



Chairwoman Marcy Kaptur
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
FY 2022 Budget Request for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and
Bureau of Reclamation
Opening Statement *As Prepared*
May 24, 2021

The Subcommittee will come to order. We are here today to discuss the fiscal year 2022 budget request for the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. Your agencies steward the lifeblood of our society and economy, and serve the critical function of protecting the life, safety, and sustainability of our nation's water resources.

Thank you to our witnesses for joining us today. We are so glad you are here and I look forward to introducing each of you shortly.

Our nation continues to experience devastating and repetitive floods across the country, over and over. Last year at this hearing, we discussed the 2019 flooding on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. And ten years ago, we had the "Great Flood of 2011" which impacted many of the same areas, demonstrating the recurring flooding challenges many regions face.

Last year, during the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season, we had the highest number of named storms ever recorded: 30. We are about to start another season.

In the Great Lakes, water levels are finally decreasing after two years of record high water, although some lakes remain above average. Much work remains to prevent future flooding and the onslaught of algal blooms impacting our communities, especially as we confront our planet's changing climate. Next week starts an unpredictable 2021 hurricane and tornado season.

Flooding isn't our only concern — major parts of our country are dealing with too little water. Over 92 million Americans are currently living in areas experiencing drought. Eight states have areas that are experiencing "exceptional drought", the highest intensity level on the drought scale.

Last year, we had a record-breaking wildfire season across the west brought on by this continuing drought. California and Colorado experienced their largest wildfires to date, with 4 million acres burning in California alone. Climate change is accelerating and exacerbating these extremes, and communities are caught in the cross-hairs.

Though the water resource needs of our country vary from region to region, there is a constant and essential need to invest in our infrastructure to adapt to a changing environment. Without these investments, the dichotomy of water surpluses in the Heartland, and water shortages in the West threatens our way of life. For example, the Colorado River is in crisis. Diversion from it supports over 40 million Americans across seven Western states and 29 tribal nations.



Meanwhile, in the Great Lakes region—the largest body of fresh water on earth—continues to deal with the economic and environmental threat that algal blooms and invasive species like the invasive Asian Carp pose to the Great Lakes and its \$7 billion freshwater fishery. Together our committee and the Corps are making great progress on the Brandon Road project, the new Soo Lock, and addressing harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes.

As we begin our discussion on fiscal year 2022, I must first note that we look forward to receiving the full budget request later this week so that we can move forward expeditiously to craft our bill.

I am encouraged by the President's budget request for the Army Corps of Engineers, but have reservations. We are making progress in these requests, but it is still a \$1 billion decrease from last year's enacted level. I look forward to working with the Biden Administration to ensure the Corps and the Bureau of Reclamation receive the necessary support to keep our communities safe and prosperous.

President Biden is addressing the climate crisis head on, and I know that your agencies have a critical role to play in this fight. We look forward to hearing how your agencies are incorporating climate change impacts and mitigation efforts, as well as making our communities more resilient.

There is bipartisan support in Congress for the work that your agencies undertake on behalf of the American people. Thank you for being here, and we look forward to hearing from you.

I'll now turn to our Ranking Member, Mr. Simpson, for his opening remarks.