

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
Fiscal Year 2014 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Bill
Full Committee Mark Up
June 26, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

This meeting will come to order.

Thank you all for being here today on time and ready to work. Today we will consider the fiscal year 2014 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill. In the interest of time, I ask you all to be judicious with your words. So far, this Committee has really lived up to its reputation of collegiality, and I know we'll continue that respectful behavior today.

—

Thank you, Ms. Kaptur, and a big thank you to Chairman Frelinghuysen and the entire Subcommittee staff for your careful work on this bill. We recognize that some difficult choices had to be made as you drafted this legislation, but the end product is a good bill that I wholeheartedly endorse.

As Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ms. Kaptur said, this bill provides \$30.4 billion for our defense nuclear weapons activities, the Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Energy programs, and other related agencies.

Facing a cut of \$2.9 billion below last year's enacted level, we had to prioritize these programs carefully, based on immediate, national needs. We chose to safeguard programs critical to our nation's security and well-being, and those that will help our economy on its road to growth.

Chief among these national security priorities are our nuclear weapons activities, including nuclear nonproliferation and our naval reactors. This critical funding will allow the U.S. to uphold our current posture of nuclear deterrence, and to remain prepared for current and future nuclear threats.

Our nation still faces very real and prevalent threats from unpredictable foreign governments, and we can't ignore the dangers as we see more nations trying to grow their nuclear arsenals.

Also high on our priority list is national and regional infrastructure – keeping it safe, viable, and prosperous. The funding we've provided for Army Corps of Engineers will have an immediate impact on job creation and the economy. Crucial navigation and flood control activities ensure our waterways stay open for business, advance our economic competitiveness, and bolster our export ability.

To improve public health and safety, we've provided funding for flood and storm damage reduction activities. The return on investment for these projects is substantial – which is why these Corps programs are an efficient and effective use of our very limited tax dollars.

But to fund these programs adequately, sacrifices had to be made. This bill makes strategic reductions to lower-priority programs that don't address the most immediate security or economic needs of this nation, or that do not warrant the investment of limited tax dollars during this tight budget time. For example, renewable and other energy research activities, which are cut in the bill, should not have to rely so heavily on taxpayer funding – this type of research can and should attract investments from the private sector.

The limited dollars that remain are targeted to investments that will also help our economy grow. We focused funding on programs that will help advance an “all-of-the-above” energy solution – one that utilizes our vast natural energy resources and encourages us to find new and improved ways to use them. The funding provided is aimed at keeping down energy costs, utilizing our vast wealth of domestic fuel sources, weaning us off our reliance on foreign oil, and promoting future growth of American business and industry.

So, again, job well done, Chairman Frelinghuysen and your Subcommittee, on a bill that reflects the difficult but crucial balance between fiscal responsibility, and essential infrastructure and security programs.

In this austere budget year, we must make choices – we can't have it all. This bill gets back to the basics – protecting our national defense, and investing in the infrastructure that is the foundation of a thriving American economy and critical to the safety of our people. These are priorities this entire Committee should get behind.

I urge the Committee to approve this bill today.

#####