

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

**WRITTEN STATEMENT
OF**

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**BEFORE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT
AND RELATED AGENCIES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON**

**THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET
FOR THE CIVIL WORKS PROGRAM
OF THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

April 17, 2024

Chairman Fleischmann, Ranking Member Kaptur, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the President's Budget request for the Army Civil Works program.

The Fiscal Year 2025 Budget request includes over \$7.2 billion for the Army Civil Works program, with a focus on investments to facilitate waterborne transportation, reduce coastal and inland flood risks, and restore significant aquatic ecosystems. These investments reinforce President Biden's ongoing commitment to protect, restore, and improve the nation's water resources that will strengthen our economy, protect people and property, and restore key ecosystems. This Budget will also spur innovation by investing in research and development and ensuring we improve our capabilities to assess risk and aggressively confront the nation's water resource challenges in a manner that broadly supports community resilience, tackles climate change, and promotes equity for underserved and overburdened communities and Tribal Nations.

The water resources challenges of today and tomorrow are not like yesterday's. Weather extremes are increasingly the norm, creating risk to communities, the economy, and natural systems. As a result, understanding vulnerabilities and increasing our preparedness is of paramount importance. For that reason, the Budget includes \$79 million for research and development to support constructing and maintaining critical infrastructure. These investments will help to improve capabilities in assessing risk, address emerging water resources challenges including climate change, and achieve significant cost savings in the Civil Works program.

With a focus on modernization and innovation, the Budget continues to prioritize the highest performing work within the three main missions of the Civil Works program:

- commercial navigation,
- flood and storm damage reduction, and
- aquatic ecosystem restoration.

The Budget also advances three key objectives: 1) decreasing climate risk for communities and increasing ecosystem resilience to climate change based on the best available science; 2) promoting environmental justice in underserved and overburdened communities and Tribal Nations in line with the Justice40 Initiative; and 3) strengthening the supply chain.

Flood and storm damage reduction is at the center of the Civil Works program's actions to support the Administration's goal of tackling the climate crisis and building community resilience.

Accordingly, the Budget contains over \$1.5 billion for flood and storm damage reduction, including funding to provide technical and planning assistance to local communities to enable them to understand and better manage their flood risks. The Budget proposes to assist these local efforts, with an emphasis on non-structural approaches.

For priority two, the Budget supports the Administration's Justice40 Initiative to help underserved and overburdened communities address their water resources challenges—including

funding for the Tribal Partnership Program. The Army is committed to helping to achieve the broader goals of the Administration regarding equity and environmental justice and will continue to improve outreach and access to Civil Works information and resources, including technical and planning assistance programs. The Army is committed to maximizing the reach of Civil Works projects to benefit underserved and overburdened communities and ensuring that updates to Civil Works policies and guidance will not result in a disproportionate negative impact on underserved and overburdened communities.

Through this Budget, the Administration also reaffirms its vision of facilitating safe, reliable and environmentally sustainable commercial navigation to improve the resilience of our nation's manufacturing supply chain. In doing so, the Budget will create good paying jobs that provide the free and fair chance to join a union and collectively bargain. In support of the Administration's commitment to our nation's coastal ports and inland waterways, the FY 2025 Budget includes over \$3 billion for the study, design,

construction, operation and maintenance (O&M) of inland and coastal navigation projects. Of this amount, roughly \$1.7 billion is derived from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. This total includes \$1 billion to operate and maintain the top 50 U.S. coastal ports, which handle around 90 percent of the nation's waterborne cargo that is shipped to or from the United States in foreign commerce. The FY25 Budget includes \$60 million, financed through the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, for donor and energy transfer ports. Also, of significant note, the Budget includes \$264 million to continue construction of the Sault Ste. Marie replacement lock to provide efficiency and redundancy for a critical trade route for iron ore in the Great Lakes region.

The Budget includes \$1.239 billion for the aquatic ecosystem restoration mission, including \$444 million for the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration program, which will enable significant progress in restoring America's Everglades and building climate resilience in South Florida. The Budget also includes, over \$75 million for the Columbia River Fish Mitigation program, and \$33

million for construction of a fish passage at Albeni Falls Dam, all to support restoration of salmon and other native fish species in the Northwest. In addition, the Budget includes \$500 million for a fish passage at the Howard Hanson Dam.

The Army seeks to increase support for aquatic ecosystem restoration projects, including those under Section 206 of the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP 206). The Budget includes \$13 million within the CAP 206 program for small aquatic ecosystem restoration projects to help protect wetlands that may be negatively impacted by the Supreme Court's Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency decision.

Other significant initiatives include continuing the investment in the phased replacement of the Cape Cod Canal Bridges. The FY 2024 enacted appropriations included the \$350 million proposed in the FY 2024 Budget for the phased replacement of the Cape Cod Canal bridges, toward a commitment of \$600 million. The FY 2025 Budget continues this commitment of the phased replacement of the Sagamore and Bourne bridges by including \$5

million for design work associated with the rehabilitation of the Bourne Bridge.

In total, the FY 2025 Construction program is funded at more than \$2 billion, continuing the President's focus on enhancing the country's infrastructure. The majority of that amount is provided in the Construction account, but also \$29 million from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, and more than \$49 million from the Mississippi River and Tributaries account. The Construction program uses objective, performance-based criteria to give priority to the projects with the highest economic, environmental, and safety returns.

Of course, in addition to construction projects, the Budget focuses on maintaining the key features of the vast water resources infrastructure that the Corps owns and manages. Specifically, the FY 2025 Budget funds the Operation and Maintenance program at over \$4.3 billion, consisting of nearly \$2.5 billion from the Operation and Maintenance account, nearly \$1.7 billion from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, and nearly

\$183 million from the Mississippi River and Tributaries account. For Operation and Maintenance, the Budget emphasizes maintaining and improving the performance of existing projects. The allocation of funding among projects for maintenance reflects a risk-informed approach that considers both project and project component conditions and the potential consequences of a failure. The Budget also gives priority to the maintenance of coastal ports and inland waterways with the highest commercial traffic.

As I wrap up, I'll note the FY 2025 Budget provides \$124 million for the Investigations program, consisting of nearly \$111 million from the Investigations account and over \$13 million from the Mississippi River and Tributaries account. This level of sustained investment is critical given the increasing demand by communities across the nation for resilience building. Within this \$124 million total, the Budget includes \$35.5 million for technical and planning assistance programs. These programs help local communities, including underserved and overburdened

communities, identify and address their flood risks, including risks associated with climate change. The Budget also includes funding to continue studies intended to investigate climate resilience along the Great Lakes coast as well as in Central and Southern Florida.

Additionally, and extremely important, the FY 2025 Regulatory Program is funded at \$221 million to protect the nation's waters and wetlands and provide efficiency in permit processing. The Recreation program is funded at \$282 million to ensure the Corps — which operates and maintains a large percentage of Federal recreation areas — can continue to effectively serve the public's desire to experience the great outdoors.

Lastly, I would like to note that \$6.4 million is included for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Since 2009, my office has never received an appropriation larger than \$5 million, and some years less. However, our costs — salaries and retirement, services and rent, and travel and supplies — have all continued to rise over the past 15 years. Using the

latest U.S. government Consumer Price Index data (at a 44.6% cumulative rate of inflation), the \$5 million my office received in 2009 equates to over \$7.2 million in today's dollars. However, this funding has remained flat. Full funding is critical to provide effective oversight of the Army Civil Works program.

To summarize, the Budget makes critical investments in water resources that will benefit the American people and promote greater prosperity and economic growth for decades to come. From solving water resources challenges facing communities, to nurturing aquatic ecosystems, the Corps is delivering on its mission to serve the public.

I am very honored to implement the President's priorities for the Army Civil Works program and excited to be a part of a great team — serving our Nation.

Thank you for inviting me here today. I look forward to your questions.