

Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Oversight Hearing on Hurricane Sandy Supplemental Implementation
March 13, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

The hearing will come to order.

The purpose of today's hearing is to discuss the impacts of Hurricane Sandy and to review the work done to date by the Army Corps of Engineers on implementing the Hurricane Sandy supplemental appropriations act.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy, the Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations Major General Michael Walsh, and the North Atlantic Division Commander Colonel Kent Savre. It's good to see you all again.

In particular, congratulations are in order for Colonel Savre, who will be promoted to Brigadier General on Friday. I know that's a hard-earned honor – congratulations! Additionally, I would note that Ms. Claudia Tornblom, currently Deputy Assistant Secretary – Management and Budget, will soon be retiring from the ASA's office after almost 26 years. That's four Administrations and even more Assistant Secretaries with cause to thank you, and this Subcommittee joins that chorus!

I'd also like to welcome the House Members representing districts affected by Hurricane Sandy who are here to share their perspectives with the Subcommittee.

It has been over four months since Sandy hit and people are still suffering this afternoon in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut and other areas of the Northeast. Their needs are immediate and real and should be addressed promptly.

According to many estimates, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and the rest of the East Coast sustained nearly \$100 billion worth of damage. Many families are still displaced, without a place to call home. Likewise small business people's dreams have been washed away and destroyed. Some towns are still under emergency edicts.

In addition to its work in support of FEMA, the Corps has been responsible for assessing damages and making many repairs to its own many federal water resources projects. The Sandy supplemental included approximately \$1.4 billion for this type of repair work.

The supplemental also includes almost \$4 billion for additional efforts to prepare for and reduce the risk of damages from future storms. Congressional intent was – and remains – that the Corps move forward with these improvements as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the Corps' recent report casts doubt on whether the Administration feels the same sense of urgency.

The report calls for more studies, on many projects already studied, and for the consideration of new policies that appear to be of the Office of Management and Budget's making rather than the Corps.

Bluntly, we need less examination and additional reviews, and more action restoring our coastlines and communities before the summer is upon us.

New York, New Jersey and Connecticut's coastline were devastated by Hurricane Sandy. Such action is vital to restore the economic health and vitality of our States and the individual communities affected.

I look forward to hearing about all of these issues in more detail today. So, once again, welcome to our witnesses. I now turn to the Ranking Member for any comments she may have.

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