

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

**WRITTEN STATEMENT
OF**

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FOR CIVIL WORKS**

**BEFORE
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON**

**WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACTS IMPLEMENTATION:
REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT OF PAST PROVISIONS**

SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Wilson, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the implementation of the Water Resources Development Acts (WRDA).

My name is Adam Telle, and I am honored to serve as the fourteenth Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and as President Trump's, Secretary Hegseth's, and Secretary Driscoll's top official responsible for overseeing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' civil works mission. I was nominated by President Trump on March 24, 2025, and confirmed by the Senate on August 2, 2025. I began work in this role immediately and have been on the job for five-and-a-half weeks. During this time, I have been working alongside General Graham and his team to ensure that the Army Civil Works program is positioned to deliver on its critical mission, which this Committee has had an important role in defining, and on President Trump's vision for our country.

When I moved to Washington in 2005, I worked as a staff member in the United States Senate. I believed that I could make a difference helping to represent the views and interests of the Americans I grew up with who often felt ignored or forgotten by important people in Washington. This is the reason I am honored to be a part of the Army Civil Works mission. It

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

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers originated in 1775, before the Declaration of Independence. The America we know today is a result of the work of the Corps. Congress has given the Corps missions in addition to its original navigation mission: flood control, flood fighting, enabling commerce and critical supply chains through dredging, and ensuring the future availability of our aquatic ecosystem resources. These missions are also important to our current President.

Because this mission is also important to the American public and their elected representatives here in Washington, during my first weeks, I have been working to establish greater consistency and accountability across the four layers of this enterprise: My office, and the Corps of Engineers' headquarters, divisions and districts. The Corps supports commercial navigation, helps reduce flood risks, restores aquatic ecosystems, and provides stewardship of the natural resources on Corps lands to benefit the American public as effectively as possible, as quickly as possible, and as cost-effectively as possible. We must optimize our

program for quality, speed, and cost if we want to do our part to protect lives and commerce as President Trump is delivering on his vision to ensure that our United States remains the greatest Nation in the history of the world during the 21st Century.

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

In addition to driving more efficiency into the Civil Works program, we must continue to lift the federal regulatory burden on local sponsors. This Administration is committed to ending the last five decades of confusing and ever-changing definitions of the term "waters of the United States" in the Clean Water Act of 1972. Together with Administrator Zeldin and President Trump's Environmental Protection Agency, the Army has already issued interim guidance that follows the *Sackett* decision, and we will move

quickly to issue a permanent definition that follows the post-*Sackett* law of the land, reduces red-tape, cuts overall permitting costs, lowers the cost of doing business in communities across the country, and protects America's waters.

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

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

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

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