

**Chairman Hal Rogers**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies**  
**Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Hearing: US Army Corps of Engineers**  
**March 26, 2014**  
**Opening Statement As Prepared**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. Assistant Secretary Darcy and Lieutenant General Thomas Bostick, I appreciate you taking the time to be here today.

We have been rolling right along through hearings with the various agencies, and I look forward to getting all 12 of our bills passed through the floor by August. This return to regular order is critical to restoring our process here in the House. The work we were able to accomplish when we rolled up our sleeves and worked together to finish the FY14 omnibus package is a prime example of what we can do together. This Committee was able to provide every facet of the federal government with adequate, responsible funding, while continuing to reduce federal spending – totaling \$165 billion in cuts since fiscal year 2010. I am proud of that track record.

The Corps of Engineers has a diverse set of projects that it manages – from lakes to rivers to dams – and no two are exactly alike. I have always been impressed by the talent that the Corps employs to ensure that projects are done well and will stand the test of weather and time. In my district, the Corps has created lakes for recreation and hydropower, moved rivers to prevent constant flooding in historic towns, and shored up dams and levees that hold back waters that will rise almost annually. In particular, I want to thank you for all your personal attention and diligence in bringing to a close the years-long safety mitigation project at Wolf Creek Dam. I was proud to help the Corps pour the last bit of concrete for that project last summer, and without a doubt, the dam is safer and the communities downstream are more secure. In recent months, I appreciate your help in working with the US Fish and Wildlife service to complete the biological assessment that was required by law for the endangered Duskytail Darter fish that was found in the upper reaches of Lake Cumberland. This stands as a model for interagency cooperation, in which you were able to complete the required assessment ahead of schedule, thus ensuring that the fish is protected while also green lighting the lake to reach its full level of 723 feet for this summer. Seven years of a lowered lake level due to repairs on the dam was a heavy burden on the businesses that rely on tourism on the lake. At long last, these challenges are behind us and we can say for certain that Lake Cumberland is open for business and I thank you for your help in completing that work.

Without these projects, many in my district would still be living under the constant threat of floods that make life and work uncertain. Now, a new threat is making life more uncertain for the people of my region. It is the relentless attack that this administration has put on coal jobs. Energy is the backbone of the United States economy. Without cheap, reliable energy, businesses that have set up shop in the US will look elsewhere. The uncertainty driven by the bureaucratic overreach created by this War on Coal will inevitably raise energy costs, and push businesses overseas and more Americans onto unemployment lines and welfare rolls.

I was disappointed to read on Monday that the Supreme Court decided not to hear a case in which the EPA was retroactively denying permits that the Corps had already approved years before. All this does is continue the cycle of uncertainty that the coal industry feels, never knowing if another government bureaucrat is going to walk out of the woods to shut down a mine operation simply because he or she doesn't like coal. It is time for bureaucrats to lay aside their personal animus toward this staple of the American economy and allow for the "all of the above" approach to energy to which the President has paid mere lip service. That should include coal. And it is time for the Senate to step up and pass the bills to protect coal mining and energy jobs that the House has sent over to them.

I am also dismayed at yesterday's news that despite years of concerns expressed by this Committee, the Corps of Engineers and the EPA are working to create new rules that will place strict new standards on thousands of miles of streams in this country. These are streams which flow seasonally or after heavy rains. By creating this new definition, the Administration is again striking at Kentucky's economy and workforce, since every hollow and valley in my region has such a stream running through it. This means that no economic activity – no road construction, no coal mining – will occur without the say-so of a bureaucrat in Washington. And another layer of red tape will be added to the Gordian Knot that already has a stranglehold on our people since this Administration declared a war on coal.

These topics are paramount for our economy and the survival of central Appalachia and I hope that you can touch on these and other issues in your remarks, so that we may better understand how the Corps plans to deal with these challenges going forward. Thank you.

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