



Chairman Mike Simpson

*Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and
Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations*

**Hearing on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Civil Works
FY 2017 Budget
February 26, 2016
Opening Statement As Prepared**

I'd like to call this hearing to order. Good morning, everyone. I would like to dispense with a little bit of administrative business – I would like to ask unanimous consent to allow one of our full committee members, Mr. Quigley, to join us on the dais and to ask questions of the witnesses once all subcommittee members have had an opportunity. With no objection, we'll proceed with the hearing.

We are here today to look at the fiscal year 2017 budget request for the Civil Works program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I'd like to welcome our witnesses, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy and Commanding General and Chief of Engineers Lieutenant General Thomas Bostick.

General Bostick, I understand you are set to retire in May, so this likely will be the last time we see you as a witness. I want to thank you for your service – to the Corps and the Army specifically and to the nation as a whole. You've been Chief of Engineers during some challenging times, but throughout you have remained accessible, professional, and focused on finding solutions. I wish you well in your next endeavors. Secretary Darcy, please don't think your hard work and dedication are not also very much appreciated – they are. But you're not off the hook quite yet, so we may see you again.

The Corps' Civil Works program comprises a wide variety of water resources activities essential to the public safety, economic, and environmental goals of our nation. This Committee works hard each year to build an appropriations bill that supports a robust program and that strikes a good balance across mission areas. The fiscal year 2016 Act provided almost \$6 billion to the Corps, including the highest level ever for Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund activities and full use of estimated annual revenues in the Inland Waterways Trust Fund. Congress clearly recognizes the importance of the Civil Works program.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the Administration. The fiscal year 2017 budget request would slash funding by almost \$1.4 billion dollars. This budget is \$100 million below even the post-sequestration level in fiscal year 2013 and, if enacted, would be the lowest funding level since fiscal year 2004. No aspect of the civil works program would be spared – all four main project-based accounts would see cuts ranging from 14 to 41 percent; overall flood control

and navigation activities would be cut by 27 percent and 26 percent, respectively, and even environmental restoration activities would be reduced by 19 percent.

The irresponsibility of this budget request makes the Committee's job more difficult, but we will continue our efforts to support a strong Civil Works program – one that will strengthen the economy, enhance public safety, and promote healthy ecosystems.

Again, I'd like to welcome our witnesses to the subcommittee. Secretary Darcy, please ensure that the hearing record, questions for the record, and any supporting information requested by the Subcommittee are delivered in final form to us no later than four weeks from the time you receive them. Members who have additional questions for the record will have until the close of business Tuesday to provide them to the Subcommittee office.

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