to join.

Mr. TELLE. Chairman Collins, you are right. In addition to expanding our scope nationally, where we are a better negotiator across the negotiating table from private industry who are our partners, there is a challenge we have related to some of the environmental restrictions that often haven't been even reexamined in decades.

I like to equate it to your spouse asking you to run 10 errands on a Saturday, but requiring you to go to the post office, Walmart, the Home Depot, and to soccer practice in a specific order all across town. You can't do it in the most efficient way to execute your mission.

And that is how we are doing dredging today. We are sending our dredgers here and there based on these environmental schedules. If we can reduce that burden on them, we can get a much more efficient product for the taxpayer.

Mr. COLLINS. That's right. And a lot of times we make them come back home and then go to the next one and then come back home. And it just is not very efficient.

I know I am out of time. With that, I now yield 5 minutes to Ms. Scholten.

Ms. SCHOLTEN. I think you could get a working mom to work that schedule for you, Mr. Telle. We will give you a schedule for those errands on a Saturday. I joke. I joke.

Assistant Secretary, the last time you testified before the subcommittee, I discussed how Grand Haven Inner Harbor almost missed a dredging cycle, which would have threatened the harbor's 450 jobs and carried \$88 million in annual economic impact.

After months of advocacy, local, State, Federal levels finally struck a compromise to dredge about 90 percent of the harbor to

ensure that ships could move through the channel without light loading.

However, the remainder of the harbor, that 10 percent, even though it is smaller, is critical, essential, right? If you can't get through that 10 percent, we can't get through at all.

The State needs to conduct sediment testing to determine if the area has been contaminated by PFAS. On February 5th, 2026, I sent a letter to the State as well as the Corps to understand the extent of which the two are working together already to engage in advanced planning to address the dredging of this potentially contaminated water. I received a thorough, timely response from the State of Michigan, but have not received clarity from the Corps yet.

One of my top priorities for WRDA 2026 is boosting collaboration and advanced planning between State and Federal leaders so that we can get to this quicker pace of these projects rolling out, right? Efficiency and effectiveness is what it's all about.

So can you first commit to sending a written response to my February 5th inquiry? And additionally, can you speak to how critical it is for the Corps to work with its State partners to ensure timeliness here?

Mr. TELLE. Ranking Member Scholten, thank you for the question. You are hitting on something that is absolutely true in Michigan. It is true across the country.

Dredging is the lifeblood of our economy. It is the hidden part of our economy that most Americans don't fully appreciate. It is the arteries of—dredging in our ports, our waterways are the arteries of competition and the arteries of our success. Everywhere that we can do this, we need to be doing it.

I will commit to get you a written response to your letter.

In every program that we take on, we have non-Federal partners, State, local, sometimes regional, that we must work closely with in every stage.

And I will pitch it to General Graham to see if he has an update on this particular project that you have outlined.

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Thank you, Mr. Telle.

General GRAHAM. Vice Ranking Member Scholten, thank you again for that question. We certainly understand the importance of Grand Haven Harbor to the economy.

I think our collaboration with the State of Michigan on testing for PFAS contamination is going pretty well. They kind of worked through some of the challenges. If it is primarily sand, there is less likelihood that there is going to be PFAS contamination on it. It really only sticks to the fine silt. So they are working to characterize the sediment in the outer and inner harbor.

And so right now, our understanding is that the deep-draft ships can get to all the commercial docks. And right now, we do understand that a task order to do the next round of contracting was issued in March of this year, and that will do a lot of the outer harbor dredging.

We are looking for a follow-on contract that we will put in place this spring and summer if the testing that is ongoing shows that that middle section by Harbor Island isn't contaminated with PFAS to the Michigan standards. Then we will try to make sure that we are in a position to go ahead and dredge that later this year.

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Thank you. I appreciate that thorough response. I still do request a written response, but we appreciate the update very much, and look forward to continuing conversations about how the Federal and State can continue to collaborate for advanced planning.

I have about a minute, and I want to touch on data centers here really quickly, a huge hot topic all around the country, but especially back home in Michigan. And constituents throughout my district are rightfully concerned about how these projects are going to impact the State's water.

I believe that we can strike the right balance between investing in our digital economy and creating good jobs without harming our natural resources or putting big data profits over our communities.

But smart policy decisions start with good information. The Army Corps plays a really important role in water management, and I want to make sure that we can leverage the agency's expertise to understand how these data centers are impacting our precious water resources.

So back to you, Assistant Secretary Telle. Can you touch on how the agency is thinking, if at all, about how data centers are affecting the use and amount of water maintained by the Corps?

Mr. TELLE. Madam Ranking Member, data centers, as you say, are a developing part of our economy and critical to our competition, our ability to compete.

In terms of the specific ways we look at it, when it comes to water supply, which is not one of our primary missions, but it is certainly something we consider as we are updating water control manuals, we would not specifically look at one facility's water use, we would look at the whole system's water use as we analyze these items.

When it comes to our permitting, we have updated our nationwide permits, which are complete, the renewal of our nationwide permits, to include data centers. Although data centers don't have any particular unique impact on waters of the United States in terms of our regulatory mission that other facilities do, but it is important to understand that data centers are modern facilities that do require permits under the Clean Water Act of 1972.

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Thank you. Some followups there, but I will yield back my time, and we will keep going, but I appreciate the answer.

Mr. COLLINS. I now recognize Mr. Babin for 5 minutes.

Dr. BABIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning. And I want to thank both of you gentlemen for being here today. I represent the 36th District of Texas, home to the Port of Houston, lots of ports other than that and waterways, refineries, petrochemical facilities. And we are no stranger to natural disasters. So I want to thank you all for your commitment to protecting and improving our Nation's infrastructure and our water resources.

I also want to take a moment to recognize Assistant Secretary Telle. Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you for your leadership and for working with your team and Army Corps headquarters to help expedite non-Federal-led studies, your engagement, in fact, both of you, both of your engagement with stakeholders in southeast

Texas, including Cedar Port, is very much appreciated. It makes a real difference on the ground.

Cedar Port plays a vital role in supporting jobs and commerce and economic growth in our district, and we value the strong partnership between the Corps and local stakeholders, who are working hard moving these projects forward.

I also want to thank you for your engagement in Buffalo Bayou and Tributaries Resiliency Study as well. They were devastated by Hurricane Harvey, and we are counting on meaningful flood protection. So looking forward to continue working with you.

My first question is, Mr. Telle, you have announced a Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork initiative. First off, I want to thank you for that. That ought to be across all the Federal Government, the same thing.

So what specific regulatory steps are you eliminating or streamlining to shorten project timelines?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman Babin, thank you for the question, and thank you to your district for welcoming me when I was there recently.

One of the ways that I think about it, and it particularly applies to coastal Texas, is we have not had a culture of prioritization. And I just want to point this out. We haven't really had a plan. If you ask a district commander at any of our 39 Civil Works districts, hey, what are the top priorities in your district? It is not a question that they have often been asked.

And I think that the taxpayers are invested in these leaders, in their ability to lead and command and have military judgment. I think we ought to be listening to our district commanders. And I think about your district and the areas around it that are so critical to our projection of energy dominance.

The American economy depends in many ways on coastal Texas, coastal Louisiana, and elsewhere, but it is also very vulnerable, as you said, to a hurricane like Hurricane Harvey or a hurricane with a storm surge.

It is critically important that we analyze our assets as a Nation in terms of their importance. I can't think of a place off the top of my head that is more critical to our national security than your district and the areas around it.

And so this is the type of thinking we need to empower our commanders—to answer your question, we need to empower our commanders to determine what is their priority and then hold them accountable from year to year about how they are cutting redtape and delivering on those projects, whether it is funding, but more importantly, process and effort, rather than expecting them to inch every project down the field 1 inch at a time and then have to re-study them after 10 years of studying.

We need to identify which projects within the districts, within the divisions, and at headquarters are, on the basis of the military judgment of our commanders, most important to the Nation. And that is a very fundamental and simple way that I believe we can cut through much of the redtape that we face.

Dr. BABIN. That's wonderful.

So what changes are you making to ensure feasibility studies and construction phases would be able to move faster without compromising safety or environmental standards?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman, it's a great question. And I will ask General Graham to add to what I am about to say, but one of the primary efforts—I talked about prioritization across the Nation, but there is also an effort to prioritize within projects.

Quite often, we study a very large swath, a very large area. And we study it, we try to boil the ocean with studies for decades rather than in an early phase, identify a feature or an initiative that can start delivering for the American public now.

So we have implemented a new process called RAPID, which is designed to make these early decisions, get features that can be authorized and funded by Congress to the Hill as quickly as we can, so that rather than study the universe for decades, we are able to start building things now.

Dr. BABIN. Absolutely.

General Graham.

General GRAHAM. I just want to add emphasis to Mr. Telle's point of the sooner we get the decisionmakers, the district engineer involved at the earliest stages, the better our outcomes are going to be.

Like Mr. Telle spoke to, we can study a whole bunch of various options, but there are decisions we can readily make at the beginning of a study to winnow that down to just what the leading options are, the leading alternatives are, and then we should focus on that. And that will give us a faster product more efficiently delivered.

Dr. BABIN. Absolutely. Thank you. I am looking forward to continuing our collaboration for water projects in the future.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Larsen for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thank you.

Mr. Telle, in July of 2025, the Corps estimated that there would be 12 Chief's Reports completed for WRDA 2026. And to date, Congress has received two of those reports. One of them happens to be the Turning Basin of the Columbia River between Washington and Oregon.

What additional Chief's Reports should we expect in time for incorporation into WRDA 2026?

Mr. TELLE. Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for the question. I will defer that question to the Chief. They are his reports.

General GRAHAM. Ranking Member Larsen, I am tracking somewhere between 7 and 13 additional Chief's Reports or Director's Reports that we will try to get in.

I talked to the staff this morning. We know that the end of May is usually the hard deadline, but we are not going to go pencils down. We are going to keep working on these additional Director's Reports and Chief's Reports throughout the summer. But to your staff, we absolutely want to get these in as soon as possible.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. So when you get them on your desk, how long is the turnaround?

General GRAHAM. I will sign those usually immediately. To the earlier question, we want all of the Corps' leadership to be taking a look at these projects earlier.

So at the time the Chief's Report gets to my desk, I have seen it. General Kelly has seen it. Mr. Telle is certainly well aware of it. And that will speed this whole process up.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thanks.

Assistant Secretary Telle, several ports have expressed concern to me that the administration is going to propose using Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund receipts to construct or maintain projects on the inland waterway system.

That is a tremendously bad idea. It would break the commitment we have made to shippers that these funds would be dedicated to maintenance of the coastal harbors, since that is where this money largely comes from.

Does the administration support using Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund receipts for inland waterways projects?

Mr. TELLE. Ranking Member Larsen, I am not going to speak for the administration's policy on this topic I don't know the answer to, but what I will say is that what you have described is not part of the Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork initiative that we put out yesterday. And so I can't speak—

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON [interrupting]. It wouldn't be, because it is a different set of things, but I just want to be sure that you understand that if that is going to be a budget proposal or a proposal from the administration that using Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund receipts for inland waterways when the dollars for the fund is produced by the coastal harbors, there is going to be a problem.

Mr. TELLE. Thank you, sir.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Secretary, thanks for briefing me on your upcoming proposal on the BINP. One of my priorities is that Corps projects be affordable to communities of all sizes. And in your proposal, you discuss expanding Corps authorities to allow non-Federal sponsors to take on design and construction of projects and seek repayment for the Federal share after the fact.

How would that expanded use of alternative delivery methods benefit smaller, rural, Tribal communities that can't afford to advance these funds and then to wait for reimbursement? Have you thought through that?

Mr. TELLE. Ranking Member Larsen, you raise a great point here. And the way that we see it is that if we use the authorities that you provided to us to expand the overall capacity of our Nation to deliver on infrastructure, it will reserve the use of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' excellence for projects that are national in scale or projects for communities that don't have those capabilities, the ones you describe.

But we do have non-Federal sponsors that do have those capabilities. And so, to the degree that we can let them help shoulder the workload burden, it is going to make it better for everyone, because it will reserve General Graham's team's expertise for communities like the ones you describe.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. And in the Pacific Northwest, I have worked on projects using Corps 206 authorities on a very suc-

cessful restoration, a fairly small project compared to much larger projects.

And so, there are different sizes of projects the Corps has authority to act on as well as different abilities that these jurisdictions have to participate without Corps.

So finally, WRDA 2024 formally expanded the target timeline for study development to 4 years and \$5 million. Non-Federal sponsors are concerned the Corps continues to scale down projects to conform to the 3-year, the three and three.

When your staff briefed the committee on your potential reforms, it continued to cling to the three and three goal despite the fact that we changed that. So can you explain the difference here, the disconnect?

Mr. TELLE. Sure, Ranking Member Larsen. The law obviously provides us with 4 years and a \$5 million limit to complete a feasibility study. That replaces a law that gave us 3 years and a \$3 million limit.

My view is that the tool that you gave us in terms of putting this box around how soon and how cost-effectively we need to complete these ability studies is a great tool for discipline, to impose discipline on the system to help produce an answer for you to your point about Chief's Reports rather than studying these things forever.

And so, I am not going to—although the law gives me the ability to waive the 4x5x3 requirement, I don't take it as this committee's position that I am going to be the waiver factory.

I think you imposed this discipline on the system for a reason. It is because you want studies completed in a reasonable amount of time for a reasonable amount of money. And I am going to be very reluctant to give any relief to that discipline, because I think it is an incredible tool that you have given us, and I think General Graham agrees.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Kiley for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILEY OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for your testimony and all of your efforts to accelerate the process of building that is so important. It is vitally important in my State of California where we have had many issues related to our water supply and have been hamstrung by the State's failure to build adequate water storage really for decades now.

So it has really fallen upon local communities to do the best that they can to provide for their own residents. And to that end, I want to thank you for the work you have done with me and my office on a \$5.3 million project for preliminary and final design work, along with environmental compliance, for a 15-mile raw water pipeline serving west Placer County.

This project is going to connect an existing Placer County Water Agency intake on the upper American River to Roseville's Barton Road Water Treatment Plant. And once completed, Roseville will retain access to their surface water resources during times of drought or emergency.

This will have many benefits. It is going to reduce reliance on a single aging intake at Folsom Reservoir; improve water reliability during emergencies and droughts; serve residents, two regional

hospitals, and a robust manufacturing and business economy; enhance groundwater banking and efficient water use; and increase surface water availability in the lower American River for municipal, industrial, and environmental needs.

And we have worked very hard the last few years. This was originally improved in WRDA. And thank you very much for getting this to the point where it can move forward.

Also, as one of the projects that we have gotten Federal funding for, we have enhanced culverts that are very vital to water infrastructure in our area with the Placer County Water Agency.

And we are finally starting to have some hope of larger scale changes in California as well. As part of H.R. 1 this last year, there was \$1 billion that was secured for new water infrastructure. This was primarily secured through the California delegation.

So we look forward to seeing that funding—this is really a Department of the Interior decision—wind up supporting enhanced capacity, like raising Shasta Dam in California.

And then finally, we have gotten Federal approval and significant Federal funding for Sites Reservoir in California, which is an offstream facility that is going to provide upwards of 1.5 million acre-feet of storage.

This is the first new significant water storage California has seen in several decades and holds the hope of getting us out of this cycle of floods and droughts, where we have sometimes both at the same time, by the way, in terms of states of emergency, so that we can actually save the water that comes in the wet years and use it in the dry years so that we are not taking water away from our farmers, forcing them to fallow their fields, forcing our citizens not to water their lawns or take shorter showers.

So your work is critical to many pieces of that. I want to thank you for everything that you are doing and for the very constructive relationship you have had with my office.

I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Garamendi for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Telle and General Graham, thank you very much for your testimony today and for the answers that you have provided thus far.

I want to go through three issues. I am going to start with the California Delta and a decision that is now before the Army Corps of Engineers. And I suppose, Mr. Telle, you will also be involved.

It is the record of decision. I would hope that the Army Corps of Engineers would deny the Federal permits to allow the State of California to dig its proposed Delta Conveyance Project tunnel. It has very serious impacts on the delta.

So that is question number one. Where is that? We sent a letter on February 3rd to you, General Graham. I would not expect a reply in 2½ weeks, but here you are, so that is question number one.

Question number two goes to the Mare Island Strait channel dredging. This was in the 2024. It directed the Army Corps of Engineers to expedite the completion of the Mare Island Strait feasi-

bility study. This has to do with the SHIPS Act and the ability of that particular facility in Mare Island to handle larger ships.

And the third question deals with the overall dredging in the San Francisco Bay area, including to Sacramento and Stockton. What is the status of that?

And so those are the three questions. Let's start with the delta. General Graham.

General GRAHAM. Representative Garamendi, thank you for that question. Primarily, our role in the Delta Conveyance Project is just our regulatory work under the Clean Water Act, 404, any impacts to waters of the United States that the new infrastructure that is required for that intake would be.

And we will get back to your office on exactly when we expect to release a supplemental EIS, but we are tracking this closely.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The existing EIS indicates that there are very significant environmental issues associated with the delta. I won't go through all of them here. They are significant. It is a perfect way to destroy the largest inland freshwater estuary on the west coast. So this project that is proposed by our Governor and others should be a nonstarter. The role of the Corps of Engineers is significant.

So please get back to us, and be happy to further enlighten you on the potential problems associated with it. Most of those are in the record.

Okay. The next one having to do with Mare Island.

General GRAHAM. Sir, Mare Island, understand that administration's priority is to restore America's maritime dominance, and that is what you are working on here on the old ship, or Navy facility, that used to be out there.

The district has been working on that 216 study. Right now, it is not looking all that favorable. That is not great news, but the good news is most of that channel is self-scouring down to 30 feet. So that is the good news. We are happy to come brief you on everything that we looked at.

Mr. GARAMENDI. General, we certainly appreciate the briefing, but the fact of the matter is that the administration came out with their maritime strategy last week, and it would call for the revitalization of the commercial maritime industry. And, of course, we already have a shortage on the west coast of docks that are available for the Navy.

Dredging becomes critically important, and I would take issue with your assessment of the dredging and the normal scouring from the river itself. Not happening. A major project. If we are going to rebuild our maritime industry, we are going to have to deal with this particular one. And, of course, there is always Richmond that we could add to it and the other harbors.

And finally, the final issue really deals with how we are going to deal with the problems that are associated, again, general issue of dredging in San Francisco Bay.

General GRAHAM. Representative Garamendi, delighted to say that we are starting to treat dredge material not as a waste product but as a vital resource. We have got great authorities from this committee to work to better use—

Mr. GARAMENDI [interrupting]. My final point, General, excuse me for interrupting, but you should keep in mind using the Adaptive Management Program of the Endangered Species Act, thereby providing flexibility, not based on the calendar, but rather on where the species are and what potential harm there may be. So adaptive management, Endangered Species Act.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Taylor for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Chairman and Ranking Member, for holding this hearing today. And thank you very much to our witnesses for being here. The sacrifices you guys made to be here today don't go unnoticed, and we appreciate it very much.

I represent many counties along the Ohio River. Congress must pass legislation that encourages growth and development, that speeds up project timelines, and protects our communities from flooding without being filled with frivolous regulations.

Public-private partnerships have historically benefited the Federal Government and taxpayers. The Meldahl locks and dam in my district is a prime example of how public-private partnerships with the Army Corps can protect communities while providing economic opportunities.

Completed in 2016, the three-turbine hydroelectric plant and spillway were added to the Meldahl locks and dam, generating 105 megawatts for the community.

Secretary Telle, I understand that the Corps coordinates with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for these potential partnerships. Is there any opportunity in this upcoming WRDA reauthorization to encourage or promote these partnerships to help create new domestic energy production along this existing infrastructure?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman Taylor, you are absolutely right. And 6 percent of our Nation's energy is from hydropower, 25 percent—the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the largest owner of hydropower facilities. But we have so many of our dams where hydropower is not part of the equation.

And this is not one of our primary missions, but through our section 408 regulatory program, we can create a streamlined process that allows the entire Nation to take advantage of the situation that you describe in your home State.

And we are undertaking, this committee—and WRDA 2024 weighed in on—streamlining section 408. General Graham and his team have got a good grasp on 404 Clean Water Act permits.

But when you go around to our districts, they all handle section 408 a little bit differently, because it has to do with touching our infrastructure, like dams, and it is a more sensitive life and safety issue.

If we can come up with a streamlined national approach to section 408, we can unlock hydropower potential energy that exists in our system today. In the same way we did it in Ohio, we can do it nationwide. Through Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork, this is one of the exact things that we are doing. So thank you for bringing it up.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you. The Corps' construction and management of levees across the Ohio River have historically protected

communities along the Ohio River from flooding, saving countless lives.

As these communities grow in population and economic development, local communities may seek to modify the Corps' existing infrastructure through the section 408 program.

Unfortunately, some communities ran into, in my opinion, unnecessary bureaucratic delays while the Corps was completing its completeness determination for a project in my district.

My constituents reported that repeatedly, the Corps took the full 30 days to respond to each correspondence, delaying the project and holding up critical development.

This process began in early June of 2025 and was not resolved until late January 2026, 7 months after the application was submitted for review.

I understand that some approvals take time, but project delivery is crucial for folks on the ground, and 7 months for approval can put projects like this one in my district in jeopardy and drive up costs.

Secretary Telle, when looking at an upcoming WRDA reauthorization, how can Congress ensure that the section 408 approval process is completed promptly and communities are not worried about losing Federal funding?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman Taylor, you are absolutely right. This is a place, as I said before, this committee has spoken on before. Before I leave this job, I hope to have a new rulemaking that streamlines section 408 for the entire country so that each member of the public who seeks a section 408 permit from the Corps of Engineers can have a process that is timely that they can rely on getting answers.

Obviously, we are not going to compromise our infrastructure, but we have to be able to streamline this process. It's buried way down in our bureaucracy, and it is something we need to elevate.

General Graham, anything to add?

General GRAHAM. I couldn't agree more. We won't sacrifice the integrity of, say, that dam on the Ohio River, but the paperwork processes, absolutely.

And I think, as Mr. Telle outlined, it is to give district engineers more authorities in that so they can move faster. One piece I could add on the Ohio River, all the icing conditions, the team in the Ohio River, particularly down in your area, performed magnificently well, keeping those vital arteries open during some truly challenging conditions, and I am tremendously proud of them.

Mr. TAYLOR. Likewise. I was over there with an opportunity to look at some of that work being done, and I really appreciate what was done to help those folks.

I am going to submit this last question, and you guys, maybe the lieutenant general, can get back to me with the answer. Ohio is home to many abandoned mines, with over 1,300 miles of streams impacted by potential acid mine drainage, many of these streams falling into the Ohio River.

That is why I was pleased to see in the last WRDA reauthorization authorization for the Secretary to establish a pilot program designed to establish treatment works for abandoned mine drainage in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

Lieutenant General, has the Army Corps of Engineers begun the process of establishing this pilot program?

General GRAHAM. Congressman, we will get back to you with an answer to that. But having grown up in Pittsburgh, I certainly understand the importance of this issue.

Mr. TAYLOR. I appreciate that. I yield back, Chairman.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Ryan for 5 minutes.

Mr. RYAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you both for being here again. Good to have you back.

When you were here in September—and appreciated that visit—I focused on what I made very clear as a top priority for my 800,000 constituents. I want to bring that project up again and maintain that focus. This is the Kiryas Joel Aqueduct Connection Project. At that time, appreciated that you both acknowledged that you were tracking this and working on it.

I also want to thank you, General Graham. I asked you during that hearing for a commitment to meeting with your senior leadership, and you followed through on time and under budget on that meeting with General Gibbs. Appreciated that, appreciated all the local leadership, and Colonel Young in the district being very engaged in this. So I just want to thank you both, first and foremost, for your continued timely and deep engagement and commitment on this.

What has changed even in the few months since I brought this up in September is that the urgency and the dire need for water in this community unfortunately just continues to grow, and I want to just give you some fresh data points there.

And just to refresh your memories, this is a village, it is the biggest municipality in my district. It is one of the youngest and fastest growing communities in the country. The average family size is nearly double the national size of families, at 5.37 people per family to be exact. Since 1990, the population has grown 500 percent in this village. So they are doing everything right to, essentially, race to keep up with their rapid growth, which we appreciate and want in other parts of the district and the country, and they just need some help to really do that.

What has particularly changed is just, as they have continued to work this, they are just in a severe water supply deficit at this point. As they work through what is the final phase of a successful 20-year project, the concerns that without just—we have gotten State funding, we have gotten additional prior Federal funding, but we need to speed up the urgency, and so we are asking your help on this.

In the last year or two, the village has been forced to rely on temporary unsustainable measures for supplying water. They have been trucking in drinking water. They have been purchasing water at incredible markups just to make sure that their folks—there are a lot of kids, in particular, in this community—just have adequate water. And this isn't even covering a fraction of their needs.

So we were able to get the authorization up for this project in the 2024 WRDA. I am going to attempt to do that again. But I specifically wanted to ask, now that the appropriations work is done, how you are thinking about and whether we can get any support in the upcoming work plan that I know you are working on to try

to speed this up. Because it is just really hard for me to look my constituents in the eyes and say we are not doing everything we can to just make sure they have got water. So would appreciate both of your input on that. And again, thanks for your engagement on this.

Mr. TELLE. Congressman Ryan, just to respond, thanks to your advocacy for this community. I think I was on the phone with General Gibbs a few hours after he met with your constituents. I think General Graham was also getting that update at the same time. This is something you brought very clearly to our attention. We are currently in the process of working with Office of Management and Budget to develop our 2026 work plan in response to the Energy and Water Appropriations Act, and appreciate your advocacy on this program.

Mr. RYAN. When are you guys, roughly, expecting that? I know we—

Mr. TELLE [interrupting]. The data states and the law says we have 60 days to deliver that work plan to Congress from the date of enactment.

Mr. RYAN. We did our part, and certainly, you need adequate time to do yours. I appreciate that.

Again, I just want to thank you both for the work that you are doing, and your teams, and ask really just on behalf of my constituents, as you are making those hard calls—I know EI projects in particular are often seen as lower priority, and I understand that—there is a huge need across the country—but this one has just reached a really critical point. So thank you all.

I will yield back the balance of my time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Westerman for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

I grew up listening to President Reagan tell stories to illustrate some hard facts in life. And one of them he used to tell was about the Communist Soviet Union. And the guy bought a new car and he asked them when he would have it, and they said 6 years from now. And he said, is that morning or afternoon. And the guy said, what do you mean, 6 years from now, why do you care if it's the morning or the afternoon. He said, well, because the plumber is coming in the morning.

And when I think of some of these projects with the Corps, I can see stories that make 6 years look like a very short amount of time.

There is some great illustrations—I have dealt with the Corps since I have been in Congress—and then some not so great ones. The first not so great one was my hometown needed one-quarter inch of water out of a lake that is about 260 feet deep in places. They needed one-quarter inch of water per year out of that lake, and it took 16 years to get the Corps to authorize the project, while the cost of building the water supply system skyrocketed. We finally got that done. No common sense whatsoever in doing that.

Then I reflect back to a flood on the Arkansas River 5 or 6 years ago, a terrible flood, took sections of levee out. And I had all these farmers wanting to—they were trying to figure out where they were going to be able to plant their crop in the fall, and they

couldn't get an answer from the Federal Government on whether they could get crop insurance if the levee wasn't in place.

And Colonel Eric Noe, he is my Corps of Engineers hero, he is retired now, but he came out and looked at the project and started talking about how many years it would take to go through the environmental assessment and historic preservation, and he got it, though. He realized that was a lot of nonsense that was holding up progress, and he fixed that levee in about 2 to 3 months.

So I know that when the right efforts are put forth, the Corps can move mountains, they can move a lot of dirt in a short amount of time, and that gave me great faith in the Corps.

Which brings me to my next issue, and that is the 12-foot channel of the Arkansas River on the MKARNS system. So it was first authorized in 2004, and here we are, 2026, and there hasn't been one effort made to deepen the channel in the Arkansas River, even though—a few years back, I was the ranking member on the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, and we put new language out there to deepen the channel, there was \$200 million that the Corps had for maintenance on the MKARNS, and still nothing has happened.

So my question is, when is something going to happen on the MKARNS, and what else does Congress have to do, other than authorize and you have funding to do it? How do we get this project to actually happen? Because when I am back home, people who use the MKARNS, that is pretty much the number one and only question I get asked.

Mr. TELLE. Congressman Westerman, the frustrations you expressed are exactly why we are getting after the Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork initiative. We are hoping that we hear fewer and fewer stories like this.

As it relates to the MKARNS, I am pleased to say that I was there recently. It is an incredible facility, an incredible capability we have as a Nation. I was at the Port of Catoosa, which is upriver from you, and even past Tulsa, what an amazing facility to deliver products that are created right in America's heartland to the world.

With regard to the 12-foot channel depth, I will defer to General Graham on that. I do know that when we are looking at these types of systems, making sure we don't strand deeper channels against shallower channels is a big consideration.

But, General Graham, I don't know if you want to provide an update.

General GRAHAM. Thank you.

First, I am just going to pivot to the levees. Absolutely, when a flood hits, we need to stay in Army mode and to get those levees repaired, not within 6 years, not within 5 years, before the next storm hits. That is our absolute goal. And we are here to protect the people's livelihoods behind there. We are not here to defend any of our bureaucracy. So, Representative, you have our absolute commitment to that.

On the MKARNS system, understand the folks you talk to, their number one concern is getting more savings by a deeper river. My number one concern for that system is the reliability of it. It is about 15 years behind where, say, the Ohio River system is in terms of needing major recapitalization. So when I look at all the

engineering reports that come in, making sure that what we have stays reliable is my number one concern.

Mr. WESTERMAN. I understand that. And that \$200 million I was talking about, it got moved down to the Three Rivers Project, which is infrastructure, which is very important. But unfortunately, it wasn't used, so it went back into the maintenance fund.

So I want to work with you. I get it that infrastructure needs repairs up and down the river, but it just seems to take forever to get things done. And it's not like you have got to dig a new channel the full length of the river. There are a few places where it's not 12 feet deep that need to be dredged out and fixed so that the river can be used.

So, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the indulgence, and I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Friedman for 5 minutes.

Ms. FRIEDMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A point of personal privilege. After his military service, my grandfather spent his entire career with the Army Corps, so I have a tremendous amount of respect for the organization and for what you all do. So, thank you so much for being here.

Lieutenant General Graham, I had the opportunity to ask you a few questions the last time you were here about the PACR for the L.A. River Restoration Project, a very important long-time project in my area in Los Angeles.

During that hearing, you had told me that the Corps was committed to completing the PACR in time for the 2026 WRDA. Unfortunately, on February 9, after asking for a status update on the PACR, my staff received communication from the Corps that stated, quote, "Federal funding is not available to continue the project's PACR completion in support of the WRDA 2026 timeline," end quote.

Now, my staff and I have sent several followup questions, which as of now have not been answered. So I would like to use part of my time to get some clarity on the status of this very important project which L.A. has invested millions of dollars over the years.

First, Lieutenant General Graham, can you provide me with a timeline for the completion of the PACR?

General GRAHAM. Representative Friedman, I will not be able to honor the commitment we made at the last hearing to finish that PACR before the next WRDA bill is due. A multitude of reasons are behind that. Some are the challenges, the absolutely ballooning astronomical cost of real estate, question the viability of it and the ability of our Federal sponsor to provide the funding to get that real estate. There are also some environmental concerns.

I have walked that whole region. I understand how important it is to the community. And nobody likes large concrete trapezoidal ditches running through their community. Although in the recent rainstorms out there, L.A. River did its flood risk management job magnificently well.

So, we are committed to working to see, can we balance the flood risk management needs and the aquatic ecosystem restoration needs. But in the case of L.A. River, we are challenged to put the conditions together that we believe we are going to have a viable way forward.

Ms. FRIEDMAN. Thank you. It is disappointing to hear, and I would love to have more communication with the Corps as we move forward. I mean, certainly, L.A. has put a lot of their own resources into this project over the years. It has been promised to the community. It serves a very important function. It could also serve a more important function if we can do the investments to help capture more water. And my fellow Representative from California mentioned water storage, and we have got a lot of water that runs down the river out to the ocean every time it rains, and there are reclamation and capture projects as part of this project that are planned.

But for the communities that have lived alongside of this for years and have been promised an amenity that they can use, the communities that have been divided from parts of the city because of this infrastructure project who want crossings, want to be able to have this not be blighted, but be an amenity for their children, moving forward, this would be a huge disappointment.

And as the project continues, and as it drags on, the costs are only going to increase. So if we just kick the can down the road because of current costs, we are looking at ballooning costs over the years. And, again, there is a lot of sunk investment into this, so I would hope that we can keep finding ways to move this forward.

In my last minute here, I do want to also mention the deeply concerning directive issued on October 15, 2025, by the Department of War, which requires the Corps district to obtain approval from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Legislative Affairs before engagement with Federal or State-elected officials and their staff. I mean, this is something—as we are talking about removing redtape, and that seems to be a priority of the Trump administration and of yours, this is adding layers of redtape that WRDA is never going to be able to unstick.

So, Lieutenant General Graham, how has this directive impeded the Corps' ability to work with Congress, and how do you plan to ensure timely communication with offices regarding time-sensitive information, like the L.A. River Restoration Project, if you can't talk to us without going through another agency?

General GRAHAM. Thank you for that question. The Army Corps of Engineers, we strive every day to function as one team. One team from the district level that are interfacing with your constituents, up through our division level, through my headquarters, and up to Mr. Telle's office. Our goal is to function as one team.

And as my interpretation of the guidance from the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Army, it revolves around the basic principle that the left hand of the organization should know what the right hand of the organization is doing. And it is also around the basic principle that at the lower levels of the organization, they should be entirely nested with the guidance and direction that senior leadership is providing. And so I think that is all well just and proper.

If the actual execution of that is clunky right now, that is my responsibility to fix it, and that is our commitment to you here today.

Ms. FRIEDMAN. Well, seems to me that adding this layer of bureaucracy is going to make things slower and maybe us not getting a response as part of that.

With that, I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Onder for 5 minutes.

Dr. ONDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Telle, General Graham, thank you for being here today.

WRDA works best when Congress sets clear priorities, and the Corps delivers real infrastructure, not just process milestones. Secretary Telle noted that the Corps performs best when it is unburdened by redtape and is free to focus on execution. I couldn't agree more.

In Missouri, we don't measure success by how many reports are issued, but whether our levees hold, whether our locks operate, and if our communities are protected. Missouri's Third District depends on a reliable inland river system. The Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, which converge in my district, support agriculture, manufacturing, energy, and multiple businesses throughout the district. We also have aging infrastructure that the Federal Government built decades ago and then sold off and abandoned.

So as we work to develop WRDA 2026, I want to focus on three things. First, delivering on the already authorized projects and clearing the construction backlog. Second, prioritizing flood risk reduction and ecosystem restoration projects that address the real and present risks to Missouri families and landowners. And third, improving transparency and accountability so Congress and local sponsors know exactly what projects remain unfunded and, more importantly, why.

Secretary Telle also pointed out that we have over \$45 billion sitting undelivered nationwide, much of it decades old. That is unacceptable, especially when we have communities waiting for much needed infrastructure upgrades.

So I look forward to discussing how WRDA 2026 can sharpen focus, restore fiscal discipline, and ensure the Corps builds what America and Missouri actually need.

Secretary Telle, you stated that the Corps currently has \$45 billion previously appropriated but not yet delivered, with \$15 billion of that being more than 6 years old. Are there specific reforms that you would like to see implemented in WRDA 2026 to help prioritize completion of these already authorized construction projects, particularly flood risk and navigation projects in States like Missouri, before authorizing new ones?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman, thank you for the question. And congratulations on representing the part of America where the longest river intersects with the second longest river, the longest being Missouri, just slightly.

Look, I have been over it. I think some of this stuff is very fundamental and may not require an act of Congress to deliver on, just simply a change in culture. We have to empower our commanders. We are not doing that today. We are asking them to do everything all at once with the same level of effort.

The reason a lot of this funding is stranded is because we get caught in endless loops of negotiation and back-and-forth, and this bureaucrat talking to that bureaucrat, this agency talking to that agency. And so I would say that that fundamental management change will do a lot to help free those resources.

I think a directive from Congress to us to reexamine whether that \$45 billion that is currently stranded, if it could be applied somewhere else more efficiently or appropriately would be useful. But I think, more importantly, we have to just get out of—we have to make sure that—in particular, we get caught up in arguments with other Federal agencies, our partners.

My view, and what's part of Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork, is that if we elevate these challenges here to echelon in Washington, we can look across at another agency and say, hey, let's solve this problem.

I think about a project in Florida, in south Florida, Port Everglades. That project costs, to deepen and widen that port, costs \$600 million, but the current pricetag for that project is \$3.2 billion. That means we, the United States of America, are paying 5x for a port on the basis of haggling between the interagency, and we can do a lot to fix that—

Dr. ONDER [interposing]. Right. Yes. A lot better than that.

Mr. TELLE [continuing]. If we elevate it. So thank you for bringing that up.

Dr. ONDER. Thank you. Also for you, Secretary Telle, the Federal Government constructed and later abandoned the Lock and Dam No. 1 on the lower Osage River in Missouri. It now poses safety and liability risks. Given that this is a clear legacy Federal project, will the administration support WRDA 2026 authorization and funding prioritization for removal and ecosystem restoration on Lock and Dam No. 1?

Mr. TELLE. Sir, I am going to let General Graham take that one. He has the latest on that project.

Dr. ONDER. Thank you.

General GRAHAM. Sir, quite versed in the challenge with Lock and Dam No. 1 on the lower Osage River. Our commitment to you is to have a Chief's Report that I will sign by the end of May.

Dr. ONDER. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Figures for 5 minutes.

Mr. FIGURES. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham, for being here today.

Secretary, it is good to see you again. We were down—I had the privilege to spend a little time with you down in Mobile a few months back when we were celebrating the deepening of that port, which is an example of what happens when communities can work together with the Corps to prioritize local and regional priorities from an infrastructure standpoint. And now we can proudly say—no disrespect to any of my other colleagues on the committee—that the Port of Mobile, Alabama, is the deepest port in the gulf. The deepest. So deeper than Houston, deeper than New Orleans, deeper than Miami, deeper than Tampa. We are, hopefully soon, to be home to the largest amount of imports and exports coming in and out of the gulf.

As we begin work towards WRDA 2026, it is important that we recognize the breadth of water infrastructure challenges facing communities across the country. While navigation and major coastal projects often receive the brunt of the attention, many cities, large and small, and rural especially, are grappling with aging

water systems, inadequate stormwater infrastructure, sediment management challenges, and mounting wastewater needs.

In my district, these are not abstract concerns. Communities are dealing with recurring flooding, failing or outdated water systems. In fact, one city in my district, Prichard, Alabama, has a water system that has been described by experts who have worked in Flint, worked in Jackson, as America's worst water system.

This certainly creates challenges that affect public health, economic development, environmental quality, and overall quality of life. And WRDA has long served as a bipartisan vehicle to address pressing water resource needs, as you guys well know.

As we consider WRDA 2026, we must ensure that the Corps is equipped, not only to maintain major navigation channels and large-scale projects, but also to partner with local communities on comprehensive water management solutions, particularly in areas facing infrastructure deficits.

I look forward to discussing with you guys and working with you guys how the administration will prioritize water supply, wastewater, stormwater, and sediment management projects in WRDA 2026, and how we can ensure communities, especially small and midsize cities, and rural communities, can effectively move projects forward through the Corps' process.

Our goal should be clear: We should be striving for a WRDA bill that strengthens infrastructure resilience, improves water quality, supports economic growth, and delivers meaningful long-term benefits to communities across this country, both large and small. Many of the Corps' projects authorized under the Water Resources Development Act are vital for community safety, economic growth, and environmental and coastal resilience.

Secretary Telle, I will start with you. How could underfunding, how could us not providing enough funding in WRDA for operations, maintenance, and construction affect the Corps' ability to deliver these authorized projects effectively?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman, thank you for the question. And I would note that you invited me to join you, in Mobile at the event that we attended together, in this room from that very chair, and we wound up sitting next to each other. So that was great.

In terms of resourcing operations and maintenance, this is critical. You will see us emphasize operations and maintenance. General Graham just did. And, absolutely, there are key issues where additional funding, including the President's budget, is required, but I believe that we can accomplish so much with the authorities and the funding that we have.

We are not delivering sufficiently, in my view, on schedule and cost with what we have, and that is why you saw us yesterday introduce the Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork initiative. This is designed to squeeze more out for every American community out of the resources that you provided.

These decades-long schedules, these billions of dollars in costs, we can do better as America. Our water infrastructure is really the secret ingredient to our communities' health and safety, it is the secret ingredient to our economy. And we have to as a Nation—I mean, this is the greatest civil engineering entity humanity has ever known sitting next to me.

Mr. FIGURES. Thank you for that. I don't want to cut you off, but I do want to go to Lieutenant General Graham.

Mr. TELLE. Yes, sir.

Mr. FIGURES. I first want to highlight the work and reputation that your district commander in Mobile, Alabama, is establishing for himself. Kelcey Shaw is doing a hell of a job by all accounts that we receive from local authorities, mayors, members of the city council, people that he engages with across my district, which is broad and vast. They are thrilled to have him there, they are enjoying working with him, and they feel heard more than anything else. And so I want to give him that acknowledgment.

Lastly, look, I live in—I represent part of Hurricane Alley. And from an engineering perspective, obviously given funding cuts and staffing changes that we have seen over the past year-plus, want to make sure that the Corps is ready and able. If a category—if a major hurricane today is to hit the gulf coast, or anywhere in America, are you confident in the Corps' ability with its current resources to be able to respond effectively and efficiently to provide a timely response to major infrastructure damage that may happen from those storms or do you need more?

General GRAHAM. Representative Figures, we absolutely are. With leaders like Colonel Shaw making sure that we are staying in Army mode, whether that being under Corps authorities or whether we are working under Stafford Act under FEMA's authorities, our goal is always to help people as fast as we possibly can. And in your vulnerable part of this country, that is absolutely true.

Mr. FIGURES. Thank you. And I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you.

And as somebody that wanted to attend that event, I couldn't, and I hate it, because it was a great project and a good example of what the Corps can do under—came in under budget and under time. So it is a good project.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Burlison for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

After decades of frustration, and myself being frustrated, representing my district for 3 years coming here to our annual hearing that we would have, what a change. What a change.

Secretary Telle, I cannot thank you enough for the sea change in attitude and respect for the citizens and the taxpayers and their neighbors. What a difference.

Thank you for your leadership, General Graham. Thank you.

You and Brigadier General Walter have just demonstrated tremendous leadership that we haven't seen in decades. And I am so impressed with Lieutenant Colonel Jesse Carter. And just last week, he led a team from the Little Rock office to my district to have a series of community meetings to explain the changes in the policies that they are going to have, and they were welcomed with positive feedback from the constituents in my district, and I cannot thank you enough. First, I just wanted to say thank you.

You have clearly demonstrated, Secretary Telle, almost a private sector attitude the way in which you address trying to streamline processes, make the Corps faster, quicker, responsible. And, again, this goes to both of you. It is impressive to see happen.

Can you highlight some of the new initiatives that you guys have worked on? And if you want to make any comments about your experience at Table Rock Lake, that would be great.

Mr. TELLE. Well, Congressman, I will just say, we made a commitment to you in this room in September, and we followed through with that commitment. And I am pleased to see that the situation has improved in Table Rock Lake.

With regard to our initiatives, we are so proud of our Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork initiative. There are so many ways that we can improve here. I want to hit on something, since you give me the opportunity, that General Graham hit on earlier but we haven't fully articulated, which has to do with the way we contract for dredging.

If you think about dredging, this is—really, it's the equivalent of a snowplow plowing your street. It allows you to get back to work, and it is the equivalent for our Nation of a snowplow clearing your street and enabling productivity.

Unfortunately, the way we contract for this is regional in scope. We talked about this. We have less intelligence about the dredging activity across the Nation when we are sitting across a negotiating table from a dredging provider than they do. And we are often competing against ourselves, driving up costs across the country, having to run errands across the country in a way that is incredibly inefficient.

We are already underway, under Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork, to elevating that contracting activity to a place where we have a national view, and it is going to make us far more efficient. It is going to allow us to squeeze every drop out of taxpayer dollars that we can. And so I am extremely excited about that.

There are a number of other ways that we can get into. I have got 1 minute and 23 seconds left. I can provide another vignette for you, if you would like, or I can answer another question, sir.

Mr. BURLISON. I wanted to make sure that I didn't miss thanking you also for the water allocation that we got from Stockton Lake after decades of southwest Missouri sweating and worried about having drinking water availability in the future. That was something that was finally accomplished, and I can't thank you and my district cannot thank you enough.

I wanted to ask about some of the funding that the Corps has, about \$45 billion in congressionally appropriated funds that included about \$15 billion that had remained unspent for about 15 years. Knowing that in my district there is infrastructure that needs improvement, can you address that issue and what we may need to do if we need to make any changes in order to make sure that those funds are utilized?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman, thank you for the question. And this is something we are working on every single day. We have analyzed every dollar of those \$45 billion that are out there. Some of them are still part of a project that is active, and for one reason or another, we just haven't gotten to the point where we can start spending it.

Some of it is stranded. Some of it will never be spent unless we repurpose it. And so we have been working with the Office of Management and Budget, we will work with the Appropriations Com-

mittee, we will work with this committee to try to make sure that, one, we are carrying through and executing the dollars that Congress has provided but to the degree that those dollars are not—I mean, the enterprise, the Corps has never had anyone—most agencies have funding that expires. Much of our funding never expires. And the Corps has rarely had anybody come around and say, hey, if you don't spend this money, it is going to go away.

We are going to execute the law, and we are going to spend the money that Congress has given us in a way that Congress expects. However, someone needs to put some discipline into the system to get some decisions made on how to execute this money, and I have been doing that. I have been letting the enterprise know that if you don't spend the money you have, eventually, Congress is going to take it back.

And so we have been getting that message out. It has put a shock into the system. I think our fiscal folks across the board are now awake and interested in spending this money.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you. And last, I just want to invite you again to come back to Table Rock. Every Veterans Day we have an amazing event where our fishing guides, dozens and dozens of fishing guides offer free guided service to our veterans. It is one of the most beautiful and Americana kind of event that you could ever see, and you both are invited to come. I would greatly appreciate it.

Mr. TELLE. Thank you, Congressman. If not for the lapse in appropriations, we might have joined you for that back in November.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Table Rock.

The Chair now recognizes Ms. Norton for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Army Corps supplies the District of Columbia's drinking water, and the Potomac River is the only source of that drinking water. With only 1 day of backup water supply, man-made or natural events that make the river unusable for drinking water would put residents, the District government, and the regional economy at risk.

In 2022, at my request, the Congress authorized the Corps to conduct a feasibility study of a project, quote, "project for the water supply, including the identification of a secondary water source and additional water storage capability for the Washington metropolitan area," end quote.

Congress has appropriated \$2,000,300,000 for the study. Two weeks ago, the Corps informed me that it will likely limit the scope of the study to an expansion of the existing primary storage basin. That violates both the study's authorization and appropriation. Expansion of the reservoir is not a secondary water source.

Lieutenant General Graham, why has the Corps decided to limit the study of the expansion of the reservoir?

General GRAHAM. Delegate Holmes Norton, thank you for that question.

First off, I just want to assure the committee members and everybody listening that the water supply for the city, parts of Fairfax, and Arlington County, are safe. The Army has been entrusted to run that water supply since right after the Civil War.

So I know there are concerns with the sewage spill from the Potomac interceptor up there up by I-495, but that is a completely different system. We provide the treated water, and DC Water is responsible for distributing that water through the city, and they are also responsible for collecting and treating the sewage.

Fortunately for the Washington aqueduct, and, ma'am, you are absolutely correct, our sole source of water, raw water, is the Potomac. We have two intakes in the Potomac River: one at Great Falls and one at Little Falls. The sewage interceptor leak was in between the two. And so the source of raw water coming into our treatment plant is pristine Potomac water right now, and we have shut off the Little Falls intake that is below the sewage spill.

The Corps is, under FEMA authorities and under EPA guidance, responding to assist as part of the Federal response. Our job right now, we have crews out there making sure that no additional stormwater interferes with what DC Water is doing to fix the interceptor. And we are also keeping additional stormwater from flowing to where the contaminated biosoil had accumulated after the break.

Ma'am, to your question directly on the feasibility study that is going on, to Mr. Telle's point, we need to get to quick, immediate decisions on what can we do now to make things better. So the expansion of the Dalecarlia Reservoir would add an additional 12 hours of supply. That is a 33-percent increase. That's achievable near term.

Ma'am, we are absolutely not taking off the table a look at, say, the Travilah—if I said that right—Quarry to look at a more longer term off-Potomac tertiary source of water. So that certainly is not off the table.

Ms. NORTON. Well, will you commit to expanding the scope of a study to identifying a secondary water source and additional water storage capability as required by Federal law?

General GRAHAM. Ma'am, absolutely. We are not limiting the scope of this study, but we are looking for early actionable elements that we can put to make the resiliency of the city's drinking water safer as soon as possible.

Ms. NORTON. What is the Federal Government's plan to provide emergency drinking water to DC in the event that the Potomac River becomes unusable for drinking water, as could have happened had a different portion of the Potomac interceptor collapsed last month?

General GRAHAM. Delegate Holmes Norton, that is absolutely an important question that we need to address. Our sole source is the Potomac, and as I said, we have built resiliency into that with an upstream intake and a downstream intake. But there is no primary source that is off of the Potomac.

We are looking to see if there are other interconnects we can possibly do with the other water providers around the city, but that is a question that we will continue to explore.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you. Last month, a section of the Potomac interceptor collapsed causing hundreds of millions of gallons of wastewater to flow into the Potomac River. Not only is this an environmental disaster, but it also underscored the urgency of a secondary water source.

Lieutenant General Graham, will the Corps provide DC Water financial assistance for the long-term rehabilitation of the Potomac interceptor?

Mr. TELLE. Ma'am, thank you for the question. And I will just say, this challenge in the Potomac River is one of the greatest ecological disasters of its type to ever occur in our Nation. We share your goal to ensure that the Washington, DC, water supply has the necessary redundancies given that the seat of Government is here in Washington. It is a critically important goal.

This is National Engineers Week, and I just want you to know, I have done a special message to congratulate all of our engineers on the occasion of National Engineers Week, and I did it from the Washington aqueduct because it is such an important facility.

And I do think that this disaster underscores the importance of this facility for our Nation. We are in the same position that you are, we agree, and I think it is a question of getting it right for the citizens, but also for the functioning of our Government.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you. And I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Crawford for 5 minutes.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the witnesses for being here.

In January of this year, you announced the removal of the Little Rock District commander, citing, quote, "a loss of confidence in his ability to command." This commander had assumed command less than 6 months prior to that decision.

As you both know, leading an Army Corps district involves significant responsibility, and I would say a pretty steep learning curve, particularly for an individual who may not have served in that capacity before. Given the relatively short tenure, it would be helpful to fully understand the context surrounding that decision.

Can you share some details regarding the factors that led to the removal of the Little Rock District commander?

Mr. TELLE. I am going to let General Graham address that question, Congressman Crawford. But I will just say, we talked with Congressman Burlison a few minutes ago. When we were in this hearing room in September, I announced to Congressman Burlison, in response to his question, that we had paused enforcement of encroachment at Table Rock Lake in order—we had to analyze the information that his office had sent us. Really we were doing case-work on behalf of one of the members of this committee. I let Congressman Burlison know that we had paused enforcement while we came up with a commonsense solution.

Two months later, I called down to the Little Rock District and said, hey, we are still hearing you haven't paused this activity. And I again directed them to pause this activity in accordance with the commitment I made to Congressman Burlison and other Members of Congress.

It wasn't until December when I was on the ground there in the Little Rock District that I was talking to one of Congressman Burlison's constituents in her driveway, and this individual told me that she was facing DOJ—heading to court under criminal accusations with DOJ as a result of the inability of the Little Rock District to follow the directions that General Graham gave them.

And it broke my heart. It was right before Christmas. And this constituent of Congressman Burlison's, who I happened to meet that day, let me know that General Graham's direction had not been followed and that she was headed to court with the Federal Government chasing her on criminal accusations related to encroachment enforcement that we viewed as overly heavy handed and not in the interest of the American public.

And I will let General Graham take it from there.

General GRAHAM. So, Representative Crawford, thank you for that question.

Just elaborate a bit on what Mr. Telle outlined. So it was my decision to remove the Little Rock District engineer from command, not as a result of any ethical or moral failings, but rather because I lost confidence in their ability to exercise sound judgment.

Mr. CRAWFORD. I am going to ask you to pause right there. So this was strictly the colonel's lack of judgment.

Was there any assessment of the staff there that played a role in the decision to continue after they had been given the direction to cease but they continued? Was there any action taken against those staff, those civilian staff?

General GRAHAM. So, Representative Crawford, the commander is ultimately responsible for everything that organization does. That is the bedrock principles of the United States Army, and that is what makes us the best in the world.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Right. Fair enough. But—

General GRAHAM [interrupting]. So the answer to your question, sir, is there were some additional individuals, many who have since retired, or—well, or have left Government service. We are right now moving in a seasoned second-year colonel who has commanded before, and he will take a look at all the individuals and all of the policies of the district to see if any additional actions need to take place or what needs to change on the ground.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Okay. Let me ask you this. So this is kind of where we run into a little bit of a gray area here, because the individuals in the office are civilians, long term, been there for many, many years. And then you have a colonel that comes in, he is brand new, he is 6 months on the job, and you issue a standdown.

Is that accurate, you issued a standdown on that particular operation on Table Rock Lake?

General GRAHAM. A pause on enforcement.

Mr. CRAWFORD. A pause?

Mr. TELLE. A pause on enforcement so that we could assess and come up with a commonsense solution.

Mr. CRAWFORD. And we have had similar instances, not on Table Rock Lake, but, say, for example, Bull Shoals, or Norfork Lake, or whatever, similar types of dynamics that have taken place.

So not faulting you at all on the cease enforcement notice. That is fair enough. The question I have is, when there is a violation of this nature, and it was so egregious that you removed the colonel from command, what further steps are taken to address this downstream of the colonel? Because he may be one of two or three that are actually Active Duty military present in that office. The rest are civilians.

I am curious what you do and how that chain of command works and how you address that problem going forward if you have another colonel that may be being led by the office staff to do one thing after he has been given another set of instructions, like a cease of enforcement. What are you going to do in the future? Are we going to continue to fire colonels or are we going to look at the office staff below the colonel?

General GRAHAM. Representative Crawford, it is a great question. And the way the, again, the Army works, we want to make sure that the chain of command is responsible for the change in that culture that should never have existed at Table Rock Lake. That is the chain of command's responsibility. It is the chain of command's responsibility to make sure that those folks underneath them aren't being overly harsh on the enforcement of these rules, as we saw at Table Rock Lake. That is their responsibility, and we are going to hold them accountable for it.

Mr. CRAWFORD. I appreciate that. The chairman has been very gracious in the latitude. I will say that Table Rock is not the only place that that has taken place. And I would also say that there is a cultural issue that needs to be addressed below the level of colonel.

General GRAHAM. Sir, acknowledged.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. DeSaulnier for 5 minutes.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to, first of all, thank you for being here in the Corps, and also my deep appreciation and respect for the Corps' work representing a district in the area for a long time at multiple levels of Government in the San Francisco Bay where the delta meets it. The Corps has traditionally been very engineering-like and professional to work with, irrespective of administrations; frequently, however, not so much today. And that is a concern for me that I want to bring up for Mr. Telle.

The number of authorized projects—and this is nationally, not just regionally—that aren't actually getting funding is a real problem because of the unique partnership that we have here with the State and local officials, particularly in sensitive areas like the one I get to represent.

So we have asked you, the Congress, in 2018, 2020, and 2024, to give us an update. So we just want to know why it is that these are authorized but funding has not been allocated. Given the pressure and the addition—I think I mention every year—is the addition to the change in weather, irrespective of how you believe that is happening, it is really important for our local and State officials to be able to do the engineering, fund these projects, and rely on you to get them out after they have been authorized.

Mr. TELLE. Congressman, you are correct. The current authorized but unfunded total of our portfolio is \$78 billion. That number is likely an underestimate of the work that has been authorized by this committee in cooperation with the Congress at large.

One thing is for sure, the demand on the services that the Corps of Engineers provides is higher than the supply that we can provide. But as we just had a discussion a few minutes ago about \$45

billion of funds that have been appropriated but unexpended, our problem is not that we need more money in every case. In most cases, we need to be better at executing that funding. We need to be better at delivering that funding. We need to be better at overcoming obstacles.

That is why the Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork initiative that we announced yesterday is going to empower our commanders. It is going to empower our commanders to identify which priorities are important for their district, and then we are going to hold them accountable year to year for executing against them. And that includes moving projects from authorization to feasibility, to engineering, to design, and then to construction, and eventually to operations and maintenance.

And so I share your frustration. That is my perspective on it.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Just, again, having been at this for a while, my hair has changed color, it is just frustrating. And engineering is engineering, and to the degree that we—we trust you to do the engineering side of it, but the project delivery, there sometimes is a lack of urgency, from my perspective. And if it needs permitting, if it is rational and makes it more efficient but doesn't—we can analyze what we may be losing from permit efficiency and not just opening up further problems. It should be completely bipartisan, and my experience on this committee is, it is.

So from an analytical standpoint, let us know what the problems are and just get down and figure out what it is to make sure we get this done.

Mr. TELLE. Sir, if I could just let you know my perspective. This is included in the Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork initiative that we rolled out yesterday. One of the odd things about the Civil Works mission is that the project funding that Congress provides to the Corps of Engineers is, then, also the funding that pays for the salaries of our district employees—

Mr. DESAULNIER [interposing]. Right.

Mr. TELLE [continuing]. Who are wonderful, in most cases. That means that if you—if this committee—or the Congress appropriates \$100 million for a project, \$33 million of that project, on average, is paying the salaries of our employees. In my view, this can create a perverse incentive to our employees, our districts, to continue projects long beyond when they could have delivered them because there is an incentive to always add a new bell or a new whistle, study something a little bit longer, that actually sustains the district, or to grab a project off the shelf that maybe isn't a strategically important project in order to sustain it.

And I think if we separate execution of project funding from the district salaries, I think it will remove that perverse incentive, and General Graham will be able to manage his organization in a way where delivery is the objective, not sustainment of districts.

Mr. DESAULNIER. I wish we could be more analytical about this. I represent an area in region 9, and when you cut EPA, that affects everybody. And if you get rid of really good employees—because as you said, not everybody is good in any organization—but we have lost really good employees in other agencies that affects your work, and you know that.

General Graham, just briefly, how do you prioritize these projects given everything we just said?

General GRAHAM. Representative DeSaulnier, thank you very much for that question.

If I could just quickly go back to your previous question, one of the initiatives under Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork is, let's get the project right at the beginning, which is your frustration. All these projects—we sometimes lose sight of this—there is a need out in somebody's community to fix a navigation project or there is a flooding challenge, right.

If we don't get the engineering upfront, this committee can't authorize to build this scope of project correctly. And if we don't get the engineering right upfront, we can't possibly give you a good cost estimate. And so that is what has bedeviled us on a lot of that \$78 billion is it's sitting at really immature engineering. So we haven't really told you what we are going to go build, and we certainly haven't made solid commitments on what the cost is going to be.

Prioritization on my end—to answer your second question, sir, directly—is finish what we start. Efficient funding for the work that we have been told to start is the best way to project delivery and delivery for your constituents.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Pou for 5 minutes.

Ms. POU. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, let me just say I want to thank both the Assistant Secretary and Lieutenant Graham for being here.

The work of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is deeply personal for the families and small businesses in the New Jersey Ninth Congressional District. My district includes communities along the Passaic River Basin, one of the most flood-prone watersheds in the United States. Towns like Paterson, Clifton, Edgewater, Lodi, and Elmwood Park have suffered from repeated and devastating flooding, needing our help. Heavy rains, higher tides, and coastal storms have caused repeated flooding erosions and new threats to infrastructure.

When these crises arise, we need to quickly communicate with the Army Corps. Sadly, recent politicizing efforts by the Pentagon have made quick and necessary communication all but impossible. Now, the Army Corps must get approval before even speaking with congressional offices. And here I thought this administration wanted to cut redtape instead of cause more.

Fortunately, WRDA gives us a unique opportunity to streamline the backlog of Army Corps projects and mitigate indemnification challenges that have left communities like mine waiting for far too long. That is why I introduced the CLEAN-UP Act, legislation that allows the Army Corps to remediate contaminated sediments under the CERCLA by using an EPA-approved cleanup plan developed with local partners for authorized water projects.

Assistant Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham, this question is for both of you. Do you believe an EPA-approved indemnification waiver for the Army Corps would reduce decades-old projects' timelines like the ones we have in the lower Saddle River, and if yes, can you please talk about how it would help?

Mr. TELLE. Congresswoman Pou, thank you for the question.

And I am not—I haven't been able to review your legislation yet. I am happy to take a look. I will say that a project in your district, New York-New Jersey HATS, which is a broad and important project, large in scope, we believe may be one of the first projects in the Nation to benefit from the rapid process that we are instilling as a result of Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork.

I will let General Graham hit the specifics of that, but we actually—we think we have a real opportunity in your district to start bringing a very complex project, breaking it up into the piece parts that are most important to your constituents, get to work, and then move on to the next steps.

Ms. POU. That is wonderful. Thank you, Secretary.

General GRAHAM. So, Representative Pou, certainly the East Riser Ditch Project, as a spinoff from the Hudson River and Tributaries Project, is a great one for us to get started to better provide flood protection to your constituents.

To the indemnification issue, we greatly appreciate you taking a look at that. So under some authorities, if there is a contaminated area, if we go in there, and, say, it is highly contaminated, we then potentially could become a principal responsible party. And that sometimes gets us just stuck, that we can't move what's needed. The contamination is not going to clean itself. And so I think exploring that topic would be a great way to clean up the environment more readily, and I think it is much needed.

Ms. POU. Thank you. Thank you so very much for that answer. Let me just say—and I believe you just mentioned some—the New York-New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study is also essential, as you just mentioned, for preparing the region for future storms and increasingly frequent flooding.

Congress, as you know, has directed the Corps in the last three WRDAs to leverage the HATS analysis to address all types of flooding for the entire study area. It also requires the Corps to advance interim projects that are smaller in size, lower in cost, and prioritize nature-based solutions to reduce risk in the near term.

Now, section 1343 of the 2024 WRDA directs the Corps to investigate and recommend projects that reduce flood risk in the HATS area. This includes examining individual flood risk and the combined effects of heavy rainstorms, storm surge, river flooding, sea level rise, and groundwater. This directive also emphasizes not just preventing damage, but producing new public benefits to habitat and natural systems, as well as community benefits like safety, resilience, and quality of life.

Assistant Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham, what actions does the Corps plan to take to implement the WRDA 2024 section 1343? Specifically, what is the Corps specifically doing to evaluate and recommend projects to address both individual and combined flood risk while maximizing benefits for the New York-New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study?

General GRAHAM. Representative Pou, I will take that start. We will have the East Riser Ditch Chief's Report over to this committee by—I am tracking right now—in June. I know the committee—

Ms. POU [interrupting]. This June?

General GRAHAM. This June.

Ms. POU. Okay.

General GRAHAM. For us to do just that. Large problem flooding throughout the Hudson Bay, Raritan Bay, and to break that down into chunks that we can get after. Certainly, East Riser Ditch is one we are going to recommend for approval in WRDA 2026.

Ms. POU. Thank you. Thank you so very much. It is vital that we work together on this.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Ezell for 5 minutes.

Mr. EZELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is good seeing both you guys here today, and I really appreciate all your hard work and the hard work of this committee. Thank you for letting me waive on.

Secretary Telle, non-Federal stakeholders in my district are often given cost estimates from the Cost Engineering Center of Expertise, but there is no transparency into how those costs were calculated.

Is there any way that we can address this in WRDA, or is this going to be an administrative priority?

Mr. TELLE. Well, Congressman, I share much of your frustration. You have been a great advocate for the Port of Gulfport. A lot of the work that you have done to identify this problem for us has caused us to relook and work with the non-Federal sponsor to get an answer that makes more sense. I think General Graham may have some news to share with you there. I am not going to get in front of him on that.

But this is a challenge. We have benefit-to-cost ratio, and both math problems, the numerator and the denominator, often confuse our non-Federal sponsor. So I think transparency, which is exactly what we did in your district with your non-Federal sponsor, was to sit down at the table, share our math, compare notes, and get to a result that everybody could stand behind.

Mr. EZELL. Thank you.

General?

General GRAHAM. Representative, so, absolutely, we are looking for more transparency, more partnership with our non-Federal partners, as its name implies. Somewhere in that mix, though, is this is a contract that is going to go out, and we have just got to be careful on some of our acquisition pricing to make sure that that information remains with the confidentiality that it deserves. But I think we can absolutely strike the right balance and become much more transparent.

Mr. EZELL. Thank you.

To follow up on that, Mr. Telle, is it an administrative priority to implement a stakeholder review of the cost estimation process? For example, Gulfport was given a cost estimate of \$40 million for its overhead dredging facilities, yet there is no appeal process to help us understand where that number came from, likely because the port and probably even the Mobile District don't believe it is accurate.

Mr. TELLE. Congressman Ezell, I share your frustration. Again, I think that this is something we can do better at. I think we can be more transparent. I think we can save our non-Federal sponsors

a lot of time and effort if we would share with them our math and work together. And that doesn't always mean they are going to get a BCR above 1, but we can do much better.

Mr. EZELL. Thank you. I want to turn to dredging just for a second and the dredging material. The gulf coast, as you know, could use dredging material almost anywhere.

I will ask both of you, is there any update on where the Corps is with implementing reusable dredging material?

Mr. TELLE. General Graham, I will let you take that one.

General GRAHAM. Representative Ezell, absolutely. Treating dredge material not as a waste product but as a valuable commodity is our absolute commitment. We had been doing about 30 percent what is called beneficial reuse, taking that mud or sand where it is in the way of our ships and moving it somewhere, usually in the environment where it will do something good. Our goal is to get to 70 percent. So we are kind of moving past 30 percent right now, and our goal is to get to 70 percent. And this committee has given us some additional authorities to do that, which we appreciate.

Mr. TELLE. I will just add, Congressman Ezell, that under Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork, one of the initiatives we have is to—a couple of the initiatives we have, one, encourage non-Federal sponsors, ports like the Port of Gulfport or others, to have a plan of what they do with their dredge material ahead of time so we are not confronting these issues in the middle of a project. We can incentivize and encourage that type of behavior.

And the other is to open up mitigation banking in a way that allows for more flexibility and better environmental outcomes when we do the work we have to do to dredge important ports like Gulfport.

Mr. EZELL. Thank you. Mr. Telle, we talked about your initiative to build infrastructure, not paperwork, and I want to say that this is the best news I have heard coming from the Corps in a long time.

I think everyone here would agree that the Army Corps needs to build or assist with building and move away from the burdensome bureaucratic process that has hindered States and local communities for decades. Anything I can do to help with this, please let us know. And thank you both for your time today and all your hard work.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Stanton for 5 minutes.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Assistant Secretary Telle and General Graham, thank you for being here today. I don't have to tell either of you how urgent water security challenges that Arizona faces, how bad they are, with national security impacts that go far beyond State lines, particularly with our leadership in the critical semiconductor industry. They demand quick Federal action. Yet Secretary Hegseth's October 2025 directive that all congressional communications from the Corps be funneled first through the Pentagon has interrupted regular communication and close collaboration between my office and the Corps.

Congress cannot be left in the dark on project implementation and delays in our districts. I trust our conversation today will be quickly followed by a commitment to schedule a meeting with myself and my staff.

Mr. TELLE. Sir, we are at your service anytime you want to talk to us.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much. I look forward to working closely together as WRDA 2026 progresses.

Arizona and the rest of the West have long suffered a historic drought, but we are operating in increasing uncertainty over the diminishing Colorado River. Negotiations over the river's future have not led to a lasting agreement between the Colorado River Basin States, despite a strong offer from Arizona, Nevada, and California. And worse, the Bureau of Reclamation's backup plan for the river threatens deep cuts to Arizona's water supplies.

Look, Arizona knows how we do more with less regarding water. Arizona's leadership in water conservation storage, particularly in high-tech irrigation and water recycling, means we already use less water now than we did 60 years ago, even with a growing population. But these looming cuts make continued support for environmental infrastructure assistance in the 2026 WRDA even more critical.

In Arizona, EI dollars support meaningful drought resiliency efforts in communities and Tribal nations. That's water lines, wastewater improvements, and aquifer recharge projects that will make a real difference as we make the most of limited Colorado River supplies.

But getting to groundbreaking has been beyond frustrating. Just one of two dozen funded projects under Arizona EI has started construction. That is unworkable. Unfortunately, we have seen lengthy environmental reviews put a hold on projects Arizona needs today. I appreciate that the Corps has streamlined its NEPA processes last June and utilizes more categorical exclusions for EI projects. But our water situation demands we work faster, making more improvements to expedite these reviews.

Assistant Secretary Telle, how is the Corps working to ensure that EI projects funded by Congress get out the door to communities in a timely and efficient manner? What additional resources or authorities, like expanded categorical exclusions or flexible funding reallocations, would help move these important projects forward?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman, thank you for the question. And I will just say, General Graham and I were recently in Phoenix together. This is a community that has been figuring it out when it comes to water since before Arizona was a State, before the United States of America was a country. So it is a community that understands this challenge.

With regard to NEPA, I will say, thank you for recognizing the reforms that we implemented last year to NEPA to follow the law. But as you said, it included categorical exclusions, which are almost like TSA PreCheck for environmental review. It makes things faster, clear rules of the road.

Here, this is what we are doing throughout Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork is reducing the regulatory challenges by im-

plementing smart policies that will allow projects like this to move ahead.

And obviously, when it comes to environmental infrastructure, it is a different type of project and something that we—frankly, it is not within the Corps' missions, the Corps' expertise of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. We are in the business of major flood control projects, major navigation projects, major aquatic ecosystem restoration projects.

General Graham and his team don't have particular expertise when it comes to municipal water systems. So one of the ways that we can actually deliver these projects more efficiently is by going out to the private sector folks who a municipality would otherwise contract with for this. And when Congress does provide money for this purpose, we believe that our private sector partners can quite often execute it much more efficiently than we can.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much. I was able to secure authorization for increased spending limit for Tres Rios in the Phoenix area in WRDA 2024, but it has been years with no substantive movement towards resuming construction. It is a critical project for my community.

Assistant Secretary Telle, will the Corps commit to prioritizing funding and staff resources to finally move Tres Rios forward?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman, I will defer to General Graham for an update on Tres Rios.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you.

General GRAHAM. So we understand how important that project is for you and your constituents and the fact that that has been ongoing for a while. I don't have the specifics with me, but we are happy to get back to you on when we are moving forward.

But what I do recall is that this last increment was going to be positively received. And we will get the exact specifics back to you. But it is on my radar as a very important project.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Fong for 5 minutes.

Mr. FONG. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Assistant Secretary Telle, Lieutenant General Graham, thank you for being here. Thank you for your leadership.

Secretary Telle, especially for you, thank you for coming to my district to see our water projects firsthand. Your personal attention, words can't describe how important that is to my community.

I was encouraged to see your announcement of the Corps' new initiative, Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork. I see this as an exciting, promising step towards delivering more cost-effective water resources projects on time and on budget.

As I have outlined to you, just in my district alone, there are a number of feasibility studies in the queue that are currently underway or hopefully will be currently underway.

How do you foresee this initiative delivering more projects to the construction phase in the near term?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman Fong, thank you for the question.

I mean, I will just say, as we were putting the finishing touches on Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork, there was a moment we had when we were out in your district and one of the local officials was talking about his hope that the investments that we

make today might benefit his grandchildren. And he had a realistic perspective on our program, which is it takes generations quite often to deliver things like Pine Flat Dam, which is important to your district.

I mean, it was a sad moment for me, because I don't—we have almost conditioned our stakeholders out in the field to think that our work is going to take generations, and it shouldn't be that way. A Member of Congress who gets elected to represent their district ought to have the ability to deliver results for their district while they are a Member of Congress, not decades later.

And so I just want to tell you how much our interaction out there in the Fresno area really informed our perspective on how important what we are doing is. And we believe this will benefit every project, including important projects like the raising of Pine Flat Dam.

Mr. FONG. Perfect. Well, that is music to my ears. And I certainly appreciate you acknowledging the importance of the raise of Pine Flat Dam.

In the last WRDA bill, Congress called for expediting certain studies, including this project, but have yet to discuss a cost-sharing agreement with our water districts.

If you could, could you provide an update on the Pine Flat Dam Reservoir raise project? Can we commence the feasibility study by 2028?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman, I don't have the latest on Pine Flat. I am not sure if General Graham does. But you can rest assured we will get you an answer immediately.

Mr. FONG. Perfect. Also, during our discussion in my district, we touched on the potential of the Corps continuing to use forecast-informed reservoir operations, otherwise known as FIRO, and incorporating airborne snow observation flights to better predict and manage snowpack, which is extremely important in California, especially with the snowstorms that just came through.

How does the Corps plan to incorporate advanced technologies into their water control strategies, especially in the Western United States?

Mr. TELLE. Well, Congressman Fong, what we learned when we were in your district recently was—we like to talk about FIRO. It is a great tool to squeeze as much water as we can, as much flood relief as we can out of our existing facilities by looking at weather patterns and making smart judgments about when to take risk.

What we really learned, though, from your district was that what is called SIRO, snow-informed reservoir operations, is even more important. And this is where we or our partners fly lidar flights above the mountains when there is no snow and then we fly lidar above the mountains when there is snow, and we make a determination about the snowpack.

And this actually is an area where we can do more and better to, again, continue to squeeze as much as we possibly can out of our existing infrastructure at a relatively low cost.

Mr. FONG. Well, thank you for that. As you know, water is life for us. I represent the food production capital of California. So we look forward to the partnership, incorporating this new technology, so that we can move more water in real time as we get it.

Lastly, as you saw in your visit, there is significant potential to provide additional water resources in California through the Redbank and Fancher Creek Project, which is also undergoing a feasibility study.

During your visit, I believe General Kelly offered his team's assistance in rescoping the existing study to incorporate a more streamlined and scalable decisionmaking scope to be aligned with the transformation initiative that you outlined, which would significantly reduce the budget of the existing study.

Can the Army Corps' leadership work with the Sacramento District in reducing the scope even more while remaining compliant with the Corps' new initiative here?

General GRAHAM. Representative Fong, if I could, going back to your earlier question, when you spoke to Pine Flat study, funding will be one of the needs to move that dam raise study forward.

Turning to Redbank and Fancher Creek, as General Kelly probably talked to you about, carving off the dry creek portion of that, taking a look, see what we can do with that dry reservoir to see if we can hold onto more floodwater longer and release that for managed aquifer recharge, certainly that is a bit of low-hanging fruit that we ought to work together on.

Mr. FONG. Well, these projects are certainly very important. I have run out of time. But, Secretary Telle, General Graham, thank you for your leadership, thank you for your partnership, and I look forward to working with you.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. COLLINS. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Carbajal for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Assistant Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham, for testifying today. When you went to my colleague Representative Fong's district, you should have come over the mountains to paradise, which is my district right on the coast. But I am sure his district was almost as beautiful as mine.

I represent the central coast of California, which encompasses a diverse portfolio of Corps projects that promote public safety, strengthen economic vitality, and support Coast Guard operations and national security.

I have always appreciated the work that the Corps does through Democratic or Republican administrations. You guys always do extraordinary work and oftentimes in a nonpartisan way, which is really what the American people expect.

Secretary Telle, for some reason, Santa Barbara Harbor dredging was left out of the President's budget for fiscal year 2026, despite its critical role in supporting the Coast Guard, national security, our regional economy, and coastal operational needs.

I sent you a letter on January 26th, following enactment of the energy and water appropriations bill, advocating on behalf of Santa Barbara Harbor and the \$4 million they need in the fiscal year 2026 Corps work plan. I bring this to your attention to ask that you give it your full and fair consideration. I hope I can get your commitment that you will take a look at this, and my office can follow up with your team on this. Perhaps you could come out to par-

adise, just like you did to Mr. Fong's district, to see some of these projects.

Secretary Telle, the Salinas Dam in San Luis Obispo County is currently owned by the Corps. San Luis Obispo County has indicated their interest in taking ownership of this project. We have had numerous conversations with the Corps, both the L.A. District and headquarters, regarding this ongoing—back to my first term in Congress in the 115th Congress, almost 10 years ago.

In the last bipartisan WRDA bill of 2024 enacted into law, I was able to successfully include a provision that allows the Corps to convey the Salinas Dam to the San Luis Obispo County government. This was section 1306 of the bill.

Can you provide me with an update on ongoing discussions with San Luis Obispo County regarding this conveyance?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman Carbajal, I looked at General Graham. He does not have an update on that. We commit to get you one here before the end of the day.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Great.

Mr. TELLE. And I will say that Congressman Fong's district is beautiful, and I hope to visit yours. I also got to say, we—the manager of Pine Flat Dam is the son of a citrus farmer, and we managed to find out where there are some oranges and some clementines and some lemons while we were out there. And I got to recommend them to everybody. It is the best thing we ever tasted.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Well, that is because you haven't tasted the wine in my country, the central coast.

Should we make the law more clear as it relates to the conveyance language that I got in the bill to help?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman Carbajal, I am not aware of any need we have related to legislation, but we will get you an update by the end of the day.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. Let me just say that it feels like we have just been going in circles on this issue. So to the extent that you could give it your attention and help us resolve a clear path forward, I would greatly appreciate it.

Secretary Telle, as you are probably aware, construction of the Lower Mission Creek Project in Santa Barbara has been authorized since the year 2000 and was later amended in 2007 to reflect the cost share between the Federal and non-Federal partners.

Despite this project being shovel-ready, our local government having invested over \$18 million in non-Federal resources, Federal dollars have not been made available.

I understand the Corps has recently updated the principles, requirements, and guideline procedures to more accurately capture total public value and taxpayer return on Federal investments.

Will these new standards help with a positive BCR score for the lower Mission Creek?

Mr. TELLE. Congressman, we just had an outstanding conversation with Congressman Ezell about this same issue. We believe that—I believe that we can do more in terms of providing transparency to non-Federal sponsors in relation to the costs and benefits and how we calculate them.

We don't need to be doing this math in a black box. We need to be sharing it and making sure everybody is in agreement, even if the non-Federal sponsor disagrees.

But I would anticipate that the updated guidance that you mentioned will benefit projects like this one, because we are always able to take into consideration more than just the raw economic numbers and consider other factors.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you very much. You have a standing invitation to visit my district anytime. I know traditionally, administrations make visits to only Members of their parties, but I sure hope you will consider coming to my district.

Mr. TELLE. Sir, I am happy to do it. We have been out to California numerous times since I have been in this role, and I look forward to getting back out there.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Great. Thank you so much.

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.

Are there any further questions from any members of the subcommittee who have not been recognized?

All right. Seeing none, the chairman is going to indulge because he can, because he is the chairman. I just thought I would take a couple of minutes.

As I sat through this whole hearing and listened, I think you all understand a little bit of the issues, and that's the fact that people are always asking about the same projects over and over and over that haven't been authorized or the studies aren't complete.

And as a small business person, been in small business all my life, it is nice to see that sometimes you take a look at just what the problem is. And it may not be bad people, it may be the process. And you take an inwardly look, and it is exciting to see that both of you are doing that, and to just look at the process maybe. Maybe we are looking at the process wrong so that we can speed up things for Mr. Carbajal, who probably would love to come to Georgia to get some good barbecue. But it is good to see that.

And even though this will be my last WRDA bill as a Member of the House—or I won't be at the next one, anyway—it is exciting. I would love to see just how many of these projects that people just come in and sit down and say, thank you, it is completed, or it is in the appropriation phase.

So, with that, I appreciate you all coming today. Thank you for your testimony.

And this subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:24 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

Letter of February 24, 2026, from Brandon Farris, Executive Vice President, Steel Manufacturers Association, to Hon. Mike Collins, Chairman, and Hon. Frederica S. Wilson, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Mike Collins

FEBRUARY 24, 2026.

The Honorable MIKE COLLINS,
Chairman,
Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC 20515.

The Honorable FREDERICA S. WILSON,
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COLLINS AND RANKING MEMBER WILSON:

The Steel Manufacturers Association appreciates the opportunity to provide a statement for the record for the Subcommittee's hearing, entitled "Proposals for a Water Resources Development Act of 2026—Administration Priorities."

SMA stands for American steel. Our members operate in communities across the country and range from the nation's largest publicly traded steel producers to single-facility, family-owned businesses. Steel manufacturers generate \$149.4 billion in annual economic impact, employing 87,266 men and women in community-sustaining jobs at an average annual wage of \$142,730. They create the essential material that underpins American industry and national security.

Steel manufacturers are investing in American's communities, deploying \$25 billion in capital here in the U.S. to modernize, expand, and construct facilities. This is made possible by smart trade policies promulgated in 2018 and continued on a bipartisan basis that recognize the importance of domestic steel manufacturing to America's economy and national security.

Continued federal support for infrastructure rehabilitation and construction is essential to capitalize on the investments made by American steel producers, inducing demand and supporting job creation. From surface transportation reauthorization to WRDA, Congress has a tremendous opportunity in the near term to ensure America continues to build, and to build with American steel. Furthermore, modernizing infrastructure will help ensure more efficient transportation supply chains for steel manufacturers and the entire economy.

SMA applauds the Subcommittee for beginning consideration of WRDA 2026. As development of the legislation begins, we respectfully urge members to focus on the Army Corps of Engineers core mission areas of navigation and flood risk management. Importantly, this recognizes the need for rehabilitation of aging inland waterways infrastructure, the failure of any project of which would be highly disruptive. We also encourage maintaining Build America, Buy America policies critical to a strong domestic steel industry and the family-supporting jobs that come with it. Our industry built America, and BABA provisions ensure those same jobs can continue to answer the call for all of our nation's needs.

Steel manufacturers are committed to working with the Subcommittee and your colleagues to continue biennial development and passage of WRDA legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

BRANDON FARRIS,
Executive Vice President, Steel Manufacturers Association.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. J. French Hill, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Arkansas, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Mike Collins**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for the opportunity to submit a Statement for the Record for the hearing entitled *Proposals for a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2026*. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my comments for consideration to your committee and witnesses.

As you all likely know, I recently submitted a WRDA proposal requesting that the Little Rock Army Corps of Engineers conduct a Reallocation Study of Greers Ferry Lake concurrent with the ongoing White River Basin Study (WRBS). Conway is one of the fastest growing areas in Arkansas. Since 2000, in fact, Conway's population has grown 61%, and it is projected to continue to grow throughout the next decade.

Unfortunately, population growth is estimated to outpace water supply in the next decade. As such, without additional water storage allocations, parts of central Arkansas may have to deny industrial growth and economic development to ensure adequate drinking supplies for constituents. In anticipation of this need, Community Water System (CWS) and Conway Corp are collaborating on a regional water intake structure on Greers Ferry Lake, a transmission line to the northeast area of Conway, and construction of a new water treatment plant, however, they have yet to have confirmation on a water relocation study so that they can properly prepare for this need as they construct. In the meantime, Conway Corp and CWS are still paying the Little Rock Army Corps for water storage allocations that they cannot use.

WRDA specifically authorizes studies and projects that include navigation, flood control, and ecosystem restoration. Congress also provides the United States Corps of Engineers with the authority to address water supply needs, as noted above. While I understand there has been some concern about conducting the two studies concurrently, the Little Rock Army Corps conducted a water supply storage reallocation study in 2017, which released the water in 2020.

Given the need, I voice my support for including language in WRDA, requesting completion of a reallocation study on Greers Ferry Lake, notwithstanding or separate from Section 729 of the White River Basin Study. Should inclusion of this critical language be accepted, I also invite strong consideration that the Committee provide funding in the fiscal year (FY) 2026 work plan following FY 2026 enactment.

Thank you for your consideration. These items are important to my home state of Arkansas. I stand at the ready to work with the Committee and lend my support for these matters.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Brian J. Mast, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Florida**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding today's hearing on proposals for the Water Resources Development Act of 2026, and thank you to Assistant Secretary Telle and Lieutenant General Graham for being with us.

WRDA is not just another infrastructure bill. It is Congress' directive to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on how to carry out its civil works mission. WRDA is the blueprint for how we manage water, protect ecosystems, support commerce, and restore communities. For my district in Florida, the decisions we make here in this committee have a direct impact on quality-of-life. The people in this room have the privilege of determining whether our rivers are healthy, whether our estuaries can survive, and whether our local economies have the tools to thrive.

For Florida's 21st district, the health of the St. Lucie River and Estuary, the Indian River Lagoon, and the broader Everglades system are intertwined with tourism, fishing, small businesses, and property values. During harmful discharges from Lake Okeechobee, the consequences are immediate—everything from lost revenue, damaged ecosystems, and public health risks are on the table.

In WRDA 2026, I am focusing on durable and clear priorities.

First, we must accelerate Everglades restoration and take full advantage of new infrastructure, like the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir, so that water is stored and sent south—through Everglades National Park—instead of unnaturally discharged to our coastal estuaries.

Second, we need greater accountability in water management decisions. When operational deviations occur, Congress and affected Americans deserve clear reporting on where water was sent, what environmental impacts resulted, and if better alternatives should have been utilized.

Third, we must move toward ecologically-based standards for facilitating the flow of freshwater into our estuaries. A successful outcome would come from real, quan-

tative environmental recording—the health of seagrass, oysters, nutrient loading, and harmful algal bloom risk are all calculable. Modeling thresholds are no longer enough.

Fourth, we should prioritize projects like muck removal in the Indian River Lagoon that produce specific water quality improvements, and see that any taxpayer dollar that goes toward restoration delivers results.

And finally, WRDA should modernize how the Corps operates. New strategies like expanding the use of private-sector design services, embracing digital tools to streamline reviews, improving dredge fleet transparency, and eliminating any unnecessary costs on non-federal partners. If we want projects done right and done fast, we have to remove outdated constraints.

WRDA 2026 is a unique opportunity to strengthen infrastructure, protect commerce, and restore America's most valuable ecosystems. With a clear plan, measurable standards, and increased accountability, communities like mine will experience real relief and improvement.

Letter of February 27, 2026, from Colonel Brandon L. Bowman, District Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, to Hon. Brian J. Mast, Member of Congress, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Brian J. Mast

FEBRUARY 27, 2026.

The Honorable BRIAN MAST,
*United States House of Representatives,
 2182 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE MAST:

This is in response to your letter dated February 20, 2026, regarding the Fort Pierce, Florida Shore Protection Project (SPP). It provides the requested information on renourishment frequency, shoreline stabilization measures, and project timelines.

Regarding the frequency of renourishments for the current coastal storm risk management project, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducts beach renourishment for the Fort Pierce, Florida SPP on an approximate two-year cycle. The project was authorized by Section 301 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-298), as amended. To confirm, the last two renourishments were conducted April–May 2021 and March–April 2023. The next renourishment for the Federal project is scheduled for March–May 2026. The approximate two-year frequency did not change after April 2023, but the Corps did not receive bids within the awardable range when the renourishment solicitation was issued in 2025.

Under Section 203 of WRDA 1986, as amended, the non-Federal sponsor (the St. Lucie County Erosion District) conducted a feasibility study to address hurricane and coastal storm damages in the area of Fort Pierce. The Recommended Plan includes beach and dune renourishment along 7,000 feet of shoreline with construction of shoreline stabilization structures at the north end of the existing Federal project, consisting of five T-head groins, a T-head weir, and a detached breakwater.

In Section 403(a) of WRDA 2020, Congress provided conditional authorization for construction of the Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida Project based on the Section 203 study. The Energy and Water Bill of 2026 provided the project \$500,000 in investigations through Congressionally Directed Spending to initiate the Pre-Construction Engineering and Design Phase, with a design agreement anticipated to be executed in FY 2026. Regarding your second inquiry, T-head groins can improve sand retention and extend the time between renourishments when erosion rates are high. However, T-groins redistribute rather than eliminate erosion and require careful siting and design to avoid downdrift impacts. They are generally most effective in closed or terminal beach systems and are more challenging to implement along open-coast shorelines. The Corps and non-Federal sponsor will address the challenges associated with T-groins during design.

Regarding your third inquiry, contract award to initiate construction is anticipated in August 2029, with construction in 2030–2031. This construction timeline is subject to receipt of future appropriations for construction.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact me or your staff may contact Julie M. Treichel.

Sincerely,

BRANDON L. BOWMAN,
Colonel, District Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District.

APPENDIX

POST-HEARING QUESTION FOR THE RECORD TO HON. ADAM R. TELLE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, FROM HON. MIKE COLLINS

Question 1. Assistant Secretary Telle, could you please provide an update on the implementation of Section 1154a of the Water Resources Development Act of 2018, which requires the Assistant Secretary of the Army to create a searchable, downloadable database of all unfunded projects?

ANSWER. The Corps is working to identify the information requested in Section 1154(a), which amended Section 1001 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (33 U.S.C. 579a). After providing this information to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Committees on Appropriations, the Corps will post the lists described in subsection (b)(2)(A) of Section 1001 in a downloadable, searchable, and sortable format on a publicly accessible website.

POST-HEARING QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD TO HON. ADAM R. TELLE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, FROM HON. ERIC A. “RICK” CRAWFORD

Question 1. Secretary Telle, over the last few months, my staff and I have experienced increasing difficulty obtaining timely responses from Army Corps District offices that operate within my district. My district includes numerous Army Corps projects spanning three Districts and two Divisions, and when my staff requests basic status updates, answers can often take well over a week. I have been led to believe that this delay is due to larger Department of Defense regulations limiting personnel from outside the Office of the Legislative Affairs speaking directly with members of Congress or Congressional staff.

As you know, timely communication is important to ensure we can effectively support these projects. During the WRDA priority submission process, it was challenging to connect with District leadership to better understand project needs and ongoing efforts. Improved communication would benefit both Congress and the Corps as we work toward shared goals. I want to ensure that we do not encounter similar challenges during the FY 2027 Appropriations process. We all share the goal of delivering results to the American people efficiently and effectively. I want to note that you have publicly stated on multiple occasions the importance of reducing bureaucratic delays and cutting red-tape. I appreciate that focus and believe strong communication between District offices and Congress is part of achieving that objective.

Can you provide assurance that communication between the Army Corps Districts and Members of Congress and their staff will remain timely and fully accessible during the WRDA 2026 and FY 2027 Appropriations processes?

ANSWER. I can assure you that I am committed to providing timely responses to Members of Congress.

Question 2. Five years ago, the Army Corps published in an April 2021 guidance document (Engineer Circular No. 1165–2–218) that it intended to establish and carry out federal levee safety program and performance metrics relating to federal levee safety program auditing; and independent peer reviews of federal levee program activities and achievements.

Can you inform me where we stand on key performance indicators, auditing, and independent reviews for the Army Corps' levee safety program?

ANSWER. In a memorandum dated September 15, 2023, the Corps established performance indicators to guide and monitor the effectiveness of its actions under the levee safety program. These metrics are directly aligned with the activities and concepts described in Engineer Circular 1165-2-218.

The programmatic audits will be scheduled on a rotating basis, with an audit conducted for two divisions each year. Four of the Corps' eight divisions have participated in these programmatic audits thus far, either as part of the Army Organizational Inspection Program (which is a comprehensive process for coordinating various reviews to identify, prevent, and eliminate problem areas) or through a separate process. The remaining division audits have not yet occurred.

It is still the intent of the Corps to initiate an independent review of the Corps Levee Safety Program; however, one has not been conducted yet.

POST-HEARING QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD TO HON. ADAM R. TELLE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, FROM HON. JARED HUFFMAN

Question 1. What is the current status and anticipated completion date of the Coyote Valley Dam Raise feasibility study? Please identify any remaining barriers to completion.

ANSWER. The study received \$500,000 in FY 2024; the Corps had obligated just under half of that amount by the end of November 2025 to prepare for the Alternatives Milestone Meeting, and the project is currently under review.

Question 2. What alternatives are being evaluated, including dam crest raise options, modified outfalls, or turbidity control infrastructure?

ANSWER. Alternatives considered include the following: dam raise; raise and modify spillway; modify outlet works (pulling from different elevations, part of a dam raise); addition of a secondary outlet; reallocate water to different uses; modify water control manual; and dam notching.

Question 3. What is the Corps' current assessment of turbidity impacts downstream of Coyote Dam on Chinook salmon and steelhead, and how frequently is turbidity monitored?

ANSWER. In 2023, the Russian River Turbidity Assessment and Proposed Plan was published as part of the Coyote Valley Dam-Lake Mendocino Water Manual Control Update's final Environmental Assessment. This plan documents the long-term trend of increased turbidity in the Russian River in the last 20 years, with no clear seasonal patterns, and several possible contributing sources, including: 1) erosion during rainstorms; 2) turbid water from the Eel River being diverted into the East Fork of the Russian River; 3) turbid water persisting in Lake Mendocino due to slow settling of suspended sediment; 4) elevated flow releases from Lake Mendocino causing increased erosion downstream; 5) sand and gravel mining; 6) other human activities causing increased erosion, such as road construction and logging; 7) algal blooms; and 8) entrainment of fine sediments by release gates.

An assessment of turbidity impacts to the species downstream requires observations over a period of years. This work is ongoing as part of the 2025 Russian River Watershed Water Supply and Channel Maintenance project Biological Opinion (Russian River Biological Opinion). Turbidity is monitored continuously at multiple locations as prescribed in the opinion.

Question 4. What operational changes are under consideration to meet turbidity thresholds and reduce impacts on listed species?

ANSWER. There are no turbidity thresholds for the project. The only recent operational changes implement the principles of forecast informed reservoir operations (FIRO), related to flood control releases, within the updated water control manual.

Question 5. How does requiring additional department approval before district or field offices communicate with congressional offices improve project delivery, technical accuracy, or mission execution?

ANSWER. It is important that all communications to the Congress related to the Army Civil Works Program are accurate, reflect Corps policy, and are consistent with Administration guidance.

Question 6. Has the Corps conducted any analysis of how this policy may affect the timeliness of responses to Congress regarding feasibility studies, project implementation, or technical assistance?

ANSWER. A process has been established that includes having dedicated staff reviewing and approving congressional inquiries and other requests.

POST-HEARING QUESTION FOR THE RECORD TO HON. ADAM R. TELLE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, FROM HON. HILLARY J. SCHOLTEN

Question 1. On September 25, 2024, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs forwarded to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness the Army Corps' SECOND request to establish a special salary rate for Soo Lock operators to reverse the 19% pay cut they are taking due to a quirk in Army Corps regulations.

Assistant Secretary Telle, what response has the Army Corps received regarding the status of this request? Since these Soo Lock employees have been enduring pay cuts since 2022, would the Corps support a solution for these employees through WRDA 2026?

ANSWER. The Corps requested a Special Salary Rate (SSR) for Soo Lock and Dam employees on August 4, 2022. The SSR request is under review.

POST-HEARING QUESTION FOR THE RECORD TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM H. "BUTCH" GRAHAM, JR., CHIEF OF ENGINEERS AND COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, FROM HON. MIKE COLLINS

Question 1. The inland navigation industry pays for 25 percent of the costs for lock and dam projects through a diesel fuel tax. General Graham, what is the Corps doing to respond to industry's request to have a single dedicated person to oversee inland waterways construction as a program?

ANSWER. The Corps has made the following changes to the delivery model:

- In October 2025, the Corps established an Engineering and Construction (E&C) Directorate that reports to the Chief of Engineers. This new directorate will provide centralized oversight for the construction programs. The Corps is also implementing a lifecycle delivery approach and applying Mega Project delivery principles to new lock design and construction to ensure the appropriate level of governance and oversight.
- We have clarified and consolidated design and construction responsibilities to improve efficiency and standardization. The Inland Navigation Design Center (INDC) is the designer of record for all new lock and dam work. The INDC is empowered to establish standardized designs and common work processes and is responsible for cost estimates and construction schedules. We are increasing staff in the INDC in accordance with the INDC Framework Report. We have established production centers in Rock Island and Pittsburgh districts that are responsible for INDC resourcing support for all major rehabilitations and new construction.
- To further improve project delivery and avoid rework, the Corps is implementing the following design process changes:
 - The design completion level prior to congressional authorization will be 35%. After the project is authorized, the Corps will complete 100% design before starting construction.
 - To allow for a more thorough process, design work will begin 3 to 4 years before construction is scheduled to start.
 - An enhanced review process is being implemented for all designs.

We believe these changes are creating a more standardized and efficient approach to the inland waterways construction program and will improve execution.

POST-HEARING QUESTION FOR THE RECORD TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM H. "BUTCH" GRAHAM, JR., CHIEF OF ENGINEERS AND COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, FROM HON. ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD

Question 1. Section 221 of the Flood Control Act of 1970 is one of many Congressional requirements in water resources law emphasizing the Corps' collaboration with local levee owners. However, significant changes on levee evaluation, including

use of probabilistic methods on things like the accreditation of levees, are increasing Federal agency leverage at the expense of local decision making and input. I am concerned that under the guise of modernity, the Corps has replaced joint Corps-local sponsor levee inspections.

How has the Corps' shift to a probabilistic levee evaluation approach, which relies on internal models and data, rather than the prior deterministic method, impacted the level of meaningful collaboration and shared decision making with local levee owners, and what measures are in place to ensure local input influences risk assessment and final outcomes?

ANSWER. Risk assessments supplement the joint Corps-local sponsor inspections. Together, the levee inspections and risk assessments enable the levee sponsor to understand more fully the condition of its levee and its effect on the overall flood risk. Levee sponsors are essential members of the risk assessment team and are the ultimate intended users of the results. The goal is to equip levee sponsors with the information and tools to enable them to understand and effectively manage their risk.

For risk assessments, levee sponsors provide input on unique levee records; maintenance and emergency activities; community land use trends; other community participants; validation of results, and actionable recommendations. The Corps requires notifying levee sponsors at least 30 days prior to the start of any risk assessment. Levee sponsors can decide their level of participation in the analysis. They are involved in reviewing the results and developing any recommended actions. Following this process, the levee sponsor may decide on its own to reduce its flood risk through a series of steps over time, based on the costs and benefits of the potential actions.

Deterministic methods and standards are part of the levee evaluation. A probabilistic approach, also known as risk assessments, supplements deterministic methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the levee. Risk assessments use probabilistic analyses to better understand ways a specific levee may fail and the resulting potential impacts. For example, one concern expressed by some levee owners is that there should not be a one-size fits all approach to levees. Risk assessments take into account the differences in flood loading (long duration floods versus flash floods); levee materials (sandy versus clay); past performance; and assets behind the levee (urban versus agricultural). This more textured type of analysis is needed to enable levee sponsors to identify options and prioritize their actions based on what is most cost-effective and impactful to address their flood risk; and to help them plan and adapt their operational and emergency action processes.

POST-HEARING QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM H. "BUTCH" GRAHAM, JR., CHIEF OF ENGINEERS AND COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, FROM HON. LAURA FRIEDMAN

Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Project

Question 1. Please clarify why "federal funding is not available" to support the completion of the PACR for the WRDA 2026 timeline.

Does the Corps simply not have funds available? Has the Corps depleted the existing authorized funding for this purpose? Or, does the Corps have funds available that could be used for this project, but the Corps does not believe these funds are appropriately authorized to be used?

ANSWER. The project is under review.

Question 2. Lt. Gen. Graham addressed concerns with "rising costs" associated with completing this project. How does the Corps plan to address any additional costs that accrue as a result of the existing delay with the PACR and any further delay to the project resulting from Corps inaction?

ANSWER. The concerns expressed with "rising costs" are not related to the time-frame for completing the PACR. Cost increases would be addressed in the PACR.

Question 3. Please elaborate on the "concerns about the viability of the project". What specific aspects of the project are the Corps concerned about?

ANSWER. Project costs have increased by \$2 billion; Lands, Easements, Right of Ways, Relocations, and Dredged Material Disposal Area costs are approximately \$3 billion. Construction costs have increased due to inflation, and contingency has increased from 37% to 51% based on current level of design and remaining risks. An additional concern is the relocation of Reach 8, the LA Transit Center (LATC). Union Pacific Railroad continues to make significant capital investments in the LATC and states there is no viable relocation site. As the project's largest environ-

mental benefits come from Reach 8, this is a significant concern to the project's environmental restoration outcomes.

Question 4. In communication with my office, the Corps communicated that the "area in question is important to the community" and that "environmental concerns" have resulted in delays to the PACR completion. I agree that this area is vital to the community, can you please elaborate on the specific environmental concerns that need to be addressed to move forward with this project?

ANSWER. It is important that we get the engineering right. To implement this multibillion-dollar project, the Corps would look at dividing the project into separable elements for early actionable implementation. Each element must have justified restoration outputs (33 U.S.C. 2213(f)). Providing the most restoration output for the investment is an environmental concern. An additional environmental concern is the relocation of Reach 8, the LA Transit Center (LATC). This is uncertain. Union Pacific Railroad continues to make significant capital investments in the LATC and states there is no viable relocation site. As the project's largest environmental benefits come from Reach 8, this is a significant concern to the project's environmental restoration outcomes.

Question 5. Lt. Gen. Graham also spoke of the need to balance the flood risk management purposes of the LA River with environmental concerns associated with the project. What aspects of the project does the Corps believe will interfere with flood risk management? How can the non-federal sponsor work with the Corps to ensure any concerns about the ability to mitigate flood risk is addressed by the project while also supporting the ecosystem restoration needs of the area?

ANSWER. One of the biggest risks to successful completion of this project is the complexity of ecosystem restoration measures coupled with a successfully functioning flood risk management (FRM) project. The engineering must be right to maintain the level of FRM for the LA community. Currently, the project is at a 10% level of design maturity. Design efforts including hydrologic and hydraulic modeling and Geotech basis of design for the system are needed to increase confidence in the FRM project's continued function and the ability to design successful restoration features. The FRM project is complex, going from an earthen channel in the north to a concrete trapezoidal channel to the south with associated variations in flow regimes. For example, In-Channel work can't be accomplished on Reach 7 without Reach 8 out-of-channel work. The non-Federal sponsor can help by supporting the required system Design Maturity efforts.

Question 6. The Corps has also highlighted the difficulty the non-federal sponsor has had in securing required real estate. As you know, real estate is expensive in the Los Angeles area, and those costs will continue to rise the longer the Corps delays the completion of the PACR. How does the Corps plan to account for rising real estate costs associated with Corps delays while working towards PACR completion?

ANSWER. Real estate costs represent the most significant financial risk to the project, accounting for over two-thirds of the total estimated cost. These costs have escalated by 175% since the 2016 authorization. While the Corps adjusts for this by applying local inflation indices in Section 902 calculations, this method remains reactive to market changes. The primary strategy to mitigate this risk is for non-Federal sponsors to pursue early property acquisitions. This proactive measure will lock in prices and minimize the financial risk associated with market inflation.

Question 7. In Corps communication with my office, the Corps stated that "based on current estimates, we would need additional funding to complete the PACR." How much additional funding is necessary to complete the PACR? Please provide a breakdown of the costs associated with the work already done on the PACR as well as a detailed estimate on the additional funds necessary to complete the PACR.

ANSWER. The project is under review.

Question 8.a. Please elaborate on the additional costs associated with "advancing the design maturity of the entire project to 35%." How much additional funding would be necessary with advancing the design maturity of this project?

ANSWER. The project is under review.

Question 8.b. Additionally, our office is not familiar with any PACRs that have been subject to the 35% design maturity requirement. As the LA River project is already a fully authorized project, can you explain why the PACR is subject to this requirement?

ANSWER. The current cost estimates for the project exceed the authorized limit under section 902 of WRDA 1986. The requirement of a 35% level of design includes projects subject to a PACR to deliver studies that are both timely and fiscally re-

sponsible, ultimately providing more confidence in the cost estimates and project outcomes.

Question 9. Finally, the Oct. 15 Department of War directive limiting Corps communication with Congressional Offices has resulted in several weeks long delays in communication with my office on this project. At the Feb. 24, 2026, hearing before the Water Subcommittee, Lt. Gen. Graham stated that any “clunkiness” associated with this directive is his responsibility to iron out. Please provide a list of action items the Corps can commit to taking to speed up communication with Congressional offices.

ANSWER. It is important that all communications to the Congress related to the Army Civil Works Program are accurate, reflect Corps policy, and are consistent with Administration guidance. A process has been established that includes having dedicated staff reviewing and approving congressional inquiries and other requests.

POST-HEARING QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD TO HON. ADAM R. TELLE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, AND LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM H. “BUTCH” GRAHAM, JR., CHIEF OF ENGINEERS AND COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, FROM HON. ERIC A. “RICK” CRAWFORD

Question 1. Thank you for your response to my question regarding the removal of the Little Rock District Commander. Your answers have provided greater insight into the factors that led to Colonel Caukin’s removal. In addition to the questions posed during the Subcommittee hearing, I have additional questions for further clarification.

Question 1.a. My understanding is that the Southwestern Division had been fully briefed and engaged on the issue at Table Rock Lake for some time. Can you describe how oversight at the Division level was exercised and detail the steps your office took in relation to leadership at the Southwestern Division?

ANSWER. The Southwestern Division (SWD) maintained continuous awareness of issues associated with shoreline management and real estate actions at Table Rock Lake. Division-level oversight is exercised through established supervisory channels and direct engagement with District leadership. Corps Headquarters engaged with SWD leadership through senior leader touchpoints.

Question 1.b. On what date did the Southwestern Division and/or the Little Rock District receive guidance from USACE Headquarters regarding Section 1323 of the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-272)?

Question 1.b.i. Please provide my office with the full and complete guidance regarding WRDA 2024 that was communicated to the Southwestern Division and the Little Rock District.

ANSWER to Questions 1.b. and 1.b.i. Corps Headquarters began implementation of the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 immediately following enactment of the legislation. Section 1323 was identified as not needing further implementation guidance.

Question 1.c. Secretary Telle stated during the September 2025 Water Resources and the Environment Subcommittee Hearing that the Army Corps paused all enforcement actions on residents around Table Rock Lake. He mentioned that two months after this pause was directed, he contacted the Little Rock District telling them that he was still hearing that they had not paused this activity and again directed them to pause the activity in accordance with the commitment he made to Congressman Burlison and other Members of Congress.

Can you provide me with documentation directing the official pause on enforcement and the date on which both directives were provided by your office to the Little Rock District?

ANSWER. Communication with the Little Rock District occurred through the chain of command and reiterated the requirement to halt enforcement actions to ensure alignment with congressional intent and policy review.

POST-HEARING QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD TO HON. ADAM R. TELLE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, AND LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM H. "BUTCH" GRAHAM, JR., CHIEF OF ENGINEERS AND COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, FROM HON. GREG STANTON

FY 2026 Arizona Environmental Infrastructure Projects:

Question 1. The fiscal year 2026 Energy and Water Appropriations bill included \$2.55 million I secured for the Arizona environmental infrastructure program. As you finalize the work plan, I ask that you allocate these funds to two critical projects in Arizona for the city of Goodyear and Santa Cruz County. The city of Goodyear would use the funds to increase the recharge capacity of its aquifer, allowing it to more effectively manage its groundwater. Santa Cruz would use the funds for repairs to the Nogales Wash to improve surface water drainage and stormwater runoff in the region.

Lt. Gen. Graham and Assistant Secretary Telle, will you commit to working with me to fund these two important projects with the resources included in the appropriations bill?

ANSWER. The \$2.55 million in Community Project Funding for the Arizona Environmental Infrastructure program in the FY26 Energy and Water appropriations only specified the State of Arizona. Therefore, funding will be allocated in the Corps FY26 Work Plan to projects in the State of Arizona eligible under the Section 595 programmatic authority based on available technical information: capability for a useful increment of work that aligns with the amount of funding appropriated, Non-Federal Sponsor readiness, and no legal impediments. The technical information for the above-referenced projects will be considered along with other eligible projects.

Drought Resiliency and Arizona Environmental Infrastructure Projects:

Question 2. Arizona and the rest of the West have long suffered historic drought, but we are operating under increasing uncertainty over the diminishing Colorado River. Negotiations over the River's future haven't led to a lasting agreement between the Colorado River Basin States—despite a strong offer from Arizona, Nevada and California. And worse, the Bureau of Reclamation's backup plan for the River threatens deep cuts to Arizona's water supplies.

Arizona knows we need to do more with less water. Arizona's leadership in water conservation and storage, particularly in high-tech irrigation and water recycling, means we're already using less water now than we did 60 years ago, even with a growing population. But these looming cuts make continued support for environmental infrastructure (EI) assistance in the 2026 WRDA even more critical.

But getting to groundbreaking has been beyond frustrating. Just one of two-dozen funded projects under the Arizona EI has started construction.

What is the Corps' current assessment of the Arizona project backlog? What are the Corps doing to prioritize drought-resilience EI projects in Arizona and across the West?

ANSWER. Under its Arizona EI program, the Corps has 20 project agreements. Subject to the availability of funds, the Corps has approved 5 of these projects to begin construction, with three more notices to proceed scheduled within the next month. The remaining 12 projects are under environmental review, and the Corps is evaluating whether any categorical exclusions may apply to these projects in accordance with the DoD NEPA Implementing Procedures.

Tres Rios:

Question 3. Tres Rios Ecosystem Restoration project is partially constructed with the most recent phase completed in 2012. WRDA 2024 provided additional authorization to complete the Tres Rios project. Over \$110M has been spent to date to construct levees, water treatment wetlands, and other engineered and natural infrastructure for Tres Rios.

I secured an authorization for an increased spending limit for Tres Rios in WRDA 2024 to complete that project. It has been several years since that authorization with no substantive movement towards resuming Tres Rios construction.

Will the Corps commit to prioritizing funding and staff resources to move Tres Rios forward?

ANSWER. The Army will consider this project for funding, along with other programs, projects, and activities across the Nation that are competing for the available Federal resources.

Rio Salado Oeste:

Question 4. Rio Salado Oeste is a Congressionally authorized project in WRDA 2007 that has not yet been constructed. When completed, it will provide important benefits to the Phoenix Metro area, including expected benefits for economic development. Rio Salado Oeste is currently in the midst of completing a feasibility study update, a process that started in the summer of 2023.

The cost and timeframe for this study have already more than doubled from the original \$3M estimated cost. As you know, last year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers instituted new requirements for feasibility studies—35% design maturity upon completion of the feasibility study (versus previous 20% design maturity requirements)—and this has adversely impacted the progress of the Rio Salado Oeste Feasibility Study.

Rio Salado Oeste is an aquatic ecosystem restoration project—not a levee. The increase to 35% plans is unnecessary to appropriately evaluate the risks of this type of project, and it makes it more difficult for the study to reach completion. The increase in design maturity is estimated to add approximately \$1 million and 18 months to the prior budget and schedule.

These limitations make it almost impossible to complete a feasibility study that would be likely to achieve an authorization in WRDA to move forward to design and construction.

What is the justification for this requirement on ecosystem restoration project studies that don't have significant engineered infrastructure such as levees? Will the Corps consider refining the guidance to return the requirement for aquatic ecosystem restoration projects to 20% design stage?

ANSWER. The Corps has seen an increase in costs of projects that have exceeded their authorized limit across all business lines, including aquatic ecosystem restoration. Achieving a 35% level of design prior to entering the Construction phase will limit delays and provide more confidence in the cost estimates, schedules, and project outcomes, while also reducing the chances of even costlier mid-construction re-design.

Expediting Environmental Review of Environmental Infrastructure Projects:

Question 5. One of the significant delays in advancing environmental infrastructure projects in my state has been the lengthy environmental reviews. These delays have resulted in frustration for many communities and in some cases, they no longer want to advance the projects Congress has funded. I appreciate that the Corps streamlined its NEPA processes last June and has started to utilize more categorical exclusions for these projects. But our water situation demands we work faster, making more improvements to expedite these reviews.

How are the Corps working to ensure that EI projects funded by Congress get out the door to communities in a timely and efficient manner? What additional resources or authorities, like expanded categorical exclusions or flexible funding reallocations, will help move projects forward?

ANSWER. The Department of War has streamlined the NEPA process with the DoD NEPA Implementing Procedures issued in June 2025, which includes over 300 Categorical Exclusions (CATEX) that are available for the entire Department. The Corps is considering applying applicable CATEX for typical EI work like sewer repairs. The Corps is also considering adopting EPA's CATEX to further enhance efficiency.

Reallocation of Existing EI Funding:

Question 6. Because of delays in approving project partnership agreements and environmental reviews for these environmental infrastructure projects, the cities of Flagstaff and Tolleson are seeking to have funds they were awarded for a stormwater detention basin and new water well reallocated to other projects. These communities should not be unnecessarily punished for the Corps delays and should be able to pursue other eligible projects with the funds Congress has appropriated without risk that the funds will be clawed back.

What is the Corps' process for approving these reallocations, and can you commit to expediting the reallocations for the cities of Flagstaff and Tolleson?

ANSWER. For Corps funds provided in an annual Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act (EWDAA), a proposal to change the allocations in a published work plan generally would be subject to Section 101 of the EWDAA. For example, where a reprogramming exceeds the amounts set forth in paragraphs (6) through (10) of subsection (a) of Section 101, congressional notification is required.