

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Dev

Member Day

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing and for all the work you do in supporting necessary agencies like the Department of Energy and the US Army Corps of Engineers. I'd also like to thank the Guam Waterworks Authority and the Guam Power Authority for their tireless efforts leading to our submitted Water Resource Development Act projects for this cycle.

To start, I'd like to emphasize the importance of the US Army Corps of Engineers' work mission in Guam. Between the ongoing work they do and the WRDA study proposals I submitted in January, it is clear that the US Army Corps of Engineers are a vital part of our community. Despite this, USACE projects on and off the island are severely underfunded. With Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands directly placed in "Typhoon Alley", both territories must have a dedicated USACE task force to respond to extreme weather recovery. While natural disasters are not exclusive to Guam by any means, we experience them at a higher rate than any state in the lower 48. I request an appropriation of dedicated funding for a USACE task force for disaster related construction projects in Guam and the CNMI. This task force would operate similarly to the recently created Task Force VIPR in the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Task forces like VIPR are a critical step in the right direction for disaster recovery efforts in areas affected by extreme weather, both in the Atlantic and Pacific.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have repeatedly advocated for more streamlined cooperation between DOD and civilians in infrastructure development. Gov-Guam agencies refer to this as the "One Guam" approach. This requires shared utilities and resources both inside and outside the fence, allowing for a more resilient and redundant power grid. Typhoons and other extreme weather events have put Guam's power grid at serious risk. Guam Power Authority is in desperate need of federal funding to prevent future disasters and mitigate damages. I am working with federal partners to develop an interagency plan for undergrounding powerlines across the island. This plan not only allows for a more resilient way of distributing power to all parts of the island but also makes it more reliable for both civilians on the island and DOD. In accordance with a letter I sent to the Department of Energy in March of this year, I respectfully request an increase in funding for DOE to be directed towards 'One Guam' projects.

Mr. Chairman, Guam is in desperate need of federal assistance for its energy and water infrastructure. Between an ever-growing Water Resource Development Act project list, our vulnerable power grid, and the increasing deterioration of cyber infrastructure, our weaknesses are obvious. I hope that we can work together to deliver Guam its first successful WRDA project in many years.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.