

US Congressman James Comer (KY-01)

**Testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations, Energy and Water
Development Subcommittee**

Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the Fiscal Year 2018 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. I testify to urge adequate funding for two very important projects to the First District of Kentucky, the Paducah Department of Energy Cleanup site and the Kentucky Lock Addition Project.

First, I ask this committee to fund fully the Paducah Department of Energy Cleanup site. As you may know, in 1952 the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant opened to support this country's nuclear weapons program and later transitioned to produce nuclear fuel for commercial power plants. Because of this work, significant amounts of contaminated soil and ground water remain at the site. Deactivation and cleanup work began in July 2014 and while much progress has been made, there is still much work yet to do. Funding closer to the Fiscal Year 2014 level is imperative to allow the Department of Energy to accelerate the C-400 Building cleanout project, which is connected to hazards associated with historic ground water contamination.

Second, I ask this committee to adequately fund the Army Corps of Engineers Construction Account to continue the work of upgrading our waterways infrastructure. The Kentucky Lock Addition project, in my district, is an example of a much needed project that would benefit from adequate funding for Corps Construction. The Kentucky Lock Addition project was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 1996. The project includes design and construction of a new 110'x 1200' lock to be located landward of the existing 110'x 600' lock. Products originating from or designated to 20 states pass through Kentucky Lock. Since most of the tows are greater than 600' in length, they must perform a time-consuming

double lockage to transit through the existing 600' long Kentucky Lock. As a result, Kentucky Lock has some of the longest average delay times of any lock in the inland waterway system – with the average delay of over 8 hours.

Recently, the Inland Waterways User Board learned that the total project cost would increase by over \$380 million to \$1.2 billion due to the uncertainty of sufficient funding. Without sufficient funding, the expected completion date of 2024 will add at least 5 years. Therefore, I respectfully request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction account receive sufficient funding to avoid delays to completion of projects like the Kentucky Lock Addition and escalating project prices.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.