

HEARING ON THE NOMINATIONS OF SEAN
MCMASTER TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, JOHN
BUSTERUD TO BE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FOR THE OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, AND
ADAM TELLE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MAY 14, 2025

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:30 a.m. in room 562, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Shelley Moore Capito (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Capito, Whitehouse, Cramer, Lummis, Sullivan, Ricketts, Wicker, Boozman, Husted, Markey, Kelly, Padilla, Blunt Rochester, Alsobrooks.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO,
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA**

Senator CAPITO. Everybody is bright and right on time, so I will call this hearing to order.

This morning, we will hear from three of President Trump's important nominees. I want to first welcome Mr. Sean McMaster, President Trump's nominee to serve as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration or better known as FHWA. FHWA is an operating administration within the U.S. Department of Transportation, responsible for providing technical support, we lean on them a lot, and funding to States and local entities.

The funding provided by FHWA is critical to facilitating the design and construction of improvements to our surface transportation network. These improvements enable the safe and reliable movement of people and goods, which enhances our quality of life and supports economic growth.

Mr. McMaster's relevant professional experience makes him well qualified to serve as Administrator. He brings more than 10 years of government service, working in the U.S. House of Representatives and at Federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Since mid-2020, Mr. McMaster has worked for two private sector transportation companies. First, he served as a National Practice Consultant and Vice President at Transportation Infrastructure Design Firm, HNTB, and most recently, he served as the Vice President for Commercial Aviation and Transportation at The Boeing Company.

One challenge that the FHWA Administrator must quickly tackle is the significant backlog of announced grants that do not have signed grant agreements in place. This inherited workload will require diligence and collaboration to resolve. I am hopeful that if Mr. McMaster is confirmed, his experience and leadership at FHWA will accelerate that process.

This Committee also looks forward to working with FHWA and others on the long-term, bipartisan surface transportation reauthorization bill.

Next, I want to welcome Mr. John Busterud, President Trump's nominee to lead the EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management, better known as OLEM. Mr. Busterud's exceptional experience has prepared him to lead OLEM and tackle some of our Nation's most pressing environmental challenges.

Following a 31-year environmental legal career, he served as Regional Administrator of the EPA's Pacific Southwest Region. Mr. Busterud also served our Country with distinction as an officer in the U.S. Army, deploying many times, and retiring as a decorated Colonel after 23 years of service.

OLEM's statutory responsibilities place it at the center of EPA's core mission: protecting our air, land, and water. If confirmed, Mr. Busterud will oversee programs that directly impact Americans' health and the environment, such as remediating PFAS contamination, cleaning up Superfund sites, and revitalizing brownfields.

Addressing PFAS contamination, which affects communities in my State of West Virginia and across this Country, is a priority of mine. The EPA recently announced an agency-wide PFAS strategy and OLEM will play a major role in ensuring its success.

OLEM is also responsible for cleaning up Superfund sites, which are some of the Nation's most contaminated sites. This Committee recently heard about the challenges with cleaning up Superfund sites and there is bipartisan support to improve the program's efficiency. I look forward to working with Mr. Busterud to implement key reforms to ensure faster and more cost-effective Superfund cleanups.

Finally, I want to welcome Mr. Adam Telle, President Trump's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Mr. Telle is well suited to lead the Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works program based on his two decades of public service in the U.S. Senate, including as my clerk for the Homeland Security Subcommittee and as a Special Assistant to the President in the first Trump Administration.

Mr. Telle has seen first-hand how the Army Corps' response to natural disasters can help communities withstand significant weather events and then recover from them.

The Army Corps does critical work across the Nation through its navigation, flood risk management, and ecosystem restoration missions. This work protects the lives and livelihoods of millions of

Americans and facilitates commerce throughout our Country and internationally.

If confirmed, Mr. Telle will also play an integral role in implementing biennial water resources development legislation, better known to all of us on committee as Water Resources Development Act, WRDA. WRDA authorizes numerous feasibility studies and projects, and directs the Army Corps to carry out various activities to address our Nation's water resources needs.

I look forward to working with Mr. Telle to ensure the timely implementation of these laws consistent with congressional intent.

I look forward to hearing from all the nominees this morning about their experiences and the issues that they will prioritize if confirmed to lead these agencies.

With that, I recognize Ranking Member Whitehouse for his opening statement.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. SHELDON WHITEHOUSE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Chair Capito. We are here today to entertain nominations for top posts at the Federal Highway Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA Office that administers the Brownfields and Superfund programs. Those responsibilities are particularly relevant to three major pieces of committee legislation that I hope we can pass this Congress: WRDA reauthorization, Surface Transportation reauthorization, and comprehensive permitting reform.

I believe Chair Capito and I can continue the good bipartisan work this committee is known for in areas for which these three nominees will have direct executive responsibility.

Here is the rub. None of these bipartisan bills will matter if Congress' Article I authorization and appropriation power is not respected. This administration has repeatedly, unlawfully disrespected congressionally authorized and appropriated spending. I am happy to see that DOT appears to be making progress obligating money to previously awarded discretionary grants. I thank the Chair for her diligent pursuit of that progress as well.

However, the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program remains paused and stuck in limbo. At the Army Corps, erratic, inconsistent and opaque administration of its Clean Water Act permitting program creates uncertainty for the regulated community at large, and for renewable energy project developers in particular, undermining core principles of fairness and neutrality in the Corps' permitting program.

I have called to restore integrity and transparency to the Corps' permitting program and to evaluate each permit action on its own merits in accordance with law and regulation, with no response. EPA, where even to begin? Administrator Zeldin continues his assault on clean air and clean water despite his promises to us in this committee to protect air and water.

His list of congressionally authorized and appropriated funding that EPA insists on continuing to hold hostage is too long to list here today. Obviously, the biggest target is the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, where Administrator Zeldin and his enablers at

DOJ continue to set themselves up for legal and professional liability in the way they conduct their assault on that program.

I have told my team to start work on common sense bipartisan legislation in all three areas. The gateway to success to ultimately passing those bills is confidence that this administration will faithfully execute the laws we pass and clear the projects we have already approved, appropriated, and obligated. It will not work in permitting reform, for instance, to exclude wind and solar from the very definition of the word energy, violating not just the law but the dictionary.

I should add in closing that we are also now faced with an effort to use the congressional Review Act to disapprove three Clean Air Act waivers granted by EPA to the State of California that have existed for many years, even though the Parliamentarian has already ruled that these waivers are not rules, as required for the Community Reinvestment Act, CRA. A decision to overrule her on this matter to deploy the nuclear option will have real consequences.

The misuse of the CRA to undo long ago past policies adding to the nuclear option of overruling the Parliamentarian opens up an immense can of worms, and the Senate floor will not be the same if this is where we go. Overruling the Parliamentarian is tantamount to eliminating the filibuster, said Leader Thune himself in January.

There are many avenues for the minority to respond to such a disruption of Senate tradition. Simply count how often the presiding officer says "without objection" on any given day to understand what the response could be to such a disruption. If this is the path Republicans want to go down, go down it at least with eyes wide open.

Also, on the merits, know that climate change is not a hoax, that its damage has already begun in homeowners' insurance markets around the Country, that the insurance to mortgage, to property values collapse can not be stopped by rhetoric, and that the sand is fast running through the hourglass to head off that economic calamity.

Thank you, Chairman.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you, Senator Whitehouse.

We will now turn to introductions for the nominees. This morning we are joined by our friend from Tennessee, Senator Hagerty. Thank you for being here, and please proceed with your introductory remarks.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Chairman Capito, and thank you, Ranking Member Whitehouse, for holding today's hearing.

It is my distinct honor to introduce my good friend and my chief of staff, Adam Telle, who is President Trump's nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Before I introduce Adam, I would like to actually address all the staff that sit behind you. I want you to look at Adam, somebody who has been here serving as you do in the U.S. Senate for the past 20 years.

He has made a real impact working here in the Senate, as I am sure all of you do, working night and day and over the weekends, as I am sure all of you do as well. Now he is going to take that

knowledge, that expertise, that experience, and move on to do even greater things.

I hope you take Adam's nomination today as a great inspiration for what you yourself might do. I will encourage you in that regard.

I also would take the privilege of suggesting that Senator Capito probably shares the same sort of pride that I do in seeing Adam's progress. Adam worked for you, you helped train him to become the person that he is today.

As you all know, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works provides leadership that is essential for the Department of Defense and for our Nation, especially the American citizens and American businesses who depend on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps is tasked to maintain 13,000 miles of coastal navigation channels, 12,000 miles of inland waterways, over 1,000 harbors, 745 dams, just to name a few of the Corps' responsibilities.

As a native of Northport, Alabama, who graduated with honors in computer science and communication from Mississippi State University's Bagley College of Engineering, Adam has lived in places where the mission of the Army Corps is at the forefront of public life. Adam can directly relate to the people who depend on the Corps, and he knows first-hand why the work of the Corps matters.

Adam has also served in the U.S. Government faithfully and with distinction for the past two decades. After beginning his Senate career in the office of Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama in 2005, Adam spent 10 years in the office of the late Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi, earning the roles of Deputy Chief of Staff, and Legislative Director. Adam then served as the lead staffer on the Homeland Security Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, serving under the chairmanship of Senators Thad Cochran, Richard Shelby, John Boozman, and of course, our chairman, Shelley Moore Capito.

In this role, Adam was the point person in the Senate for the U.S. Government's activities involving nearly 20 agencies, 260,000 personnel, and an annual budget of approximately \$70 billion. During President Trump's first term, Adam led the Senate team at the White House's Office of Legislative Affairs where he managed national security and appropriations matters.

He played critical roles in the negotiations for the historic Abraham accords, and the creation of the U.S. Space Force, which is the first new branch of the U.S. military created and authorized in more than 70 years.

Over the last 4 years I have had the privilege of watching Adam in action on a daily basis, particularly as my chief of staff. Adam's leadership is evident not just in his strategic vision and passion for our Nation, but also in the ways in which he is trusted by staff and by other colleagues. The kindness, the mentoring and the heart that he demonstrates with his teams will make him an inspirational leader of this critical organization.

Adam is just the leader that our Nation needs in the Pentagon right now. I urge the committee to move quickly in consideration of Adam Telle's nomination so he can assume the leadership in this important work as soon as possible.

I want to thank all of you for your time this morning.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you very much. That was a wonderful introduction.

I will now ask the nominees to move up to the witness table when Senator Hagerty clears. You can remain standing for a minute.

Before we move to opening statements, I would like to administer the oath for the sworn testimony. If you would please stand and raise your right hand and answer the following question. Do you swear the testimony you are about to give to this committee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God? We will start with you, Adam.

Mr. TELLE. Yes, I do.

Mr. MCMASTER. Yes.

Mr. BUSTERUD. Yes.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you. Let the record show that the witnesses have answered in the affirmative. We will now proceed to our opening statements, and thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

Mr. Telle, you can begin.

**STATEMENT OF ADAM TELLE, NOMINEE TO BE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS**

Mr. TELLE. Thank you Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, members of the Committee, and the staff of the Environment and Public Works Committee. It is an honor to have been nominated by President Trump to serve as the 14th Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

I want to begin by thanking President Trump, whom I was honored to serve during his first administration. In addition, I would like to thank Secretary Hegseth, Secretary Driscoll, my family, my wife Shelby, my two beautiful children, who are here in the back, my mother Rita and my father Whitney.

I would also like to thank the U.S. Senators, with whom I have worked the closest over the last 20 years: Chairman Capito, Senator Wicker, Senator Boozman, Senator Richard Shelby, Senator Thad Cochran, and finally, Senator Bill Hagerty, whom I have had the privilege to serve over the last 4 years since he came to the Senate.

Senator Hagerty, you have given me such incredible perspective during our time together, and I am so fortunate to have had a front row seat as you brought that same fresh perspective to the Senate. Thank you.

In 1802, as President Thomas Jefferson was contemplating how to expand our Nation westward, he keenly understood that our waterways would be the key. To harness the power of these waterways, he turned to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, which was producing America's best engineers. We would no longer rely on European engineers. The original navigation mission of the Army Corps of Engineers was born.

The America we know today, from sea to shining sea, is a result of the work of the Corps. Over time, Congress has given the Corps additional missions, primarily flood control and the preservation of natural resources. These missions are also important to our current President.

Some of my earliest memories as a young child are of riding with my father, him pointing out the window as we were crossing some of our waterways: the Black Warrior River, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the Mississippi River. He was always teaching, and he would turn my attention to the little tug boats pushing the big barges, brimming with natural resources, opening access from the small communities in our neck of the woods to the rest of the Country and to the world.

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

On August 29th, 2005, exactly 1 month into my time working in the Senate, Hurricane Katrina made landfall. This was the most costly natural disaster in American history. I stayed up all night that night, I could not go to sleep, watching Katrina come ashore. A 28-foot storm surge, 1,800 American lives lost, and hundreds of billions of dollars in damage.

Pretty soon, Senator Thad Cochran asked me to run point on Mississippi's recovery from Hurricane Katrina. My years of experience securing resources and untangling bureaucratic messes in the wake of Katrina prepared me for my role as the top Homeland Security staffer on the Senate Appropriations Committee, where I was also given the top role, working for Chairman Capito and Boozman, and advising all Senate Republicans on disaster recovery and response.

These formative experiences as a child and as a young professional are emblematic of why my personal background and passion match the depth and the breadth of the missions of the Corps of Engineers civil works' mission: enabling commerce, mitigating floods, responding to disasters, and most recently removing debris in the wake of Hurricane Helene, and in response to the Los Angeles wildfires.'

Few government agencies' missions capture the interests of American citizens, landowners, communities, States, job creators and their representatives here in Washington quite like this one. These are real missions, with real outcomes, and they matter deeply to Americans in places that are very far away from Washington decision maker.

If confirmed, I intend to aggressively tackle the critical issues that confront the Corps. As it relates to permitting, we are at a moment in history where all Americans of all viewpoints crave certainty from their government about whether or not the rules apply to them. We must act with haste, transparency, and clarity to give them regulatory certainty without delay.

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

With regard to flood control, we must work together to maintain the investments that you have made and complete new projects as soon as humanly possible to mitigate floods before they happen and to fight them when we must.

When it comes to coordination, issues related to water are spread across Federal entities and authorities, perhaps like no other. Getting it right for the American public will require an outsized focus on coordination among the dozens of entities across the government that deal with water. If confirmed, I will devote significant attention to collaboration and coordination across these partner agencies.

I am honored to be before you. If I have the honor of being confirmed by the Senate, I commit to be responsive to our Nation's politically accountable leaders, the President, the members of this committee, the members of the Senate, and the members of the House of Representatives.

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

[The prepared statement of Mr. Telle follows:]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Again I am honored to be before you.

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

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

Hearing Entitled, “Hearing on the Nominations of Sean McMaster to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, John Busterud, to be Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Adam Telle to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.”

May 14, 2025

Questions for the Record for Adam Telle

Senator Sullivan:

1. One of the key issues with infrastructure development in Alaska is that the permitting and study process takes half a decade to a decade to complete before we can build a project, which leads to increased project costs the longer these reviews take, etc. Acknowledging Alaska is often ground zero for permitting delays, President Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 14153, Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential, to tackle this, and we are now working on implementation. This EO has language that has specific direction for the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to facilitate the expeditious review and approval of infrastructure projects. **Will you commit to implementing EO 14153 and prioritizing the permitting and completion of projects in Alaska, including but not limited to the Juneau Glacial Lake Outburst Flood project, Port of Nome, Barrow Seawall, and West Susitna Access Road?**

[Yes, if confirmed, I will fully execute and implement all directives outlined in the Executive Orders issued by the President, ensuring they are carried out as soon as possible.](#)

2. The Ambler Mining District is home to copper, cobalt, and germanium mineral commodities that are all essential for both national security and energy security. Despite road access to this district being guaranteed in law under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, or ANILCA, Alaskans have been fighting for years to enable access to the area so responsible resource development can take place. This Ambler Access Project would bring unmatched economic opportunities for local communities, infuse our state's economy with more resources, and support the nation's efforts to create more reliable, sustainable critical mineral supply chains. However, in June 2024, the Bureau of Land Management issued its Record of Decision – a new ROD – which selected the “No Action” Alternative, essentially blocking this proposed project and denying the right-of-way application submitted by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA). Days later, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) suspended the 404(b) permit for the project. **If confirmed, will you commit to reviewing the suspended 404(b) permit for the Ambler Access Project and fairly evaluate whether it merits reinstatement?**

[Yes, if confirmed, I commit to reviewing the suspended 404\(b\) permit and work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure accurate evaluations are made and appropriate actions are taken towards suspended permits.](#)

- a. The previous administration was politically motivated in its efforts to suspend the 404(b) permit for the Ambler Access Project and rumored efforts to revoke it just days before the inauguration of President Trump. **If confirmed, will you commit to righting the wrongs of**

the previous administration and ensuring that final determinations on whether to reinstate permits for the Ambler Access Project or other projects are carried out in a fair and transparent manner?

If confirmed, I commit to working to ensure that accurate evaluations are made for final determinations on whether to reinstate permits for the Ambler Access Project or other projects are carried out in a fair and transparent manner.

b. Will you commit to refraining from weaponizing the permitting authorities of the Army Corps to fulfill politically motivated objectives if confirmed?

If confirmed, I commit to working to ensuring that the permitting authorities within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are executed appropriately.

3. The Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development Program, created by Congress, provides a contract vehicle through which sole-source and set-aside contracts can be awarded to small businesses owned by Alaska Native corporations, Community Development Corporations, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations. These corporations are tied to political relationships, not racial classifications. They are also some of our most efficient contractors, earning stellar Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) marks. Lastly, many of these small businesses employ veterans at rates far exceeding the national average, allowing our Nation's finest to continue to serve after they take off the uniform. **Will you commit to working to preserve and strengthen 8(a) contracting within USACE and the Department of the Army?**

As we previously discussed, local contractors can often provide exceptional service to the government, particularly in specialized localities like Alaska, because they better understand local conditions. If confirmed, I am committed to working closely with the Army's Office of Small Business Programs, Army Senior Leaders, and this Committee to support small business programs, such as the 8(a) program, in accordance with the Small Business Act.

a. I recently toured an 8(a) contracting operation and saw firsthand the value the 8(a) Program brings to the federal customer regarding cost and efficiency while delivering mission-critical solutions that increase our national security and warfighter readiness. 8(a) contracts represent the best "bang for the buck" for taxpayers, giving contracting officers additional flexibility while maximizing efficiency by reducing red tape. **Do you see the value in increased efficiency and flexibility brought from initiatives such as the 8(a) program**

I support utilizing small business programs such as the 8(a) program that align with increased efficiency and flexibility. If confirmed, I will work with the Army's Office of Small Business Programs and the Army Senior Leaders to support small business programs that deliver capability to the Nation more quickly and at affordable prices.

4. Mr. Telle, I wanted to bring to your attention a very important flood control project in one of my Alaska communities – the City of Seward – called the Lowell Creek Tunnel Project. The original flood

control project was built by the Corps back before Alaska was a State, but after many years it is in danger of failing and if so has the potential for catastrophic flooding of Seward's downtown area and economic hub. Its replacement has been a City priority for over two decades. The good news is after a lot of work and with strong support from the Corps, Congress included significant funding for the project in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The replacement project is now 65 percent engineering complete and the Corps estimates it will be 100 percent design complete by February of next year. The BIL funds a major portion of the construction but not all of it as the project has experienced cost growth from the Corps' original estimate from several years ago. I am hoping the FY 2026 PBR will include additional funds which will go toward construction. **Will you commit to working with me to continue to make progress on this important project and find ways to advance it to the construction phase?**

If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the progress of ongoing projects by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and working with you to continue making progress on projects in Alaska.

Senator Ricketts:

5. In recent months, I have been made aware of the United States Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE or Corps) winter release plan from the Gavins Point Dam along the Missouri River. There are utilities which operate power generating units along the river and use it as a source of cooling. During extreme cold weather conditions, three power plants along the river provide nearly 24% (1,840 megawatts) of the energy generation.

The release plan for the Dam issued by the Corps for this past winter outlined a minimum release level of 12,000 cubic feet per second from December 1, 2024, through February 28, 2025. Because of riverbed degradation, that low level is no longer sufficient to maintain the river levels required to operate the facilities. There is further concern that this level for the river is too low, particularly when conditions exist that also favor the formation of ice jams.

The Corps' Missouri River Basin Water Management Division has said intake access problems are the problems of intake power generators, but these stakeholders are not responsible for ice formations nor the degradation of the river, which will also continue if not rectified.

- a. How will USACE make administrative adjustments to the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System Master Water Control Manual to ensure reliability of energy facilities with intake systems?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to manage the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System in a manner that reflects its multiple authorized purposes and responds to evolving stakeholder needs. If confirmed, I would support efforts to evaluate whether updates to the Water Control Manual are warranted based on changes to the variety of factors affecting system performance.

- b. How will USACE partner with stakeholders to ensure the reliability of water supply downstream?

If confirmed, I will encourage ongoing coordination with affected stakeholders—including energy providers, municipal water users, and state and Tribal partners—to better understand their water-supply needs. I believe the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should continue to engage with these partners through established mechanisms such as interagency working groups and technical exchanges to identify challenges and develop shared solutions that enhance water reliability, while remaining within the scope of authorized project purposes and legal authorities.

6. Energy production facilities could be significantly impacted by the Corps' management of the Missouri River regardless of extremely cold temperatures or ice jam formations. In 2024, when river levels were very low, two of their facilities were unable to generate energy during extremely cold temperatures. Because the State of Nebraska approaches energy generation with an all-the-above approach, power customers were not impacted by power shortages.

- a. What administrative actions could the Corps take under Section 4 of President Trump's Executive Order "Declaring a National Energy Emergency" to facilitate the nation's energy supply with respect to the winter release plan from the Gavins Point Dam?

If confirmed, I will support the intent of Section 4 of President Trump's Executive Order "Declaring a National Energy Emergency," which directs agencies to take all appropriate actions to facilitate the Nation's energy supply. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to assess whether interim operational adjustments, increased coordination with energy providers, or additional flexibility under existing authorities could help meet energy reliability goals while remaining consistent with the system's authorized purposes and hydrologic constraints.

Ranking Member Whitehouse:

7. While flood risk is on the rise nationwide, coastal areas face the most severe increases due to rising sea levels and more frequent extreme rainfall events. In First Street's National Flood Risk Assessment, coastal cities outrank inland cities by all measures of substantial flood risk. Despite evidence of dire risks to our coastal populations, inland flood risk management projects dominate the Corps' flood risk management business line by factors ranging from 20:1 to 100:1 annually. If confirmed, what steps will you take to rebalance the distribution of construction funding under the Corps' flood risk management business line to more effectively respond to the increasing risks faced by coastal areas?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' flood risk management investments are aligned with the greatest risks to life, safety, and critical infrastructure—whether inland or coastal. I understand that the distribution of funding reflects, in part, the number of authorized projects that are in the study, construction, or operations and maintenance phase. If confirmed, I will support a benefits-based and risk-informed approach to planning and budgeting, including efforts to improve the pipeline of coastal flood risk management projects.

8. Under its fiscal year 2025 work plan, the Corps has allocated approximately two-thirds of the funding in the Construction account to projects in red states. By contrast, the Corps' fiscal year 2025 budget proposal, the bipartisan Senate bill, and the Republican House bill each split construction funding about equally between projects in red states and projects in blue states. If confirmed, do you commit to budget and allocate funds for Corps projects and activities equitably using objective criteria?

If confirmed, I commit to ensuring budget and allocation of funds for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects and activities are appropriately made in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

- a. What steps will you take to prevent political bias from influencing the Corps' civil works program development and execution?

The Corps' civil works program development and execution can benefit Americans in every state. The program should focus on the developing, managing, and protecting water resources for our Nation. If confirmed, I will commit to ensuring the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works program is developed and executed based on sound technical analysis, statutory authorities, and established budgetary criteria within budgetary constraints.

9. Cost escalations and delays are pervasive and recurring issues in the Corps' civil works construction program. Multiple major construction projects that were supposed to be funded to completion under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act have encountered significant cost increases and additional funding requirements. Despite evidence of a real problem, neither the Corps nor the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works have cooperated with congressional efforts to identify the root causes of cost escalations and schedule delays and develop solutions. A GAO audit of over budget and behind schedule Corps projects that was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 has not moved forward because the Corps has refused to provide GAO with a list of projects. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address the problem of cost increases and delays in the Corps' construction program?

Transparency and accountability are paramount. If confirmed, I will work closely with this Committee and support initiatives to improve cost and schedule performance in the Corps' Civil Works construction program.

- a. Do you commit to promptly provide GAO with the list of overbudget and behind schedule projects required to complete the audit?

If confirmed, I commit to be fully briefed on this matter and ensure information is adequately provided to the GAO in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

10. The Trump Administration's cuts to the federal workforce pose an immediate threat to the Corps' efforts to modernize and streamline its permitting processes. The Corps is losing staff through the Deferred Resignation Program. Layoffs at cooperating agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, may place additional pressure on the already understaffed environmental review offices tasked with providing technical assistance and consultations under the Endangered Species Act for Corps permit actions. Do you oppose cuts to the regulatory workforce?

I have not been briefed on the current status of the workforce, but if confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulatory workforce is adequately resourced and equipped to fully carry out its missions.

- a. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that federal workforce reductions do not lead to permitting delays?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers monitors staffing levels closely and proactively identifies process and personnel issues that could impact permitting timelines. I will coordinate with other federal agencies to address potential bottlenecks and explore efficiencies to help maintain timely and effective permit reviews.

11. The Corps has approved emergency permit processing procedures in response to President Trump's declaration of a "national energy emergency" in Executive Order 14156. Oil and gas pipelines, LNG facilities, and a coal mine are among the projects the Corps has announced that it is fast-tracking under the procedures, which limit the public's opportunity to comment and cut short timelines for interagency reviews. Corps regulations in 33 C.F.R. 325.2(e)(4) define "emergency" as "a situation which would result in an unacceptable hazard to life, a significant loss of property, or an immediate, unforeseen, and significant economic hardship if corrective action requiring a permit is not undertaken within a time period less than the normal time needed to process the application under standard procedures." Can you explain how any of the projects the Corps has noticed thus far meet the regulatory definition of "emergency"?

If confirmed, I will follow Executive Order 14156 and take appropriate and timely action to facilitate the Nation's energy supply in times of emergency. I understand that the Corps' emergency permitting procedures are governed by specific regulatory criteria. If confirmed, I will review the application of these procedures to ensure any determinations are both consistent with the Corps' regulations and aligned with the broader goals of the Executive Order.

- a. If confirmed, do you commit to promptly respond to requests from the Committee for information pertaining to Corps actions taken in response to Executive Order 14156?

If confirmed, I commit to working to ensure information requested from this Committee is promptly provided.

12. A March 2024 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report on the status and trends of wetlands found that net wetland loss increased by 50 percent since 2009, with 670,000 acres lost between 2009 and 2019. What are your views on the longstanding national policy of ensuring no net loss of wetlands under section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and the Corps' role in realizing that goal?

If confirmed, I will support the Corps' efforts to carry out its responsibilities under this program in a manner that appropriately balances conservation and economic interests. I also recognize the role of mitigation can play in offsetting unavoidable losses.

Senator Padilla:

13. Mr. Telle, while water supply is not a primary mission of the Corps, updating water control manuals to account for improvements in weather and hydrologic forecasting like Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) allows the Corps to make release decisions that protect downstream communities while saving water for the dryer months. How important are tools like FIRO for the efficient management of Corps facilities like those in the West and California?

If confirmed, I will support the Corps' continued exploration and evaluation of tools like Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) to help improve reservoir management. I understand that modern tools that better inform decision-making could help retain and distribute water more efficiently in many watersheds, including those in California.

14. Mr. Telle, how important is research and data like the Corps' Coastal and Ocean Data System (CODS) for ensuring the safety and importance of maritime commerce and navigation projects in the United States?

It is vitally important that America's navigation and port facilities are attractive to commercial interests as we seek to make our nation more competitive in the 21st Century. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the value of research and data systems like the Coastal and Ocean Data System in supporting safe and reliable maritime navigation. I recognize that access to accurate coastal data can inform sound planning, design, and maintenance decisions for navigation projects that are vital to the Nation's economy and supply chains.

15. Mr. Telle, the Corps, in collaboration with local and state agencies, is conducting a flood control feasibility study to identify a project which is essential to protecting the lives of over 55,000 residents and critical infrastructure in San Joaquin County. This future project is integrally linked to an ongoing \$2.95 billion flood mitigation effort aimed at reducing the risk of a catastrophic event in the greater Stockton metropolitan area. After three consecutive years of funding, no money for the Lower San Joaquin Feasibility Study (Lathrop-Manteca) was allocated in either the FY25 Budget Request or the FY25 Work Plan. Additionally, the non-federal project sponsors recently learned from the Corps that – for the second time – the study's cost estimate has been revised. Initially projected to cost \$3 million, this flood control study will now take over \$13 million to complete. Mr. Telle, can you commit to working with me, and my colleagues in the California Congressional delegation, to ensure that this study is funded and completed in a timely manner?

If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the Corps of Engineers' efforts on the Lower San Joaquin Feasibility Study. If confirmed, I also look forward to working with you to identify means to accelerate the completion this study.

16. Mr. Telle, I am particularly concerned with San Francisco Bay ports that are not currently receiving annual dredging. Alternate dredging methods and alternate disposal areas incorporating

beneficial use of dredged material would not only allow for the necessary dredging, but it would also enhance ecological and resilience efforts throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. One of the ports that does not receive annual dredging provides 60 percent of the aviation fuel used in the Bay Area. What will you do to ensure that these ports are annually dredged to support critical navigation and operational needs in the San Francisco Bay?

If confirmed, I will work to better understand the specific budgetary challenges facing ports in the San Francisco Bay that may not receive annual dredging. I recognize the importance of maintaining reliable navigation channels, particularly for facilities that support critical economic development and viability. If confirmed, I will also support exploring alternative dredging methods and beneficial use opportunities that align with operational efficiency.

17. Mr. Telle, the Tule River/Lake Success Spillway Enlargement Project is an essential project to the Central Valley. It is aimed to reduce the risk of flooding and provide a more reliable water supply in an underserved community that needs these improvements. If confirmed, will you commit to improving flood safety for underserved communities that are particularly vulnerable to increasingly frequent storms?

Part of the reason I am so honored to have been nominated by President Trump to serve in this role is that its responsibilities and mission set can benefit every community in America, particularly those that depend on the Corps' work to realize their citizens' potential. If confirmed, I commit to working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that projects in all communities are appropriately prioritized and carried out to improve flood safety and protection against frequent storms.

Senator Alsobrooks:

18. The Army Corps has been involved in long-term oyster restoration in the Maryland and Virginia parts of Chesapeake Bay through both the Baltimore and Norfolk districts. In Maryland, the Corps works jointly with NOAA, EPA, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Oyster Recovery Partnership to restore oyster reefs in Harris Creek, the Tred Avon River, and the Little Choptank River. If confirmed and if Congress enacts the Administration's proposed budget cuts to NOAA and EPA, how will you ensure the Corps fulfills its mission of ecosystem restoration in the Chesapeake?

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Corps of Engineers carries out its authorized responsibilities in the Chesapeake Bay using the funding and authorities provided by Congress. I will also work to ensure coordination across partner agencies and with stakeholders to deliver the right solutions for the citizens of Maryland and the Nation.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you.

Before I go to Mr. McMaster, could your family stand up so we can see them? I know your kids are little. Are they back there?

Mr. TELLE. They are currently in the hall, I am told.

[Laughter.]

Senator CAPITO. They are in the hall. You have them really well trained.

Okay, our next nominee is Mr. Sean McMaster. Mr. McMaster is President Trump's nominee to lead a critical agency, the Federal Highway Administration. Welcome, Mr. McMaster.

STATEMENT OF SEAN MCMASTER, NOMINEE TO BE ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Mr. MCMASTER. Thank you. Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as you consider my nomination for FHWA.

I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Duffy for the opportunity to serve in this position. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to achieve the President's and the Secretary's vision of building big, beautiful American infrastructure.

With me today is my amazing wife Brittany and two of my three children, Grady and Emerson. I would also like to mention my oldest son Connor who could not be here today. He is a newly minted Lance Corporal in the United States Marine Corps serving our Country as an air traffic controller in California.

Without their tireless support and understanding the commitment required to serve in the Federal Government would not be possible.

We must work to build and restore the beautiful roads, bridges, and tunnels across the Nation. The Federal High Way Administration's 2024 National Bridge Inventory data shows that more than 83,000 out of 147,000 bridges on the National Highway System are in fair or poor condition. While we have made progress advancing these priorities, the current State of our critical infrastructure must further be improved.

If I am confirmed, I will work tirelessly to support the Secretary's efforts to manage this challenge. This work, and all work under my leadership, if confirmed, will be guided by my top priority, and the top priority of the Department, safety.

As the transportation industry is painfully aware, delays in project delivery can delay safety enhancements and drive up project costs. Data from FHWA's National Highway Construction Cost Index shows that transportation construction costs have increased by 67 percent over the last 3 years reported, from 2021 to 2024.

I saw first-hand these impacts to cost, schedule and delivery of essential infrastructure projects during my time at HNTB working directly with State and local leaders as they were challenged to identify and attain Federal funding in time to support their critical transportation infrastructure needs.

It is essential that we build projects more quickly and efficiently. We must further streamline project delivery, including the permitting process.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary and Congress on ways to improve efficiency and reduce costs so more of the funds being invested in our infrastructure will go to building the infrastructure.

I know from experience that this is achievable. While I served at the Department of Transportation during the first Trump Administration, the I-85 bridge in Atlanta reopened less than 7 weeks after a fire caused its devastating collapse in March 2017.

Thanks to Emergency Relief funds from FHWA, the bridge was quickly rebuilt using innovative components and state-of-the-art concrete. Significantly, the bridge reopened ahead of schedule—demonstrating that time and cost savings are attainable.

This is an important moment for FHWA. In addition to its ongoing work, FHWA must also look forward as the current surface transportation authorization, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, is set to expire at the end of September 2026.

Surface reauthorization is vital for maintaining and enhancing the safety of our Nation's roads, bridges and tunnels. It provides U.S. transportation infrastructure with policy direction and consistent multi-year funding.

While I served as Deputy Chief of Staff at the Department, I was fortunate to lead the development of its surface reauthorization proposal that included FHWA. Through this work, I met with key stakeholders to understand the needs and impacts of the reauthorization on our States and local communities.

This Committee has already started its critical work on surface transportation reauthorization, and Secretary Duffy appeared before this Committee last month to discuss these efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary and Congress throughout the reauthorization process so that we can realize a golden age of transportation.

As the Administration and Congress embark on this transformation through the accelerated deployment of critical projects, further reductions in red tape, common-sense solutions for infrastructure needs, and reauthorization legislation, it is critically important that we fully understand the unique challenges affecting States throughout the Country.

Through meetings with State and local transportation leaders during my time at the Department and at HNTB, it is clear that states have a unique understanding of their specific needs. FHWA maintains strong partnerships with States nationwide. If confirmed, I will continue to support those critical partnerships and work to ensure that States receive consistent guidance and support from FHWA.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McMaster follows:]

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SEAN MCMASTER,
NOMINEE TO BE ADMINISTRATOR,
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS,
UNITED STATES SENATE**

May 14, 2025

Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as you consider my nomination for the position of Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Duffy for the opportunity to serve in this position. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to achieve the President's and Secretary's vision of building big, beautiful American infrastructure.

With me today is my amazing wife Brittany and two of my three children Grady and Emerson. I would also like to mention my oldest son Connor who couldn't be here today. He is a newly minted Lance Corporal in the United States Marine Corps serving our country as an air traffic controller based in California. Without their tireless support and understanding the commitment required to serve in the Federal Government would not be possible.

We must work to build and restore the beautiful roads, bridges, and tunnels across the nation. FHWA's 2024 National Bridge Inventory data shows that more than 83,000 out of 147,000 bridges on the National Highway System are in fair or poor condition. While we have made progress advancing these priorities, the current state of our critical infrastructure must be further improved. If I am confirmed, I will work tirelessly to support the Secretary's efforts to manage this challenge. This work, and all work under my leadership, if confirmed, will be guided by my top priority – and the top priority of the Department – safety.

As the transportation industry is painfully aware, delays in project delivery can delay safety enhancements and drive up project costs. Data from FHWA's National Highway Construction Cost Index shows that transportation construction costs have increased from 1.91 in March 2021 to 3.19 in March 2024 - a 67 percent increase. I saw first-hand the impacts to cost, schedule and delivery of essential infrastructure projects during my time at HNTB working directly with state and local leaders as they were challenged to identify and attain federal funding in time to support their critical transportation infrastructure needs. It is essential that we build projects more quickly and efficiently.

We must further streamline project delivery, including the permitting process. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary and Congress on ways to improve efficiency and

reduce costs so more of the funds being invested in our infrastructure will go to building the infrastructure.

I know from experience that this is achievable. While I served at the Department of Transportation during the first Trump Administration, the I-85 bridge in Atlanta reopened less than seven weeks after a fire caused its devastating collapse in March 2017. Thanks to Emergency Relief funds from FHWA, the bridge was quickly rebuilt using innovative components and state-of-the-art concrete. Significantly, the bridge reopened ahead of schedule—demonstrating that time and cost savings are attainable.

This is an important moment for FHWA. In addition to its ongoing work, FHWA must also look forward as the current surface transportation authorization, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, is set to expire at the end of September 2026. Surface reauthorization is vital for maintaining and enhancing the safety of our nation's roads, bridges and tunnels. It provides U.S. transportation infrastructure with policy direction and consistent multi-year funding. While I served as Deputy Chief of Staff at the Department, I was fortunate to lead the development of its surface reauthorization proposal that included FHWA. Through this work I met with key stakeholders of FHWA to understand the needs and impacts of the reauthorization on our states and local communities.

This Committee has already started its critical work on surface transportation reauthorization, and Secretary Duffy appeared before this Committee last month to discuss these efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary and Congress throughout the reauthorization process so that we can realize a golden age of transportation.

As the Administration and Congress embark on this transformation through the accelerated deployment of critical projects, further reductions in red tape, common-sense solutions for infrastructure needs, and reauthorization legislation, it is critically important that we fully understand the unique challenges affecting states throughout the country. Through various meetings with state and local transportation leaders during my time as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Department of Transportation and as a National Practice Consultant at HNTB, it is clear that states have a unique understanding of their specific needs. FHWA maintains strong partnerships with state Departments of Transportation nationwide. If confirmed, I will continue to support those critical partnerships and work to ensure that states receive consistent guidance and support from FHWA.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Hearing Entitled, "Hearing on the Nominations of Sean McMaster to be Administrator of the
Federal Highway Administration, John Busterud to be Assistant Administrator for the Office
of Solid Waste of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Adam Telle to be Assistant
Secretary of the Army for Civil Works."
May 14, 2025
Questions for the Record for Sean McMaster

Senator Sullivan:

1. In Alaska, it took 35 years to complete the EIS for the Cooper Landing Bypass Project. NEPA has morphed from its original intent to provide transparency and better decision-making to a tool for single-minded activists, increasing the volume and complexity of NEPA documents and related litigation. On day one, President Trump issued Executive Order 14153, "Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential." This Executive Order makes it clear that it is the policy of the United States to expedite federal permitting in Alaska. **Do you believe states can take on a more prominent and more independent role in developing environmental reviews for transportation projects?**

Yes, through the NEPA Assignment Program, states assume project-level NEPA responsibilities, putting them in a more prominent and independent role in developing environmental reviews for transportation projects. FHWA implements approved NEPA Assignment applications through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the state. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the specific challenges facing Alaska from FHWA staff, your office, and the state, including lessons learned from FHWA's experience with this program, and engaging on ways to encourage more state participation.

Ranking Member Whitehouse:

1. We have heard numerous reports of this Administration terminating leases for federal office space, including for Federal Highway Administration staff. We have, however, received no information about an execution plan.
 - a. If confirmed, do you expect to provide input on the office space needs of your agency?

If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Department to evaluate FHWA's office space and facilities to ensure FHWA maintains sufficient space to effectively deliver its mission.

- b. If so, what information are you going to use in making recommendations about FHWA office space needs?

As stated above, if confirmed, I will work with the Department to evaluate FHWA's office space needs to ensure FHWA maintains sufficient space to effectively deliver its mission. I would want to learn more specific information from FHWA and Department staff, including, for example, the current and projected size of the workforce, individual facility utilization and occupancy rates, operating costs, lease terms, and mission needs in each location. Ultimately, my goal is to ensure space decisions are efficient, cost-effective, and aligned with the

mission of the agency and this Administration.

- c. Will you commit to seeking the input of members of this Committee before taking drastic real estate-related actions, such as eliminating FHWA Division offices?

I value the input of this Committee and I am committed to meaningful communication with its Members. I recognize the importance of these decisions, not just on carrying out the mission of the agency, but also the broader impact on the employees, constituents, and the communities FHWA serves.

- 2. Over 40,000 deaths occur on U.S. roads annually. Recently, fatality rates have substantially increased for bicyclists, motorcycle riders, and pedestrians, and accidents involving large trucks. What specific actions should FHWA take, and that you will take, if confirmed, to protect vulnerable road users?

Safety is the Department's and FHWA's top priority. If confirmed, I will support FHWA in advancing the implementation of proven safety solutions, strategies, and countermeasures to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries for all road users.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's latest estimate states that 39,345 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2024. The 2024 estimates represent a decrease of 3.8 percent compared to the 40,901 traffic fatalities in 2023. In 2023, fatalities "outside the vehicle" (motorcyclists, pedestrians, pedalcyclists, and other nonoccupants) accounted for 37 percent of total roadway fatalities. FHWA has more work to do to improve safety and mobility on our Nation's highways.

If confirmed, I will support a one DOT, data-driven approach to make informed decisions on investments to save lives.

Senator Markey:

- 1. The Federal Highway Administration has roughly 2,800 employees. But over 300 of those employees either accepted the buyout offer or were probationary employees that the administration has tried to fire. That's over 10 percent of FHWA's workforce. And the Department of Transportation is planning to fire additional workers.

- a. I understand that you are not yet at the Federal Highway Administration but from your vantage point, are you concerned that these staffing cuts will impact the administration's ability to get money out the door?

If confirmed, I commit to working to ensure that FHWA maintains adequate staffing levels to accomplish its mission, while fully supporting the Administration's goals of making the government more efficient.

- b. Will you commit to opposing any workforce cuts that undermine the work of the Federal Highway Administration?

If confirmed, I will work with the Department to ensure FHWA maintains adequate staffing levels to meet its mission, while optimizing efficiency, increasing transparency, and minimizing bureaucracy.

2. Provisions in MAP-21 required the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct a Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study looking at, among other things, safety and infrastructure impacts between trucks operating within federal limits and those operating above them. That study concluded in 2016 with a clear recommendation: that there was insufficient data to justify increasing truck size or weight limits.

Despite this, proposals to allow heavier 91,000-pound trucks and longer double trailers continue to circulate. Meanwhile, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's recently updated Fatality Analysis Reporting System data, 2023 saw the third highest number of large truck crash fatalities since 1989 — and a 37.5% increase over just ten years ago.

In light of these worsening crash trends and the conclusions of USDOT's own study, will you commit to upholding the current federal truck size and weight limits and oppose any exemptions or pilot programs that would permit heavier or longer trucks on our roads?

The weight limits on the Interstate system are established in statute by Congress. If confirmed, I will ensure FHWA continues to maintain compliance with the statutory requirements. I also look forward to working with FHWA staff to learn more about the current status of the truck size and weight program and research.

Senator Padilla:

1. Mr. McMaster, I remain very alarmed about the mass firings and reductions in force across the Administration, including at the Federal Highway Administration, where nearly 600 employees have taken the deferred resignation. This has impacted regional staff, who are intimately familiar with the projects and programs that FHWA carries out. Secretary Duffy and you have noted that you plan to be more efficient with fewer staff.

- a. How do you think getting rid of the experts who help run the Federal Highway Administration will lead to more efficiency?

Please see the response to Senator Markey in question 1.a.

- b. How will a reduction in staff allow you to swiftly and effectively carry out the programs authorized and appropriated by Congress?

I am committed to following the law and, if confirmed, will implement the programs established in statute. I also fully support the Administration's goal of making the government more efficient. As stated in my earlier response, if confirmed, I will work with the Department to ensure FHWA maintains adequate staffing levels to meet its mission.

2. Mr. McMaster, I remain concerned with the Administration's efforts to cancel entire grant awards simply based on ideological preferences. For example, this month, DOT terminated three grants to University Transportation Centers at UC Davis, San Jose State, and USC without providing the option of revising the scope of their projects. Entities apply for federal grants with the understanding that the federal government will be a responsible actor.

- a. What reputation do grant cancellations create at DOT if the agency simply pulls the rug out from under awardees without notice?

As I am not at the Department, I do not have insight into the Department's review of grant programs or cancellation of grant awards. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to review awards for FHWA grant programs to ensure funds are used to deliver infrastructure projects in a manner that is consistent with statutory and regulatory requirements.

Senator Alsobrooks:

1. As Congress prepares for the next surface transportation reauthorization, there's growing bipartisan support for allowing states to use existing safety funds more flexibly, particularly for technologies like predictive analytics, AI-based tools, and telematics. Do you have a view on these technologies and allowing states more leeway to utilize them?

- a. If confirmed, would you work with Congress to advance and implement these innovations through FHWA programs?

Yes. I understand there are a number of benefits emerging technologies have to offer – including predictive analytics, AI-based tools, and telematics – that several states currently use to support project development and maintenance of the National Highway System. If I am confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on the current efforts and working with you to find opportunities for further integrating innovation and technology.

2. Maryland's transportation system is critical to the safety of its residents and the efficiency of its ports, particularly the Port of Baltimore, which plays a key role in the national supply chain. Advanced technologies like AI, telematics, and risk modeling can help target safety improvements while enhancing freight flow and reducing congestion. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that FHWA works with states like Maryland to integrate these innovations into both safety and freight efficiency programs, with a focus on improving the performance of critical ports like Baltimore?

Yes. If I am confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on the current efforts and working with you and states to find opportunities for further integrating innovation and technology. Enhancing critical freight hubs is essential to strengthening national supply chains and protecting roadway users, and I look forward to engaging on these efforts.

3. Law enforcement plays a critical role in roadway safety but often lacks the data and tools to focus efforts where they're needed most. Technologies like predictive analytics, telematics, and AI can help target enforcement and safety countermeasures in high-risk areas or for specific crash types. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that FHWA collaborates with states and law enforcement to leverage these technologies, enabling more efficient and effective interventions that save lives and improve roadway safety?

Yes. If I am confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on the current efforts and working with you, states, and law enforcement to find opportunities for further integrating innovation and technology.

4. We have seen how agencies like the FAA continue to rely on outdated technology like air traffic controllers using floppy disks for tasks like updating navigation databases. This highlights the risks of falling behind in innovation. At FHWA, many tools used to measure and improve roadway safety are still stuck in the past, relying on clipboards, manual processes, and outdated methods. Given the advancements in telematics, AI, and predictive analytics, if confirmed, will you commit to leading FHWA into the future by prioritizing innovation and modernizing the agency's approach to improving safety, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness?

FHWA's mission is to improve safety and mobility on our Nation's highways through national leadership, innovation, and program delivery. If confirmed, I will support FHWA in carrying out this mission. I look forward to being briefed on current efforts and working with you to find opportunities for further integrating innovation and technology.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you, Mr. McMaster.

Our final nominee this morning is Mr. John Busterud. Mr. Busterud is President Trump's nominee to lead the EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management. If confirmed, Mr. Busterud will oversee vital programs like the Superfund and Brownfields to ensure efficient and effective management of our Nation's land and waste issues.

Welcome.

STATEMENT OF JOHN W. BUSTERUD, NOMINEE TO BE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mr. BUSTERUD. Thank you, Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and all the distinguished members of this Committee. It has been a privilege to meet with you and your staff to learn about the issues of highest concern to you. I intend to work with all of you to ensure that we protect human health and the environment for all Americans.

I humbly appear before you nominated to serve as EPA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of Land and Emergency Management. I am grateful to President Trump and Administrator Zeldin for giving me the opportunity to lead the men and women of OLEM.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with our dedicated career staff, States, communities, and stakeholders to ensure OLEM fulfills its core statutory mission to clean up historic sites, prevent releases, and respond with urgency and compassion when emergencies arise. In this way, OLEM provides an essential connection between environmental protection and economic prosperity, a linchpin of this Administration.

This morning, I am accompanied by my wife Gretchen, herself a retired EPA attorney and a great source of inspiration and support. Our grown children, Becky and Tommy, are here in spirit.

I come to you with a background of commitment to public service and environmental protection. Growing up in northern California, I was profoundly influenced by my father, also John Busterud, who served in the California Legislature and later as Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality under President Ford. Environmental issues were often front and center at the dinner table and took precedence over partisan politics, at least as far as I can remember.

After law school I chose to practice environmental law, representing businesses who saw environmental compliance and leadership as essential business functions, valuable to their customers, employees, and shareholders. In that role, I worked with State and Federal regulatory agencies, advocacy organizations, communities, and our State legislature to support policies that sought to balance environmental protection with a sustainable business climate in California.

After retiring from corporate practice, I served on the board of the California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance, a public policy organization with members from Fortune 500 companies and labor unions. CCEEB works to find common-sense, bipartisan solutions to emerging environmental issues.

I was also privileged to serve our Country as an officer in the Army Reserve, deploying to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Djibouti in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and retiring as a Colonel in 2014.

In Baghdad, I had the unique opportunity to advise the Iraqi Minister of Environment as she developed Iraq's first environmental regulatory programs. This service not only provided some of the most fulfilling experiences of my life, but taught me that the rule of law is central to peace, prosperity, and environmental protection.

In the first Trump Administration, I was honored to serve as Regional Administrator of EPA Region 9. As RA, I worked with 600 dedicated career staff and Administrator Wheeler to protect human health and the environment for 50 million Americans in California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, 148 tribes and the Pacific Territorial Islands. My experience in Region 9 was one of the highlights of my career and I am looking forward to working again with all our regions to support the offices that are truly the face of EPA across our Nation.

If confirmed, I will be responsible for implementing some of the most forward-facing programs in EPA. As much as any other Office at the agency, OLEM affects Main Street America in many tangible and beneficial ways. The Superfund program, both at civilian and Federal facilities, remediates sites to provide essential protections for land and groundwater. The popular Brownfields program literally addresses environmental conditions on main streets across our Country, restoring urban lands to productive use.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, RCRA, and underground tank programs ensure that we do not create future Superfund sites by preventing releases of hazardous materials from currently operating facilities. The Office of Mountains, Deserts, and Plains uses a cross-media, cross-agency approach to address abandoned hard rock mines. Finally, the Office of Emergency Management works alongside other Federal agencies, States, cities and communities to plan for and respond to emergencies.

Through these programs, OLEM has the opportunity to provide essential human health and environmental protections for all Americans and do so in a non-partisan, common-sense manner that promotes our great American comeback.

I look forward to working with all of you to fulfill this mission. Thank you, Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and all the members of this Committee. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Busterud follows:]

Oral Testimony of John W. Busterud
Before The United States Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works
May 14, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and all the distinguished members of this Committee. It has been a privilege to meet with you and your staff to learn about the issues of highest concern to you. I intend to work with all of you to ensure that we protect human health and the environment for all Americans.

I humbly appear before you nominated to serve as EPA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of Land and Emergency Management. I'm grateful to President Trump and Administrator Zeldin for giving me the opportunity to lead the men and women of OLEM. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our dedicated career staff, states, communities, and stakeholders to ensure OLEM fulfills its core statutory mission to clean up historic sites, prevent releases, and respond with urgency and compassion when emergencies arise. In this way, OLEM provides an essential connection between environmental protection and economic prosperity, a linchpin of this Administration.

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Through these programs, OLEM has the opportunity to provide essential human health and environmental protections for all Americans and do so in a non-partisan, common sense manner that promotes our Great American Comeback. I look forward to working with all of you to fulfill this mission.

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

“Hearing on the Nominations of Sean McMaster to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, John Busterud to be Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Adam Telle to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.”

Senator Sullivan:

1. In 1971, Congress passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), which conveyed to 12 Alaska Native regional corporations, and more than 200 village corporations, 44 million acres of land and \$962.5 million to settle the aboriginal land claims of Alaska Native people. In the decades since the signing of ANCSA, though, some Alaska Native tribes and organizations have been left potentially on the hook for the clean-up of more than 1,100 sites on the lands they received through ANCSA that were polluted or contaminated by the federal government. *Will you commit to supporting these programs and working with other agencies and Congress to find a way to fund and prioritize the clean-up of contaminated lands conveyed to Alaska Native Corporations as part of their ANCSA settlement?*

Answer: If confirmed, I will work in concert with the Alaska Native people, EPA’s dedicated career staff, the State of Alaska, other agencies, and Congress to address contaminated sites conveyed to the local corporations in accordance with law.

2. Moose Creek, a thermal remediation treatment facility outside of Fairbanks, treats soil and other matter that has been contaminated by PFAS, particularly from nearby military bases. Thermal remediation is the most viable option for PFAS treatment in Alaska. However, due to the moratorium on incinerating PFAS-contaminated soil, Moose Creek has not been able to treat that soil from DoD, but can from other agencies. *Will you commit to working with DoD to help lift the moratorium on PFAS incineration to ensure that facilities like Moose Creek can continue to treat PFAS-contaminated soil?*

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with DoD, concerned stakeholders, and EPA staff to support viable PFAS treatment technologies, including thermal destruction, in accordance with law.

3. EPA’s Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant Program (SWIFR) provides grants to improve recycling and waste management systems. It was authorized by my Save Our Seas 2.0 Act, a law to tackle marine debris, and funded by the Infrastructure and Investments Jobs Act. These SWIFR grants allow communities, including many in Alaska, to better manage their waste to ensure that it does not end up in our oceans. *Will you commit to reviewing, improving and supporting the SWIFR program?*

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with career staff to review and assess the SWIFR program and evaluate opportunities to improve this program to continue the progress being made on solid waste management in Alaska and other parts of the country.

Senator Padilla

1. Mr. Busterud, you served at EPA Region 9 during the first Trump Administration, when Exide's contamination was already well known. Given the scale of the remediation needed – not just at Exide, but at sites across the country – *how do you plan to accelerate cleanups when the President's budget proposes cuts to the Superfund program?*

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with EPA's dedicated career staff to ensure the Superfund program operates efficiently and effectively. Accelerating cleanups is a priority. We will accomplish this critical core mission with the resources we are provided by Congress.

- Will you commit to prioritizing the Exide cleanup and ensuring it doesn't fall through the cracks or get deprioritized for sites in red states?

Answer: It is my understanding that the Exide site is currently being evaluated for inclusion on the National Priorities List (NPL). While I cannot prejudge the outcome of an ongoing regulatory proceeding, if confirmed I will work with our dedicated career staff to treat all sites in an even-handed and lawful manner to protect human health and the environment for all Americans.

- Staffing has also been a major barrier to swift clean-ups, and that's before the current layoffs and RIFs. How will you ensure that EPA has the personnel and technical capacity to take on large, complex cleanups like Exide?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work closely with our career staff to ensure EPA has the personnel and technical expertise needed to address large, complex cleanups in a timely and effective manner. If confirmed, we will continue to fulfill our core mission of protecting human health and the environment through Superfund, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Brownfields, and other Office of Land and Emergency Management programs, using the resources provided by Congress.

Senator Alsobrooks

1. Waste from industrial activities can end up in our water, like the Chesapeake Bay, affecting our environment and our economy. The Superfund program, when it has adequate funding, ensures that these hazards are addressed and that the state's communities are protected from contamination that could lead to health problems. Unfortunately, the program has been underfunded for years; the Superfund tax has been generating far less revenue than anticipated, and the recent EPA budget included a \$254 million cut to the Superfund program. *If confirmed, how do you plan to balance funding shortfalls with the need to maintain comprehensive and effective?*

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with our dedicated career staff to accomplish our critical Superfund mission with the resources we are provided by Congress. We will prioritize high-risk sites, improve efficiency whenever possible, and continue to protect public health and the environment.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you all very much. I appreciate that.

Before we begin with questioning from each member, there are three standing yes or no questions that I will ask all of the three of you if you could just respond.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this committee or designated members of this committee and other appropriate committees of this Congress to provide information subject to appropriate and necessary security protections with respect to your responsibilities?

Mr. TELLE. Yes.

Mr. McMASTER. Yes.

Mr. BUSTERUD. Yes.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you. Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, documents, and electronic and other forms of communication of information provided to this committee and its staff and other appropriate committees in a timely manner?

Mr. TELLE. Yes, Senator.

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, Senator.

Mr. BUSTERUD. Yes, Chairman.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you.

Finally, do you know of any matters which you may or may not have disclosed that may place you in a conflict of interest if you are confirmed?

Mr. TELLE. No.

Mr. McMASTER. No.

Mr. BUSTERUD. No.

Senator CAPITO. Great, thank you.

Okay, I am going to start my round of questions, and I am going to start with Mr. McMaster. You mentioned bridges, and I think you and I talked about bridges when we had our meeting in the office. I appreciate all of you for coming to visit. Our geography requires us to have a lot of those bridges.

We need a strong Federal partner in the FHWA. It is critical to our success. A lot of progress was made and is being made with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, IIJA. Are there any policy and funding proposals that we should consider including in the next reauthorization, which we are beginning work on, to further address regionally significant or bridge projects?

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, Senator, I appreciate the question. I know you have been a champion for bridges. For the Federal Highway Administration, bridge safety is a paramount importance issue. It is critical to the safety of our traveling public; it is critical to our supply chain. As we look to support reauthorization, there is work still yet to be done. Tremendous progress over the last few years, when I served at HNTB I was fortunate to work in support of the Brent Spence Bridge, which after 20 years is now finally realizing development.

I look forward to supporting you if I am confirmed. I know it is of paramount importance for the Federal Highway Administration and I look forward, if confirmed, to supporting your efforts through authorization to identify additional ways we can accelerate the maintenance and enhancement of our Nation's bridges on the highway system.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you.

Mr. Busterud, addressing PFAS is a top environmental priority that I share with Administrator Zeldin, and I think they are making some announcements today. I was pleased to see the EPA release an agency-wide plan setting bold goals to tackle this crisis.

If confirmed, you will be responsible for leading OLEM's major role in this strategy, from updating PFAS destruction guidance to enforcing the polluter pays principle. How would you lead in this way, and help us tackle this very difficult and far-ranging problem of PFAS contamination?

Mr. BUSTERUD. Thank you, Chairman. PFAS is a high priority issue for EPA, and the Administrator on April 28th as you noted announced a suite of programs basically taking a whole of EPA approach to addressing PFAS across its major program offices.

As you noted, and as we discussed in our conversation in your office, OLEM will play an important role to increase the frequency of guidance we give on PFAS destruction. It has been every 3 years. We are going to commit to providing those updates on an annual basis, and there was great interest in that.

OLEM will also look at and examine its RCRA authorities to prevent releases of PFAS from manufacturing facilities and other facilities which use PFAS. You mentioned the polluter pays issue, and I support that entirely. We will continue with that approach.

The notion of passive receiver, the issue of passive receiver is very important to a number of Senators on your committee and others. That is an issue that if confirmed, I pledge to work with our dedicated career staff and to look at ways in which we can avoid a situation in which customers of water utilities would be forced to pay for contamination they didn't put in the water to begin with. I look forward to working with your committee on that.

Senator CAPITO. Great. Thank you.

Mr. Telle, we had a hearing on Corps of Engineers and the implementation of some of their programs. This is a daunting challenge, I think, to step into the position that you are in, because the slowness and the sluggishness of some of the work that we know is critical is, I think, universally felt by all of us.

This goes to the fact that the Army Corps is actively working on nearly 100 ongoing feasibility studies and general reevaluation reports. These will result in projects later on, as you know, and authorizations and appropriations.

How will you ensure that projects and other activities are appropriately prioritized in work plans, and balance the competing water resources in the Country?

Mr. TELLE. Chairman Capito, you have identified the fundamental issue as it relates to this nomination, which is this is a complex and exhaustive set of challenges. The demand for the Corps' work is greater than the supply. The Congress is incredibly interested in the projects and work of the Corps of Engineers, as you have identified.

The core principle, and when it comes to prioritization in a constrained budget environment is to follow the law. The law says that the Corps' primary missions are navigation, enabling commerce on America's waterways, flood mitigation and control, and aquatic ecosystem restoration.

Those have to be the primary beacons when it comes to prioritization, examining how the projects meet those missions as the Congress has laid them out, setting priorities on the basis of benefits versus costs, life and safety and other factors that ultimately will play into all these decisions. It is a complicated one.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you. Senator Whitehouse?

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Thanks, Chairman.

Mr. McMaster, the Chair and I both intend to deliver to you a robust, bipartisan surface transportation reauthorization, as we discussed in my office. In order for that to happen, we need assurances that whatever bipartisan legislation we write and get enacted into law will be implemented by the executive branch in a faithful and unbiased way. In particular, we need to clear the illegal funding freezes that have jammed up so many already appropriated projects.

Will you commit to implementing any and all authorized programs in a faithful and unbiased manner?

Mr. McMASTER. Senator, I appreciate your comment and your question. It is an important one. I give you my full commitment, if I am confirmed, to implement the law with the intent of Congress.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. You understand how it would be hard for the minority to agree to a bipartisan bill if the upshot of that agreement was that only the majority's parts of the bill were actually implemented, and everything that we wanted got binned by the executive branch?

Mr. McMASTER. Senator, I appreciate your comments. I think as the Secretary pointed out, infrastructure is not partisan. You have my full commitment to implement the law in accordance with the intent of Congress.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Thank you.

Mr. Telle, I have referred to the Army Corps of Engineers as a bureaucratic tributary of the Mississippi River. That is a rhetorical point that I make to highlight the extent to which the Army Corps appears to favor inland over coastal flooding projects.

We have looked back at the Inland and Coastal Flooding Account at the Army Corps, and its best year was \$20 for inland for every \$1 for coastal flooding. That was our best year as coastal States. Worst year was \$100 for inland flooding for every \$1 for coastal flooding.

Rhode Island's sea level is up about 11 inches. That is not a debatable proposition. You measure that the same way you measure the height of your kid on the doorway. It is really simple; it is inches and rulers.

We have real coastal flooding issues. I would like your assurance that you will take these inland versus coastal concerns seriously as coastal flooding becomes more and more of a danger for coastal communities.

Mr. TELLE. Senator Whitehouse, thank you for raising this issue. I look forward to and am eager to, if confirmed, to make sure we have our hands around this data and understand it. I think historically the riverine flooding has been easier to predict perhaps than the locations of coastal flooding, but that does not mean we should not invest as much as, a greater amount in coastal flooding. This

is obviously an issue that has been near and dear to my heart, working on hurricane recovery my entire career, as well as the inland flooding, riverine flooding.

I would just say, I think you are right, as we work to justify and prioritize, as Chairman Capito mentioned, the projects that are of the greatest benefit to the public, we have to be able to consider things that have in the past been unpredictable and try to predict them more accurately.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Yes. I would also add that Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA's, mapping has been such a flagrant disaster that States like mine have had to do their own flood mapping, because FEMA's mapping simply wasn't worthy of belief. You do not have to look much beyond FEMA's flood mapping of the Houston area versus the actual flooding, repeated flooding, in the Houston area, which is a really big area in the last decade, to see how bad FEMA's mapping has been.

Part of the problem is to fix the mapping as well as to fix the priorities. I look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. TELLE. Senator, if I may, really quickly, this is an issue I have worked on in the past and would say there is a great deal of frustration in the public around FEMA's mapping programs. It is not something that I will be in charge of if confirmed, but certainly something I will work on.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. To the extent you want to rely on them, you need to go in eyes wide open that they are a failure.

Mr. TELLE. One of the frustrations that the public has had about FEMA's maps is it does not adequately consider flash flooding, rainstorms. It only considers storm surges in many cases, and it does not adequately consider flood control infrastructure. These are issues that have to be addressed in order to give the public confidence in the government's product.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. I would also like to work with you and the Chairman on a priorities list where committee members who feel that a project has gotten lost in the Army Corps' bureaucracy can get a regular scheduled briefing from the Army Corps where we put our projects on that list and you know that those projects are on that list and you are going to have to come in and report to us on them on a regular basis, so that projects that are important to members of this committee get the attention that they deserve.

Mr. TELLE. Senator, when Congress passes a law and the President signs it, there is some expectation that it be followed. I look forward to working with you on that.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Good. Well, this is an issue where the Chair and I are going to need to work together and agree. We would certainly urge that senior Army Corps folks turn up for those briefings on those projects once we have sorted out what that looks like.

Senator CAPITO. I would add, just the second question that I asked you all, with timely responses back, there is nothing more frustrating, no matter who is in charge, to not get an answer. That happens, and it is very frustrating.

We will go to Senator Ricketts.

Senator RICKETTS. Thank you, Chairman Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse, for holding the hearing today. Welcome to all of our nominees, congratulations.

I chair the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water and Wildlife, and sit on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. I look forward to learning from each of you how you plan to serve Nebraskans and Americans in your new roles should you be confirmed.

The Endangered Species Act, ESA, is a law that impacts each one of you as nominees. Mr. McMaster, you and I shared, I shared with you my concerns about the American Burrowing Beetle, and its impacts on infrastructure. Mr. Telle, you heard about the piping plover and the pallid sturgeon and its impacts on the Missouri River and the Platte River. Then Mr. Busterud, you are no stranger to National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA, compliance.

I would like each one of the nominees to talk a little bit about how you plan to implement the ESA in a way that promotes species protection and recovery but is not prohibitive to the work in your respective offices. Mr. Telle, may we start with you?

Mr. TELLE. Senator, thank you for the question. I detected a bit of frustration from you and I have detected it from the public over my time working here in the Senate about when the law is applied on the basis of, or decisions are made within the government on the basis of something that the government did before. I think that is the case here, with the species you are talking about, where the government's work actually increased the habitat and then created a problem where before it didn't exist.

We have to be better at predicting these things and having a comprehensive management plan that looks at second and third order effects of the government's work and gets it right, and when we do not get it right, correct it as quickly as possible instead of ignoring the problem.

Thank you, Senator.

Mr. MCMASTER. Thank you, Senator, I appreciated the conversation the other day. I will say the Administration has a strong process, a robust process and a way to find ways to expedite project delivery, but at the same time respect and conserve the environment in that process.

If I am confirmed, I look forward to learning more from you on these specific issues you raised in person, working closely with the Federal Highway Administration in partnership with the State to make sure that those environmental challenges are conserved, maintained, and respected while we look to move projects forward quicker, faster, and better for the benefit of the State and the Country. Thank you.

Mr. BUSTERUD. Senator, based on my environmental legal experience, and I would bring that to bear here with EPA, I believe that early consultation and engagement on endangered species issues in the planning phase before shovels even go in the ground is essential in terms of planning out an expedited schedule that is not impaired by the presence of either critical habitat or listed species.

Senator RICKETTS. Great. Thank you.

Under Chairman Capito's leadership, we are beginning to work on the Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill, and are focused on improving efficiency in the system. I have heard from Nebras-

kans that one reason projects are significantly slowed is that too many agencies are required to take action to approve a single project. Often these approvals are being done consecutively instead of concurrently, adding unnecessary delays to project implementation.

Mr. McMaster, how important is streamlining processes to deliver on timely project delivery and what can Congress do to help?

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, Senator, I appreciate that question. It is a tremendous priority of this administration to find ways to move projects faster, better and more cost effectively. I will say this tremendous backlog, the historic backlog of grant awards that are awaiting grant agreements, it in no small way is a tremendous priority that needs to be addressed. Over the last couple of weeks we have seen two different tranches of backed awards totaling more than \$5 billion in this effort.

The Secretary is also interested in reducing the regulatory burden on these awards and future awards, so that when we say we want to build, we are able to build and we are able to build more cost effectively. In addition, the administration is looking at updating its guidance on NEPA and then looking for additional streamlining provisions.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and the Congress as you engage in your efforts to reauthorize the Surface Transportation programs.

Senator RICKETTS. I am running out of time here, but Mr. Telle, obviously as Governor I sat through a 500-year flood in Nebraska in 2019. Can you tell us how you can work with sister agencies like Fish and Wildlife to ensure the management of the Missouri River Basin to prioritize people and property to make sure we are protecting life when we have those 500 year floods?

Mr. TELLE. Senator Ricketts, thank you for the question and thank you for your leadership as Governor during that flood that affected large swaths of the Country, and especially Nebraska.

With the Missouri River, which I told Senator Fischer yesterday is America's longest river, edging out the Mississippi by one mile, it requires management from Montana all the way to Missouri. Your State is right in the middle.

There are competing interests that have to do with navigation interests and flood control interests up and down the system, as well as water supply interests, especially in the farther west reaches of the river.

It is a challenge. The Corps of Engineers often has to make decisions about whether agricultural interests and weigh those against commercial interests and weigh those against life and safety interests. I would just say that life and safety and the protection of property has to always be a primary concern as these issues are balanced.

The Corps of Engineers has manuals that dictate how they operate these facilities, but Senator, I think our elected leadership, our politically accountable leadership, I think there is an expectation that they will use good judgment in times of crisis like this one to deliver the best result for the public. I hope that we can get it right.

Senator RICKETTS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Senator CARPER. Senator Ricketts, or excuse me, Senator Padilla?. We just had Senator Ricketts.

Senator PADILLA. Thank you, Madam Chair. I mean, people confuse us all the time.

[Laughter.]

Senator CAPITO. Right.

Senator PADILLA. It is understandable.

Senator CAPITO. I think it is the accents.

Senator PADILLA. I appreciated, Mr. Telle, in our meeting, that you are tracking the proposed \$1 billion cut to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. As you may know, the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are the busiest ports in the western hemisphere, receiving 40 percent of the Nation's imports. There are other ports along the coast of California, but those two alone account for 40 percent.

They are also considered donor ports, which generate nearly half the revenue into the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund but receive only a small fraction in return. Now, Congress directed the courts to ensure more equitable distribution of the trust funds in the 2020 WRDA, and finally, in the Fiscal Years 2024 work plan funding was made available.

Can you provide, Mr. Telle, some assurances that the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, HMTF, obligations defined under WRDA 2020 will continue to be met this year and going forward again in that more equitable fashion?

Mr. TELLE. Senator Padilla, thank you for the question. You have identified an issue here that is important. The Congress and the executive branch have had debates, and the Congress has weighed in heavily on how revenues related to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund are collected and expended.

Congress did recently enact a provision, as you referenced, that says ports like the ones in your State, which have significant traffic but fewer dredging needs, that they have the ability to use Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund revenue and expenditures on non-traditional depth and width projects which help facilitate commerce in areas of the port where the Corps of Engineers hasn't traditionally worked.

I intend to follow the law in this regard, and certainly look forward to working with you on how the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund is managed.

Senator PADILLA. I very much appreciate your answer in regard to following the law, as current law is, following the directions as set by Congress. I hate to even have to ask, but you know as well as I do what we have been through the last 4 months, where despite congressional action and not just authorization by appropriations, we are dealing with an administration that sometimes thinks they know better and directs departments and agencies to do differently.

I believe you when you say you will stick to the letter of the law, and look forward to following up with you to ensure that on specific projects.

Speaking of specific projects, the Los Angeles County Drainage Area Project is a dynamic flood conveyance system that provides flood risk benefits to the 10 million people living in Los Angeles

County, and frankly, a larger number of people if you look at the greater metropolitan area. However, the Corps-owned and maintained portion of the system has a significant backlog of maintenance, nothing new; you referenced the general dynamic earlier, which leaves the entire system vulnerable to extreme weather events.

The Corps' annual budget cannot keep up; it is not even keeping close. As a result, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works is currently engaged with the Corps to transfer some of the Corps-maintained sections of the system to ensure the long-term viability and safety of the critical system. We have been working on this for a couple of years.

Given the Corps' \$100 billion backlog of authorized but unfunded projects, I am encouraged when I see partners like Los Angeles County willing to step up and work together to address the challenges. As a member of this committee, I was proud to support provisions in WRDAs 2022 and 2024 to help address the operational efficiencies of the LA County Drainage Area System.

All that being said, my question is to have your commitment to work with me and Los Angeles County to ensure the seamless transfer of those assets to the county that have been agreed to.

Mr. TELLE. Senator Padilla, thank you for your advocacy for this. As a general principle, I agree with the notion that Federal responsibilities, to the degree that a State or locality has the capacity to deal with an issue or to operate a facility, we ought to be pushing authorities and responsibilities and the fiscal burden to the local entity, because they understand the needs of their citizens much better than we can here in Washington.

In general, I agree with you on that principle. I do not have the details in terms of how this could affect the system of systems that is the California water system. I would like to take a look at that, but I commit to taking a look at that and working with you on this to make sure that we get it right for the citizens of your State and of course the surrounding States in the west, who all share water resources in a very careful manner.

Senator PADILLA. I am sure the rank and file and professionals at the Corps have agreed that this makes sense, we are in the process of doing it, it has been agreed to. I hope that we can continue and finish the transfer process.

A couple of other questions I would like to ask, but my time is up so I will submit questions for the record.

Mr. TELLE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator PADILLA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator RICKETTS. [Presiding.] I will take over for the Chair while she is voting. Senator Wicker?

Senator WICKER. Thank you, and very ably done, Mr. Interim Chair.

[Laughter.]

Senator WICKER. Mr. Telle, let's talk about a wastewater treatment program, project that involves the State of Mississippi and the State of Tennessee. As everyone knows, Memphis and Shelby County amount to one of the largest metropolitan areas in the Country and certainly the largest in the State of Tennessee.

Just below Memphis and Shelby County is DeSoto County, Mississippi, one of the fastest-growing counties in Mississippi. Included abutting the State line are the cities of Southaven, Horn Lake, and certain unincorporated areas. About 48 years ago, a wastewater treatment facility was federally funded, addressing the wastewater treatment needs in both of those areas. It was funded to the extent possible based on population numbers from the Mississippi area as well as the Memphis area.

Some years ago, the folks north of the State line brought suit and asked that the Mississippi customers be excluded from that treatment plant. This went to court, we didn't feel it was fair, but the Federal judge ruled that the Mississippi areas, Southaven, Horn Lake and certain unincorporated areas, have to get on their own water treatment system by the year 2031. Only way we can possibly do that is to look as this metropolitan area did 50 years ago to the Federal Government.

The Army Corps of Engineers is a valuable part of this new project. Can you please commit to me that the Army Corps of Engineers do everything possible to assist the DeSoto County Regional Utility Authority, known as DCRUA, in building a new wastewater system before this judicially imposed 2031 deadline?

Mr. TELLE. Senator Wicker, thank you for the question. It is an issue that I have familiarity with from both sides of the State line. In 1992, Congress began authorizing the Corps of Engineers to take on projects generally described as environmental infrastructure. These are not the traditional navigation, flood control, aquatic ecosystem restoration types of projects that the Corps of Engineers has done, but it has had a great deal of interest from the Congress.

I think that is going to continue, and I certainly commit to work with you in an area, DeSoto County, Shelby County, that I know well, to make sure that we get it right and we can facilitate to the degree we are able DeSoto County's ability to meet the directive of the courts.

Senator WICKER. I assume that if this project is not done by 2031, the Federal judge will not decree that sewage start to run in the streets of DeSoto County, Mississippi. We are going to try, with your help, we are going to try to comply with this.

Let's talk about the Bonnet Carré Spillway. We have already talked about how long the Mississippi River is, and the Missouri River. Thirty-one States contribute to what runs by the States of Louisiana and Mississippi as it gets almost to the Gulf. By the time it gets there, it is full of bacteria, nutrients, fertilizer runoff, sediment and other things that leads to algal blooms in the Gulf.

When the water gets high, there are a number of spillways that can be opened to prevent flooding of a number of very important areas. In 2019, though, the Bonnet Carré Spillway was opened for a total of 123 days. It spilled into the Mississippi sound, a saltwater important area for fishing, changing it more into freshwater, hugely damaging, costing many, many jobs.

We can not possibly have this happen again. There are times when the spillway can be opened, take some of the freshwater into a saltwater area, but not that much.

Will you agree that the Army Corps should include stakeholders such as the Mississippi Sound Coalition and stakeholders in both

Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi, in a comprehensive study of which spillways are opened?

Mr. TELLE. Senator Wicker, I would gladly take input from stakeholders. As you rightly point out, there are facilities up and down the Mississippi River from Bird's Point to Morganza and then the spillway of last resort, of course, is the Bonnet Carré, which diverts water into Lake Pontchartrain, and then ultimately as you say, into the Mississippi Sound, which affects the ecosystem there, the commercial ecosystem as well as the recreational ecosystem.

These are the types of tradeoffs that we have to discuss when we talk about operating the Corps of Engineers many facilities. Preventing a flood upstream may mean effects, as you described, on places like the Mississippi Sound. It is very important that the Corps of Engineers has clear input from stakeholders from across a waterway, from up and down, to understand the impacts. These are complex systems of systems and we could use as much input as we could possibly get to try to make sure that we get the balance right.

Senator WICKER. Thank you for that answer. Mr. Chairman, I realize we have gone over, but it is a matter of thousands and thousands of jobs up and down the Mississippi River. Thank you.

Senator RICKETTS. Senator Blunt Rochester?

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to the nominees and your families for being here.

I would like to start with Mr. McMaster. Thank you for the opportunity to meet. When we were in my office, you indicated your willingness to be transparent about the status of discretionary grants in my State, if confirmed. I am sure, and you have mentioned that Secretary Duffy recently shared the grant obligation announcements.

Missing from that list were many projects in Delaware. During his confirmation, he committed to getting discretionary grants out the door and abiding by the law. I am sure this is an easy question for you. Will you make this same commitment?

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, Senator, absolutely. This is a tremendous priority for the administration and the Secretary. You have my full commitment, if I am confirmed, to support the Secretary in those efforts and to look into any specific projects you may have and followup with you directly.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. Great. Thank you so much.

I made a point during my meeting with him as well that this funding was already awarded, much of it. I understand that we are like re-reviewing some of the grants. I hope, again, for me, that is not as efficient. I am looking forward, and I am grateful for your commitment. I appreciate that commitment. We will followup.

My next question is for Mr. Busterud. If confirmed, you will oversee EPA's Superfund program and as of now, there are over 1,300 sites on the Superfund's National Priorities List. Delaware has 17 sites spread across our State.

Given your commitment to putting public health and the environment at the center of your work, and the limited resources for a very complex program, how will you prioritize the completion of Superfund projects under your leadership?

Mr. BUSTERUD. Senator, thank you. I am committed to protecting human health and the environment, as I told your staff during the visit. I am going to make a priority in enhancing and improving the pace and efficiency of our Superfund cleanups.

Really, there are two essential components there. One is a suite of process improvements we can make. There are opportunities for that. I spoke with Senator Ricketts in his office yesterday about that very issue, providing enhanced project management tools to the regions, so they can explore ways in which we can take phases of the remedial investigations and move them in parallel rather than in sequence. There are also great opportunities for using AI in producing reports and not necessarily spending time drafting documents, you know, have an issue, if you will.

I want to say, too, in addition to those enhancements, I want to acknowledge to this committee that there is a human element to Superfund. Superfund affects children, families, communities, tribes, businesses and their employees. I know if confirmed I am going to make that a priority for me in terms of implementation. I know our dedicated career staff feels that way, and I look forward to working with them and with the communities we serve.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. Thank you for that commitment as well.

Mr. Telle, as a former staffer, I was impressed by Mr. Hagerty acknowledging everyone around this room. I am sure they are proud and inspired.

Delaware, as you probably know, is the lowest lying State in the Country, which makes the Army Corps' work critical to us as a State. Affordability criteria and the high Federal cost share are critical to helping our local communities, like those in my State, mitigate disaster risk.

This approach has been essential to funding beach nourishment and restoration projects across the Delaware Bay beach communities. That really gets inland as well.

Mr. Telle, if confirmed, do you commit to following affordability criteria and including a high Federal cost share in order to protect local communities?

Mr. TELLE. Senator Blunt Rochester, thank you for your comments. You raise a very important issue. Part of the reason that I am so honored to have been nominated for this position is because the Corps of Engineers' mission reaches into the smallest communities in America and some of the biggest cities, and has an impact on all of them in a very real way.

Often times, it is reaching to the small communities, and in many cases, economically disadvantaged communities over the course of history, along the Mississippi River, along the coast, along the tributaries. These communities may not have the capacity that the larger communities have.

That is why it is incumbent upon the Corps as it works with these communities which are very important to provide technical assistance along the way, and where necessary tailor the cost share to meet the community's needs as appropriate, and of course with care for the Federal taxpayer as well.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. Thank you. I have additional questions on brownfields, reconnecting communities, the Port of Wil-

mington and dredging, but I will submit those questions for the record.

I also am in a Commerce Committee hearing on FAA right now. I think I heard Mr. McMaster mention that your son is an air traffic controller?

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, that is correct.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. Tell him thank you, thank you on behalf of our Country. I yield back.

Mr. McMASTER. I appreciate that. I will. Thank you.

Senator RICKETTS. Senator Boozman?

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you so much. First of all, I want to congratulate Mr. Telle on his being nominated to lead the Corps. I had the opportunity to work with him, actually I felt like I worked for him on Homeland Security. I was the chairman, he was the staff director. He did a tremendous job, and I know he is going to bring that same work ethic again in leading the Corps. I really believe that he is the right person for this position.

As you know, Ebbing Air National Guard Base in Fort Smith, Arkansas is the home of the F-35 Foreign Military Sales Training Mission. The recent passage of the Fiscal Year 2025 full year continuing resolution includes funding to enable important construction projects that the Little Rock Corps is doing, responsible under tight timelines.

I have to compliment them; they have done a tremendous job so far in working so hard to expedite this. This is something that has kind of been an all hands on deck approach.

If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring the Little Rock District receives the Corps' full support and resources to deliver these mission critical projects on schedule to the highest standard?

Mr. TELLE. Senator Boozman, thank you very much, first of all, for the compliment. I appreciate it. I absolutely worked for you. The first time I came into your office, I saw a sign on your desk that said Arkansas First, and we followed that practice at all times.

Senator, with regard to the Little Rock District, I commit to working with you to make sure that congressional intent, your interests, the interests identified to you by your constituents are met. We visited Arkansas when I was working with you, and I look forward to visiting the Little Rock District if confirmed.

Senator BOOZMAN. Very good. Again, I want to publicly thank them for doing a really good job up to now in pushing things forward.

In 2024, the Corps of Engineers recreation sites welcomed approximately 260 million visitors nationwide, including Corps managed lakes and parks in Arkansas and throughout the Country. These sites are vital to the local economies, providing safe, affordable access to public lands for fishing, boating and camping. Yet many sites face aging infrastructure and deferred maintenance. Fees collected onsite most of the time are not reinvested where they are generated.

I know that the Corps has its missions and this and that. Again, this has grown to a tremendous extent. The problem is you fix things and you prevent them from getting bad, it does not cost a

whole lot of money, you let them go and eventually they have to be replaced and it costs a fortune.

If confirmed, would you prioritize helping us figure out a better path forward, so that we can maybe take some of the burden off? Things like public-private partnerships, thinking outside the box. Then also maybe looking at the fact that again, these are generating money for the Corps, seeing if we can keep a percentage of that money in the areas where they are generated.

Mr. TELLE. Senator Boozman, thank you for the question. You have hit the nail on the head here. The Corps of Engineers' facilities actually have more annual visitors than the National Park System. This is of great benefit to the public. It is not a primary mission of the Corps of Engineers, as you have identified, but it is a secondary mission, and certainly, when the Corps of Engineers takes on projects, there are often recreational benefits that come alongside those projects that do not add significant additional funding to the cost of the project.

We need to be smart in trying to meet these needs. When it comes to maintaining and operating and improving these recreational facilities, I do look forward to working with you, and I hope it's in a creative way, to help solve the issue you have identified.

Senator BOOZMAN. Very good. Thank you.

Mr. McMaster, very quickly, as you are aware, the U.S. has 35,000 injuries, thousands of fatalities from roughly 100,000 work zone crashes each year. How does U.S. Department of Transportation, USDOT, plan to improve worker safety? Do you have any ideas about worker safety and work zone awareness in these areas, to try and get these numbers down?

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, Senator, you highlight an extremely important issue that the Federal Highway Administration faces, and the Department recently just honored work zone safety. I will say I look forward to, upon confirmation, getting briefed up by the Federal Highway Administration on kind of the current challenges, where the data is. I look forward to working with the Congress directly to resolve and improve our work zone safety challenges that we have throughout the Country.

You raise an important point, it is not something that has been solved to date, and we need to continue to work to protect those critical workers as they build out our infrastructure across the Country.

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you very much. Thank all of you for your willingness to serve.

Senator RICKETTS. Senator Alsobrooks?

Senator ALSOBROOKS. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. Thank you as well to each of the nominees today. Congratulations to you and to your families on your nominations.

The three offices that you are being considered for are really critical to Maryland. I am excited to have the chance to ask some questions today.

I will start with Mr. McMaster, and ask you a question regarding the university transportation centers. Last week, the U.S. Department of Transportation actually terminated grants for seven university transportation centers related to advancing a so-called

“woke” agenda. I understand that Johns Hopkins University, which is one of the seven universities impacted, had however already revised its work plans to align with the administration’s priorities. These grants required a dollar-for-dollar match, meaning that the universities made significant financial and institutional commitments, and they did so based on the promise of a 5-year Federal partnership.

I am concerned not just about the terminations themselves, but how it was handled, and the justification that was provided, and what this says about the Federal Government’s willingness to honor its commitments.

The question is, given that some of the universities have already revised their work plans and others have expressed a willingness to do so, can you commit today to working with these institutions to reverse the terminations and instead pursue a path that allows these universities to fulfill their mission under the revised mutually agreeable terms?

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, thank you, Senator. I understand how important this issue is to you.

I am not familiar with the recent terminations of those, so I can commit to you, if I am confirmed, to following up directly with the Federal Highway Administration and the Secretary and the Department to understand more fully what the justifications and what the interests were in that, and then happy to followup with you directly to address this issue.

Senator ALSOBROOKS. Perfect. Thank you so much.

Mr. McMaster, just one other question regarding Maryland, the freezing of some funds. Maryland’s aging bridge infrastructure presents for us a really significant challenge. There are several critical structures requiring attention and investment.

For this reason, the Bridge Investment Program, which was established under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, is really, really important to our State. The Trump Administration froze this program at the beginning of the year and then quickly reinstated the program. The freezing of funds caused confusion, as you might imagine, uncertainty, and it also added to some project delays.

If confirmed, can you commit that the Federal Highway Administration will keep congressionally appropriated Federal funds flowing?

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, Senator, I appreciate the question. I can confirm, if I am confirmed, I can commit to you that I will carry out these programs in accordance with the law and the intent of Congress.

Senator ALSOBROOKS. Thank you.

The third, Mr. Telle, I want to ask you a question as well about sustainability and climate resilience projects. Many of Maryland’s Army Corps projects are related to climate change and are designed to enhance resilience. The Baltimore District in particular is currently working on projects that mitigate risks from sea level rise, coastal storms and flooding. I suspect that you have familiarity with similar projects, given your time working in both Mississippi’s and Alabama’s congressional delegation.

If confirmed, the question is whether or not you would commit to working with my office to ensure that Maryland’s congression-

ally authorized Army Corps projects that focus on sustainability and climate resilience are completed?

Mr. TELLE. Senator, thank you for the question. With regard to climate resiliency, it is a question of, for the Corps of Engineers, the policy, the Corps of Engineers does not set the policy on why or the root cause of a particular project. It only looks at the data, the latest hydrological trends, the real hard information to make decisions about how to plan projects for now and for the future, so that they can make States like Maryland more resilient.

I absolutely commit to following congressional intent and working with you on advancing the projects that are important to your State.

Senator ALSOBROOKS. Thank you. I yield to Senator Husted.

Senator HUSTED. [Presiding.] Thank you.

Gentlemen, thank you for joining us today. I know that you will hear from me what will be a broken record, that is, time is money. The faster we go, the more money we save, the more quickly we begin to improve life. You each have roles that impact the environment and the economy, and the faster we get to solutions on the problems that you are addressing, the better off we will all be.

If you take the previous 4 years, although the latest inflation numbers show that inflation is at a low for the past 5 years, but if you take the previous 4 years, there were, the average inflation rate was 5 percent. That is a 20 percent cost increase over the previous 4 years. That is illustrative of my point about how quickly we make these decisions the more money we save, the more quickly that we can improve our environmental circumstances.

Mr. BUSTERUD, I want to bring this to you, and I know there was just an announcement on PFAS this morning, which I saw some of the details. It is hard for me to digest all that has happened.

I first became aware of PFAS through the Patel Institute in Ohio, which has done a lot of work on this issue in terms of PFAS destruction through their annihilator technology. With PFAS, for example, it has a dramatic health impact, which can cause cancers and other health challenges for people.

Tell about your plans to fast-track that evaluation and get some of these new technologies in place as quickly as possible, so that we can get PFAS out of our water systems.

Mr. BUSTERUD. Yes, Senator, I could not agree more than it is an urgent issue. As part of OLEM's role in the whole of EPA approach to PFAS, which Administrator Zeldin announced last month, we are committed to providing destruction guidance on a much more frequent basis than we had historically. We were doing it every 3 years, and we are going to be doing it at least annually going forward.

If confirmed, I commit to working with our staff to ensure that we and our scientists, our OLEM scientists, to ensure that we are considering and providing guidance on emerging technologies that have real promise.

Senator HUSTED. I appreciate that. It is the, it was originally, I mean, it is just amazing how quickly the technology can be developed, and we just have to get the technology deployed and the guidance out there as quickly as possible. All that you can do in that respect I think is in all of our best interests.

Mr. McMaster, I will again, with the theme of time is money, you mentioned the Brent Spence Bridge, which of course, when we had a chance to talk, I believe the last bridge that was built across the Ohio River took 13 years, 10 years to design and permit and 3 to build. With all of these construction projects, particularly with bridges, can you just give us a sense of confidence and direction about what you are going to be able to do to improve the speed with which these projects get completed? Then what advice you have for us as this process moves along on how we can help you.

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, Senator, I appreciate the commentary. I also appreciate you brought up inflation. I have that in my testimony. The last 3 years reported on the national construction cost index from the Federal Highway Administration shows that there has been a 67 percent increase alone in construction for infrastructure projects.

Senator HUSTED. The States, it affects the State revenue. They have been challenged with this. I know in Ohio, we had a plan, but inflation ate into the cost so much that now the funding mechanisms are not sufficient for the plan.

Mr. McMASTER. Absolutely, there is a tremendous impact in the ability to deliver these projects in a timely way. Then ultimately you deliver less projects as a result of the inflationary pressures on those.

What I will say as far as expediting project delivery, I mean, you could not have a more supportive administration in this effort. I know the Secretary has a tremendous effort underway to take these thousands of grant awards and move them to grant agreements. As part of that process, there is a review and a process to reduce the regulatory burden where there are not statutory demands and intent of Congress. He has taken it upon himself to clean up those grant awards, so that the ultimate project awardee can move those projects quicker, faster, better.

You have a tremendous advocate in the administration. Upon confirmation, I look forward to supporting his efforts strongly to expedite that backlog to completion and support you all as you consider additional opportunities for streamlining projects and accelerating project delivery under your reauthorization proposal.

Senator HUSTED. Great. Thank you very much. Sorry I didn't get a chance for you to give your time is money remarks, but Chairwoman Capito, I turn it back over to you.

Senator CAPITO. [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator. Thank you for taking the gavel there. We are all running back and forth today.

Senator Kelly, you are up.

Senator KELLY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Telle, good seeing you again. Thanks for coming by my office.

I want to talk about some priority infrastructure projects that we have in Arizona. First, as we discussed in my office, we talked about Winslow, the Winslow Levee Project. The Army Corps of Engineers is constructing this new levee system that will remove the town of Winslow from a 100-year flood plain. This project is authorized and it is fully funded under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. They have the local match.

Will you commit to ensuring that the Corps moves as quickly as possible to complete this infrastructure project?

Mr. TELLE. Senator, of course, if confirmed, I will follow the law and work with you and your constituents to make sure we provide that facility as quickly as we possibly can.

Senator KELLY. Thank you. Second, in last year's WRDA bill, we secured some new emergency authorities for the Army Corps to ensure that the Corps can exercise your regulatory authorities differently in regions experiencing drought. What I am talking about are the flood control curves that we discussed. These changes have the potential to save hundreds of thousands of acre feet of water in certain years in the west.

Will you commit to working with my office to ensure that the Corps' implementation guidance reflects congressional intent so the Corps moves quickly to respond to conditions in drought-stricken regions?

Mr. TELLE. Senator Kelly, thank you for the question. As I have testified today, on a number of occasions, the primary missions of the Corps of Engineers are navigation, flood control and aquatic ecosystem restoration. Water supply can be a secondary mission of the Corps.

I think I would point out the provision that you worked to include in a recent WRDA bill that said, in times of drought emergency, there can be an exception made to that policy. I think it makes sense, especially for communities in areas like your State that at times can be so desperate for water.

I look forward to working with you to make sure that we follow the law and get that provision implemented, the guidance and the rulemakings, and other processes that are required to bring that to bear. I look forward to working with you to make sure we get it right.

Senator KELLY. Thank you.

Finally, we also talked about Rio de Flag, which is another flooding issue in Flagstaff, Arizona. We have this project, it is downtown Flagstaff, it has been funded. Phase one of the project should be ready for construction next year.

We may run into an issue with the 902 limit. If a post-authorization change report is required for this project, will you commit to working with the city of Flagstaff to find a way to continue advancing phase one of the project without delay?

Mr. TELLE. Senator, thank you for the question. I look forward to learning more about the change that you describe and certainly across the board as has been discussed on numerous occasions here today, and the Senator right before you the point that time is money. I am sure that is the case in this project, too. I look forward to working with you, and I commit to doing everything we can to get it right, even with changes.

Senator KELLY. If a packer is required, will you commit to ensuring that the report is completed as quickly as possible so that it is provided to Congress in time for WRDA 2026?

Mr. TELLE. Senator, thank you for that question as well. This is another topic that I think I have heard on a bipartisan basis is of interest, which is even if we, whether we like the answer you are going to give us or not, give us an answer. I believe in that. I look forward to trying to be transparent and clear with you about the projects of interest to you, so that even if the answer is not some-

thing that you would have preferred, you can potentially work to mitigate the concerns that may exist.

Senator KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Telle.

Mr. McMaster, thanks for coming by my office as well. When we met, we discussed this 22d Street Bridge project in Tucson. It is a classic example of the type of project which Congress on a bipartisan basis intended to fund when we passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

This project replaces an ageing bridge over Union Pacific's main rail line that goes east to west through Tucson. Right now, the bridge is in such poor shape that, as we talked about, school buses and ambulances do not go over it.

The city of Tucson has submitted a draft grant agreement to the Federal Highway Administration for their review, which included all of the NEPA documents and utility and right-of-way clearances. Yet the city has not yet received any feedback on this submitted documentation since December, and they have not been able to meet with anybody. I know you are not in the building yet, but anybody with the staff.

If confirmed, will you commit to prioritizing and completing finalized grant agreements that have been caught up in this haphazardly implemented funding freeze like the 22d Street Bridge?

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, Senator, I appreciated the conversation in your office. I will commit to you that I look forward to supporting the Secretary in his efforts to move these projects from award to agreement as quickly and expeditiously as possible. Lives and money are impacted with any possible delay as it relates to this specific project. I look forward to following up with the Federal Highway Administration on the current status of that effort. Then I will followup with you directly afterwards.

Senator KELLY. Will you also commit that your office will follow the law and implement any other discretionary grant programs as Congress intended?

Mr. McMASTER. I commit to following the law with the intent of Congress.

Senator KELLY. All right. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator CAPITO. Senator Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for the witnesses and your families, for your service.

Mr. Telle, you are a glutton for punishment. A lot of folks do not know, you had your Armed Services confirmation hearing yesterday. You did a great job on that one. This should be a piece of cake.

Mr. TELLE. Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN. By the way, in my State, I am going to focus a lot on Alaska. I appreciated our meetings, Mr. Telle and Mr. McMaster.

Hard to build anything in Alaska, right? You want to build a road, a sidewalk, you usually get, you know, 12 radical far left environmental groups that sue to stop. We had the King Cove Road, we have only been trying to get that done for 40 years, a nine mile single lane gravel road that every Democrat in the Country, including, God rest his soul, Jimmy Carter, said you can not build a road in Alaska.

Then it went so bad, you had the Biden administration's last frontier lockup. My great State suffered through 70 executive orders, and executive actions, from the Biden administration, singularly focused on Alaska. I like ripping this up because that is not the issue any more.

We now have President Trump who issued his day one executive order called Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential. Mr. Telle, as you and I discussed, there is a lot of great provisions in here. This is all about getting things done in Alaska, not crushing us, as the radical left wants to do.

There is a really good provision about the Corps of Engineers. I am going to read it to you. The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, that is you, shall immediately review, revise or rescind any agency action that may in any way hinder, slow, or otherwise delay any critical project in the State of Alaska. That is from the President.

Will you commit to abide by that very expansive provision to get things done in my great State after, you know, 4 years of being crushed by the previous administration?

Mr. TELLE. Senator Sullivan, absolutely. When I visited your office, I tattooed the executive order that the President issue on Alaska on my heart.

Senator SULLIVAN. That, by the way, that is a great answer.

Mr. TELLE. I will go ahead and read the second paragraph to you from memory, which essentially says that I shall if confirmed coordinate as closely with the Governor of Alaska as any human could possibly coordinate.

Senator SULLIVAN. Good. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. TELLE. Of course.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay. Just double checking on that.

[Laughter.]

Senator SULLIVAN. We talked about the Juneau Glacial Lake outburst flooding. You want to talk about a unique issue in Alaska, we have had this flooding that pretty much happens now every summer. It is amazing it hasn't killed anybody. We need the Corps' help. This is a unique challenge. It is uniquely, the Corps is uniquely qualified to help us. You can not have flooding. I went and toured where this happened this past summer. Over 200 homes were flooded. This is, I mean, we got to fix it.

The Corps initially said when I went to them, well, Senator, we are going to work on this. We think it will be 10 years to study and fix this. Say what? That is the wrong answer.

Can you commit to me and really importantly the citizens of Juneau, Alaska, that the Corps is going to bring its best minds in a very, very rapid way to help address this unique challenge that we really need the Corps' help on?

Mr. TELLE. Senator Sullivan, thank you for the question. I did fail to mention, as a part of my answer to your previous question, that Alaska is home to greater than 60 percent of the U.S.'s wetlands. It makes the work of the Corps of Engineers critically important, thus the need for the executive order.

With regard to the glacial outburst issue in Juneau, you rightly point out that this is an issue that is brand new as far as I under-

stand it to be in terms of flood risk management. It is going to require creativity—

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, it is.

Mr. TELLE:—and the Corps of Engineers was made to solve tough problems. I look forward to working with you with the surrounding communities to try to solve this challenge.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great, thank you. In an expedited manner, not 10 years. That is just—

Mr. TELLE. In an expedited manner, Senator.

Senator SULLIVAN. You and I talked about the Ambler Road, the Port of Nome, so I will just submit questions for the record. The Port of Nome has got bipartisan support. We do not have an Arctic port anywhere to push back on the Russian and Chinese aggression in my part of the State. That project, it is really important. We got to get over the finish line.

Can I get your commitment to work with me and the others in this committee on that project? That is an interesting project. I mentioned you had your Senate Armed Services Committee, SASC, hearing yesterday. Environment and Public Works, EPW, and that is very much DOD, to be able to have Navy ships, icebreakers, be able to pull up to the Port of Nome. We do not have a port in the Arctic right now that can handle Navy ships and icebreakers.

Mr. TELLE. Senator Sullivan, one of the most strategic issues that confronts the United States of America today is our status as an Arctic and Antarctic nation. This is an area of the world that the Chinese Communist Party is very interested in. The Russians are very active. Your State is front and center to the United States of America's being an Arctic nation. We must be. It seems to me that if we are going to be an Arctic nation that Alaska ought to be one of the key launching points of that force projection and power projection and economic projection.

I look forward to working with you to help make the case for the strategic nature of Alaska and the Port of Nome as it relates to the United States asserting itself as an Arctic nation.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. That's a great answer. I really appreciate your expertise on that.

Finally, I am going to submit, Madam Chair, for the record, a number of other questions.

Just, Mr. McMaster, I mentioned to you, we are a resource rich, infrastructure poor State. We have less road miles than Connecticut, and we are almost 120 times bigger. If Senator Whitehouse were here, I would say we are 491 times bigger than Rhode Island. He does not like when I say that, but it is true.

Can I get your commitment to work with Alaska, this committee, our delegation, on permitting reform but also on just helping us build, right? We need more roads to resources. We need more roads to help our economy be stronger. That will help Alaska.

When you unlock the resources of Alaska, it helps America.

Mr. McMASTER. Yes, Senator, absolutely. I know the Federal Highway Administration has a strong partnership with the State of Alaska. If I am confirmed, I look forward to looking for ways to even strengthen that.

Senator SULLIVAN. For the record, we also have a couple grants on infrastructure from the Infrastructure Bill that have been fro-

zen. I would like to work with you and your team on just getting these unfrozen. I have talked to Secretary Duffy about it. Can I get your commitment on that as well?

Mr. McMASTER. Absolutely.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you. Senator Lummis?

Senator LUMMIS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Telle, first of all, congratulations on your nomination to oversee the Army Corps of Engineers. In Wyoming, we deal with the Corps so much we just call them the Corps, and everybody knows what we are talking about when we talk about the Corps. Right at the moment, we do not have any front page news projects with the Corps like my colleague from Alaska does. Did you call it a glacial outburst?

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, it is a very unique challenge that, it is almost like a glacier burping every summer and it floods in huge ways. It is a real challenge. We do not have that in a lot of other—I do not think West Virginia has glacial outburst issues.

Senator CAPITO. We have outbursts, but they are not glacial.

[Laughter.]

Senator LUMMIS. It is a spectacular country in that way, that it is so diverse. Of course, if you are trying to administer programs at the Federal Government level, it creates real challenges because of the nuances and uniqueness of this great country.

I will just let you know that we do have some ongoing Corps needs and some potential projects in the pipeline and I will look forward to working with you on those when they arise.

Mr. TELLE. Senator Lummis, I look forward to it as well. As you clearly articulate, the wonderful thing about the position I have been nominated for is that it does reach into every corner of America, Wyoming, West Virginia, Alaska. I look forward to working with you on issues important to Wyoming.

Senator LUMMIS. Thank you.

Now, Mr. McMaster, good morning. Roads really are the lifeline in Wyoming. We have very little airplane traffic, obviously very little waterborne traffic. It is a State that is road-dependent. I think we will be spending a lot of time together. Thanks for your willingness to serve in this capacity. It is critical infrastructure in this country.

The fact that you have Arizona roots helps you understand how vast our distances are, how challenging our terrain is, how extreme our weather can be. I know that is true in Arizona, it is very much more true in Wyoming. I for one thing can see that you understand how EV mandates do not work in Wyoming. Our elevations, our cold weather, and the distances that we have to travel just make EV mandates unworkable.

There is 450 miles that I travel from my farm to my ranch. One, I can see the Idaho border from the farm, and I am very close to the Colorado and Nebraska border on the ranch. I travel between them; I can not get between them on an EV charge. It is just not a practical solution for Wyoming.

Additionally, you appreciate that Wyoming has a really short construction season, and that means projects can not afford to wait on Federal approvals or disbursements to get underway. We have

this very, very narrow window for a construction season. It is, it creates a unique challenge for Wyoming. Even more unique than you might see in our adjacent States of Montana and Colorado.

There are a couple of projects that are very, very front and center. Currently, the Wyoming Department of Transportation is seeking reimbursements for the Green River Tunnel in I-80. There was an absolutely horrific crash in that tunnel that did a great deal of damage to the tunnel. That tunnel is used by commercial truck traffic en masse every single day of the year.

The other one is the Teton Pass issue. There is tremendous traffic between Driggs, Idaho, and Jackson, Wyoming. Nobody can afford to live in Jackson. The millionaires have now pushed the billionaires out of Jackson—

Senator CAPITO. You mean the billionaires have pushed the millionaires.

Senator LUMMIS. Well, I would have said that, but now the billionaires are coming down to Star Valley where I am because they want to get away from the millionaires and there are so many more millionaires. It is just the nuttiest place.

None of the people that are providing accommodations and services to these millionaires can afford to live there. They are driving either from Star Valley, where I am, up to Jackson, on the roads or they are going over Teton Pass from Driggs, Idaho, to work in Jackson. That roads sloughed off, it just slid away. We have a temporary fix. The permanent fix for Teton Pass will be coming to your attention. I will look forward to working with you on that.

Again, I want to commend you for your willingness to serve, your family's willingness to allow you to serve and support your service. You have a really strong transportation background, both in policy and administration, that are going to serve our Country well.

You have to work with the States. You have to trust the States. Our administrators really do know boots on the ground what the issues are they have to deal with and can help guide you in how to help us, the old help me, help you.

I want to ask you if you could take the remaining minute to talk about your priorities for FHWA.

Mr. McMASTER. Senator, I appreciate those comments, and I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation. I look forward to, if I am confirmed, working closely with the Wyoming Department of Transportation, but all States around the Country.

As far as my priorities the FHWA, I think I look at it in four ways. The first and obviously the most important is to support the Secretary in his refocused mission on safety. I think that is critical. I expect if I am confirmed that the Federal Highway Administration will additionally strongly support that effort in a refocused manner.

The second priority for me would be to advance expediting project delivery as quickly as possible. It has been raised multiple times here today. Time is money, as it relates to moving projects forward. There are limited resources available. The longer it takes the fewer projects we are actually able to realize.

I would like to support the Secretary in his efforts to address the backlog initially while he is reducing regulatory burden on our project awardees, so that we can realize quicker, faster, more cost

effective projects, and actually build rather than say we are going to build and move paper around.

My third priority would be to strongly assist your critical work here in Congress as you look to reauthorize the Surface Transportation Bill. I have an acute appreciation for what that may require for you all, and I want to make sure that you understand that the Federal Highway Administration, if I am confirmed, will be a resource for you as you consider many different aspects of what that will mean.

Then the fourth component I think for, as a priority for me, would be to make sure that the different viewpoints and unique needs around this Country are well reflected in the Federal policy at the USDOT. I look forward to supporting you all. Those would be my top kind of four areas of priority. It is an honor to potentially serve, and if I am confirmed, I look forward to following up with you on those priorities, and any other concerns or issues or priorities of your own you may have.

Senator LUMMIS. Thank you, and I might mention one more priority I have, which is commercial truck parking. Obviously, with the Department of Labor limits on how long you can stay behind the wheel, 18-wheelers are struggling for places to park when they time out. Another member of this committee, the Senator from Arizona and I, are working on that together. We will look forward to those conversations with you as well.

Thank you all, panel. Appreciate you.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you, Senator Lummis.

I want to thank the panelists. It has been a busy day, in and out. I am sure you are well aware of other obligations.

I would ask unanimous consent to enter into the record letters of support for all the nominees today. Without objection, so ordered.

[The referenced information follows:]



May 12, 2025

Chairman Shelley Moore Capito
Environment and Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Todd Roberts, President
Rick Andritsch, Senior Vice President
Trey Pebley, Vice President
Mac Caddell, Treasurer
Jeffrey D. Shoaf, Chief Executive Officer
James V. Christianson, Chief Operating Officer

Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse
Environment and Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: AGC Support for Mr. Adam Telle, Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works

Dear Chairman Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse,

On behalf of the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), I write in support of Adam Telle's nomination to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA-CW). AGC is a national construction trade association with chapters and members in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. AGC represents more than 28,000 construction firms, including many engaged in critical water resources infrastructure work in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The ASA(CW) plays a central role in guiding the policies that shape our nation's inland waterways, ports, locks and dams, flood control protections, and ecosystem restoration. These projects create jobs, improve the quality of life for all Americans, protect our communities, facilitate waterborne commerce, restore environmentally sensitive areas of the country, and help grow our economy.

AGC looks forward to working with Mr. Telle to maintain USACE's essential mission and avoid burdensome policies that could disrupt the construction supply chain or delay critical infrastructure projects. In addition, we want to ensure that the USACE maintains robust private sector involvement in water resources construction, especially in dredging. There is more than sufficient capacity in the private sector to meet our nation's dredging needs safely and efficiently. AGC also looks forward to working with the ASA-CW to continue advancing efforts to expedite flood control repairs through streamlined reimbursement and permitting.

Mr. Telle is a competent and proven administrator with well-documented experience in civil works. For these reasons, I write in support of the nomination of Adam Telle to ASA-CW. AGC looks forward to working with him to improve our nation's water infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Etchen'.

Alex Etchen
Vice President, Government Relations

CC: Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works

Senator Britt Statement for the Record
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
Adam Telle to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW))
Wednesday, May 14th – 10:30 AM

Statement from U.S. Senator Katie Britt on the Nomination of Adam Telle as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works

I'm proud to support the nomination of Adam Telle to serve as the next Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. As someone who has known and worked with Adam and his wife, Shelby, for years, I can say without hesitation that he is a leader, a dedicated public servant, and a tireless advocate for strengthening America's infrastructure.

Adam is more than a colleague – he's a true friend. There's no one I would trust more to take on the responsibility for which he's been nominated. We came up in public service around the same time, and I've had a front-row seat to the way he leads: with determination, deep conviction, and an unwavering commitment to the people he serves. I know he cares about the importance of rural communities, the power of infrastructure to connect and uplift people, and the responsibility we carry to leave things better than we found them. I've seen the heart he pours into his work, from rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina to cutting through red tape in the Senate to get real results for real people. I know firsthand the kind of integrity, humility, and grit he'll bring to this role.

Adam understands the importance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' mission – because he's lived it. From serving as Chief of Staff to U.S. Senator Bill Hagerty, working with Senators Richard Shelby and Thad Cochran, and serving in the White House Office during President Donald Trump's first administration – Adam has built a deep well of experience navigating the intersection of policy, oversight, and fiscal responsibility. He brings a unique understanding of how to deliver results, and I know he'll bring that same level of commitment and excellence to this critical role.

As an Alabama native, Adam has a deep appreciation for how vital our inland waterway system, ports, and flood control infrastructure are – not just to our state's economy, but to the nation's economic security. I'm confident that he'll be a strong partner in advancing the shared priorities we've been fighting for, including the continued implementation of the 2024 Water Resources Development Act and long-overdue investments in Alabama's locks, dams, and dredging needs.

Alabama has nearly 1,300 miles of navigable inland waterways and a world-class seaport in Mobile. We need steady, strategic leadership at the Army Corps to ensure these assets are maintained and enhanced for future generations. I look forward to supporting Adam's nomination and working closely with him to ensure that families, small businesses, and communities in Alabama and across the country continue to benefit from reliable, resilient waterway infrastructure.



80 M St. SE, Ste. 800, Washington, DC 20003 ★ www.trucking.org

May 12, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on
Environment and Public Works
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on
Environment and Public Works
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

On behalf of the American Trucking Associations (ATA), I am writing to you today to strongly support the nomination of Sean McMaster to serve as the next Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The more than 3.5 million professional truck drivers who rely on our roads and bridges to deliver the freight that helps grow our economy deserve the world's best infrastructure. We must build on historic investments to eliminate freight bottlenecks, expand truck parking capacity, and ensure the maximum efficiency of freight movement on our highways. Over 80% of American communities rely solely on trucking to meet their freight transportation needs. With such high stakes, ATA welcomes the leadership of Mr. McMaster at FHWA.

Mr. McMaster has spent a career developing a deep understanding of the challenges facing our nation's transportation systems and working with federal agencies and legislators to advance solutions. His prior experiences at the U.S. Department of Transportation, as well as his years working with the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and its leaders, will be of tremendous benefit to the agency. His input will be especially invaluable as we look toward the 2026 surface transportation reauthorization effort.

Trucking is the lifeblood of our economy and moves over 70% of the nation's freight. As the largest national trade organization representing over 8.5 million men and women working in the trucking industry, ATA strongly encourages the Committee to approve the McMaster nomination so that he can be confirmed by the full Senate at the earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

Chris Spear
President & CEO
American Trucking Associations

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works



Washington, DC Office
 1300 I Street NW
 Suite 520 West
 Washington, DC 20005-3314
 T: 202.898.9064

aem.org
aem@aem.org
 Toll free: 866.236.0442

May 14, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chairman
 The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse, Ranking Member
 U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
 410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse:

On behalf of the U.S. equipment manufacturing industry and the companies that make up the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM), we respectfully support the nomination of the Honorable Sean McMaster to serve as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation.

Equipment manufacturers are proud to support 2.3 million family-sustaining jobs—one in eight manufacturing jobs in the United States—which contribute \$316 billion to the nation's GDP and play a critical role in the construction and maintenance of our infrastructure assets, especially and including our federal highways. In turn, AEM members and the economic sectors they support depend on a reliable surface transportation network to move their goods to local and global markets.

Effective leadership at the Federal Highways Administration is more critical than ever as it will be responsible for the continued deployment of potentially record levels of formula funding for federal highway investment as part of the surface transportation programs scheduled for 2026.

We are confident that Mr. McMaster will successfully advance the mission of the Federal Highway Administration to enable and empower the strengthening of a world-class highway system that promotes safety, mobility, and economic growth, while enhancing the quality of life of all Americans. Please feel free to call on us to expand upon our rationale for supporting the nomination of Mr. McMaster.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and we look forward to prompt action in moving this nomination forward.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kip Eideberg", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kip Eideberg
 Senior Vice President, Government & Industry Relations
 Association of Equipment Manufacturers



Garrett T. Eucallitto, *President*
 Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Transportation
 Jim Tymon, *Executive Director*

May 12, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
 Chair
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 Dirksen Senate Office Building 410
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 Dirksen Senate Office Building 456
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse:

We at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) write to express our strong support for Sean McMaster, nominated by President Trump to serve as the nation's next Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Administrator-designate McMaster previously served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs at the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) and as professional staff for the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. We believe these positions have provided Mr. McMaster with strong leadership experience and a deep understanding of the value of FHWA's partnership with the nation's state departments of transportation (state DOTs) to help deliver the safety, mobility, and innovation goals outlined by Secretary Sean Duffy. Built around stable and predictable formula-based funding to states, this federal-state partnership established under the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 remains foundational in advancing shared priorities between FHWA and AASHTO.

Thank you for your stalwart leadership in providing Congressional oversight of FHWA, and we stand ready to further assist in the important work of your Committee.

Sincerely,

Jim Tymon
 Executive Director



200 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 200
 Washington D.C., 20001
 202.408.9494
www.cement.org

May 13, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
 Chairwoman
 Environment and Public Works Committee
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
 Ranking Member
 Environment and Public Works Committee
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse:

On behalf of the American Cement Association, which represents the majority of cement manufacturers across the country, I write to express support for the Senate's expedited consideration of Sean McMaster to serve as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The American Cement Association, formerly known as the Portland Cement Association, is the premier organization serving America's cement manufacturers. Originally founded in 1909 as the Portland Cement Association, the association changed its name in 2025 as U.S. cement manufacturers have expanded the types of materials they produce beyond Portland cement, working to develop more low-emission cements in an effort to decarbonize the industry and increase domestic cement manufacturing capacity. Cement is used to construct highways, streets, bridges, airports, mass transit systems, commercial and residential buildings, dams, and water resource systems and facilities. Our products make buildings more energy-efficient, roads more fuel-efficient, and our nation's infrastructure more resilient. Cement and concrete product manufacturing, directly and indirectly, employs over 600,000 people in our country, and our collective industries contribute over \$100 billion to our economy.

Our members manufacture cement, the primary ingredient in concrete, an essential construction material and a basic component of our national surface transportation infrastructure. Cement is used in the construction of highways, bridges, tunnels, and culverts, which are all critical to the efficient movement of goods and people. Concrete is a resilient, durable, and sustainable construction material that is critical to building transportation infrastructure, which can better manage severe storms and reduce long-term maintenance costs.

The nation's roadway network enables Americans to commute to work and goods to move through the supply chain effectively. Strong leadership at FHWA is important for this to happen. Sean McMaster's experience working for the U.S. Department of Transportation and as a staffer on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will help fulfill President Trump's commitment to ensuring our nation's roads and bridges are built efficiently to meet the range of needs of our surface transportation network.

The American Cement Association is ready to work with the Trump Administration and Congress on legislation to reauthorize the surface transportation program. Confirmation of Sean



200 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 200
Washington D.C., 20001
202.408.9494
www.cement.org

McMaster is critical to getting this done. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at soneill@cement.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. O'Neill", written in a cursive style.

Sean O'Neill
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs



May 13, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
Committee on Environment & Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment & Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse –

On behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) – the business voice of the engineering industry – I am writing to support the nomination of Sean McMaster as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Sean has extensive transportation policy experience in both the public and private sector. His tenure as a senior official at the U.S. Department of Transportation during President Trump's first term and as a senior congressional aide on Capitol Hill give him unique insights into federal highway programs. As a former engineering firm executive, he understands the essential role engineers play in delivering safe, modern, resilient infrastructure and the importance of strong partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies.

A Senate-confirmed leader at FHWA is critical as you and the Administration oversee the last year of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and work on the next long-term surface transportation bill.

We appreciate your consideration and encourage swift confirmation of Sean McMaster to lead FHWA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Linda Bauer Darr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Linda" being the most prominent.

Linda Bauer Darr
President & CEO



Thomas L. Brown, President
 Todd Roberts, Senior Vice President
 Rick Andritsch, Vice President
 Ken Kubacki, Treasurer
 Jeffrey D. Shoaf, Chief Executive Officer
 James V. Christianson, Chief Operating Officer

March 19, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
 Chairman, Environment & Public Works
 Committee
 United States Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
 Ranking Member, Environment & Public
 Works Committee
 United States Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: AGC Support for Mr. Sean McMaster Nomination to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration

Dear Chairman Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse:

The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) supports the nomination of Sean McMaster to serve as the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). AGC is a national construction trade association representing more than 28,000 construction firms with chapters and members in every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. AGC chapters and members work on transportation projects nationwide – including roads, bridges, airports, passenger rail, freight rail, and transit systems - and understand the importance of investing in our nation's infrastructure.

Sean McMaster's extensive background working in Congress, the Department of Transportation, and the private sector makes him exceptionally qualified to lead FHWA. During his tenure working for a member of Congress and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, he played a key role in the legislative process that led to the enactment of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. These laws included reforms to the environmental review and permitting processes that have expedited the delivery of construction projects.

Through his work at the U.S. Department of Transportation, Sean demonstrated his willingness to work with members of Congress and industry stakeholders to advance the nation's infrastructure priorities. AGC is eager to work with him on ways to prioritize work zone safety to protect the workers building our infrastructure and the traveling public.

AGC looks forward to continuing our positive relationship with FHWA to rebuild our nation's infrastructure and support well-paying construction jobs. As such, we urge the Senate to quickly confirm his nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Etchen'.

Alex Etchen
 Vice President, Government Relations



American Road
& Transportation
Builders Association

250 E Street, S.W.
Suite 900
Washington D.C. 20024

P 202.289.4434
F 202.289.4435
W artba.org



April 21, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senate
170 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Capito and Senator Whitehouse:

The American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) supports the nomination of Mr. Sean McMaster to be administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). We urge the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee to consider and favorably report his nomination as soon as possible.

Because of leadership from you and many of your colleagues in the 2021 reauthorization of the federal surface transportation programs, FHWA is currently responsible for administering historic levels of federal-aid highway funding. Mr. McMaster is well prepared for that challenge, and we are also confident he will work with stakeholder partners in identifying and implementing reforms necessary for expediting the delivery of transportation improvement projects.

Mr. McMaster's professional background includes senior positions at the U.S. Department of Transportation, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and high-profile industry companies. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. McMaster served as a key contact for ARTBA in Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao's office. During that difficult period, he was among those working with us to ensure transportation projects continued moving forward while safeguarding worker safety and health.

We believe Mr. McMaster will bring this thoughtful, collaborative approach to FHWA, emphasizing safety, innovation and cost-effectiveness. We hope to begin working with him again soon.

Thank you for considering our views on Mr. McMaster's nomination.

Sincerely,

David C. Bauer
President and CEO



National Association of County Engineers

THE VOICE OF COUNTY ROAD OFFICIALS

President
Stephen McCall, PE, PS
County Engineer
Champaign County, Ohio

President-Elect
Jacob Thorius, PE
County Engineer
Washington County, Iowa

Secretary/Treasurer
Pamela Dingman PE
County Engineer
Lancaster County, NE

Immediate Past President
Jeff Blue, PE
County Engineer
Champaign County, Illinois

Northeast Region Vice
President
Jeff Linkous, PE, PS
County Engineer
Clifton County, Ohio

Southeast Region Vice
President
Josh Harvill, PE
County Engineer
Chambers County, Alabama

North Central Region Vice
President
Wayne Sandberg, PE
County Engineer
Washington County, MN

South Central Region Vice
President
Andrew McGuire, PE
County Engineer
Keokuk County, IA

Western Region Vice President
Matt Machado, PE, LS
Deputy County Administrative
Officer/Public Works Director
Santa Cruz County, CA

National Association of
Counties Director
Rich Sanders, PE
County Engineer
Polk County, Minnesota

CEO/Executive Director
Kevan P. Stone

March 17, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse:

The National Association of County Engineers (NACE) strongly supports the confirmation of Sean McMaster as the next Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). With an extensive background in transportation policy and infrastructure development, Mr. McMaster is exceptionally qualified to support the nation's transportation network and the critical needs of local and county road systems.

Throughout his career, including his tenure as Deputy Chief of Staff at the U.S. Department of Transportation, Mr. McMaster has demonstrated a deep understanding of transportation challenges, regulatory frameworks, and safety initiatives. His ability to engage collaboratively with stakeholders across all subdivisions of government has been instrumental in advancing effective transportation policies.

Counties own and maintain nearly 44% of the nation's roadways and 39% of the nation's bridges—more than any other division of government. Ensuring the safety, reliability, and resilience of this infrastructure is essential for economic growth, public safety, and the efficient movement of goods and people. Mr. McMaster's expertise in regulatory reform, project delivery, and transportation safety will be invaluable in addressing the pressing infrastructure needs of counties nationwide.

We urge Congress to swiftly confirm Mr. McMaster as FHWA Administrator to ensure continued leadership and progress in strengthening our nation's transportation systems. NACE looks forward to working with Mr. McMaster and FHWA to enhance infrastructure investment, streamline project delivery, and promote safe and efficient local road networks.

Sincerely,

Kevan P. Stone
Executive Director & CEO



NATIONAL STONE, SAND
& GRAVEL ASSOCIATION

March 13, 2025

Senator Shelley Moore Capito
Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on
Environment & Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on
Environment & Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse:

I write to you on behalf of members of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA) in strong support of the nomination of Mr. Sean McMaster's nomination to serve as the next Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administrator. Mr. McMaster has an impressive background in transportation policy and his proven track record of leadership will be vital for steering FHWA through the critical challenges ahead. We urge you to support his nomination.

NSSGA represents over 500 aggregates producers, manufacturers and service providers responsible for the essential raw materials that make up our nation's highways. In fact, 38,000 tons of aggregates are in every mile of highway. As a key stakeholder in the national highway system, we understand the critical role that efficient and effective highway management plays in maintaining the infrastructure that supports our economy and communities.

As we address challenges, such as aging infrastructure, increasing traffic volumes and federal funding gaps, it is essential to have a leader at FHWA who understands the complexities of these issues and is dedicated to collaboration between the public and private sectors. We believe Mr. McMaster is that leader. With an impressive background of serving in the Department of Transportation and in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Mr. McMaster brings a wealth of knowledge and experience on the key issues facing our national highway network.

NSSGA and its members look forward to continuing to work with Mr. McMaster and FHWA to improve our highway transportation, increase connectivity and grow our economy. We urge you to swiftly advance the nomination for Sean McMaster as FHWA administrator and appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michele Stanley".

Michele Stanley
Interim CEO
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association





Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association

National Headquarters: 1 NW OOIDA Drive, Grain Valley, MO 64029
Tel: (816) 229-5791 Fax: (816) 427-4468

Washington Office: 1100 New Jersey Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003
Tel: (202) 347-2007 Fax: (202) 347-2008

May 13, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Letter of support for Mr. Sean McMaster as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Dear Chairman Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse:

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) is the largest trade association representing the views of small-business truckers and professional truck drivers. We have approximately 150,000 members located in all fifty states that collectively own and operate more than 240,000 individual heavy-duty trucks.

We are writing to express our strong support for Sean McMaster to be confirmed as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Mr. McMaster's experience within the Department of Transportation during President Trump's first term makes him a qualified and capable nominee for this important post, which plays a key role in developing policies that affect the quality and safety of our nation's infrastructure and can help to ensure the success of America's professional drivers.

In particular, we believe that he understands and will help guide FHWA in working to address the national shortage of truck parking. The United States Department of Transportation has identified the truck parking shortage as a critical safety issue affecting every state and region of the country. Supporting investment in truck parking capacity will improve truckers' productivity, and more importantly, improve safety for professional drivers and the rest of the motoring public.

Given his past experience and demonstrated commitment to addressing issues that support small trucking businesses and professional drivers, we encourage your Committee to approve Mr. McMaster's nomination without delay.

Thank you,

Todd Spencer
President & CEO
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, Inc.

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

Senator CAPITO. With no further questions, I would like to thank you, as I just did, and also my colleagues for their participation this morning. Senators who wish to submit written questions for the record have until 5 p.m. next Wednesday, May 21st—gosh, is it almost May 21st?—to do so. The nominees' responses to these questions are due back in the committee no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 28th, and will be admitted for the record.

With that, this hearing is adjourned, and thank you all very much, and thank the families. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:18 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

