

## House Appropriations Hearing on Corps Budget

On April 16, the House Appropriations Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Subcommittee held a budget [hearing](#) with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Adam Telle, Chief of Engineers Lieutenant General Butch Graham, and Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of Interior Andrea Travnicek participated as witnesses at the hearing.

Secretary Telle noted the \$6.663 billion request to support commercial navigation, flood risk management, and ecosystem restoration. This year, the Corps has separated overhead and staff costs from project costs to increase transparency and increase project delivery. General Graham stated, "We're a great investment for the American people. The Civil Works Program for FY27 is performance based and focuses on high performing projects and programs." He will be focusing on getting the engineering right and he is wedded to the 35% design maturity threshold in order to request project authorization. He also stated it is important to get the project management right to deliver on schedule. He also believes leveraging private sector resources will help the Corps maximize use of internal resources. His goals are to get estimates and timelines to be more accurate.

Chairman Chuck Fleischmann (R, TN-3) noted for FY27, the Administration is seeking \$6.7B, which is level with the Administration's request from FY26. However, it is over \$3B less than FY26 enacted level. He also stated the Administration is proposing \$1.7B from HMTF which is less than half the maximum offset provided for in law. While Ranking Member Representative Marcy Kaptur (D, OH-9) highlighted the 36% decrease in the Corps' budget proposal (over \$3.8B) and the \$358M cut to the Bureau of Reclamation and stated she believed the cuts to be dangerous to people relying on well-maintained infrastructure and it could lead to higher costs to average Americans. She also noted the pause of over \$11B of Corps projects in "blue" states or cities and the loss of approximately 8% of the Corps' workforce. She stated, "I must express my deep disappointment with and disapproval of the extreme politicization of and lack of transparency we are witnessing regarding our nation's water infrastructure...We are also seeing gag orders emerge from the Department of Defense that require all Congressional communication to be routed through legislative affairs at the Pentagon...Again, this is political manipulation that impedes the timely exchange of basic, factual project information with this committee and Members of Congress."

Rep. Mike Levin (D, CA-49) also highlighted the Department of Defense memorandum preventing sharing of capability info and responding to congressional staff on WRDA issues. Rep. Levin noted Article I of the Constitution and reminded the Corps that Congress has the power to legislate, fund, and oversee the military, including the Corps. Rep. Levin asked if Secretary Telle was aware of the FY26 appropriations explanatory statement that "directed your office to ensure timely delivery of information, including project capabilities, to Congress without delays, interference, or prior clearance from DOD or OMB?" Secretary Telle stated that Members of Congress can contact his office for information and that the Corps is working to

coordinate with the interagency to get as much info as possible while being compliant with OMB Circular A-11.

Rep. Mike Simpson (R, ID-2) expressed support for projects in his District and asked about the Donor and Energy Transfer ports access to the HMTF funds and expressed concern about it being used for activities that were not dredging or other approved uses. The Corps indicated that they would get back to him on where the line is drawn between what is and isn't allowed for Donor and Energy Transfer ports.

Rep. Newhouse (R, WA-4) discussed wildfire damage to a Yakima Valley irrigation canal and expressed concern about catastrophic failure of water delivery to the region and hopes the Bureau of Reclamation can repair the vital waterway. He also asked about land along the Columbia River in the Tri-Cities for flood control. He noted that locals lease land from Corps for public parks and does not believe there is a need for Corps to continue owning the land when a group of locals and tribes have worked on a plan for managing it. He stated there is a legislative fix to codify the plan. He also hopes the working group will continue to receive support from the Corps. Secretary Telle supports outsourcing recreation services to the locals, but expressed concern about real estate issues and liability to the Corps if they don't make sure they don't put people in harm's way of flooding. General Graham applauded the effort of the working group and said the Corps is working through environmental issues with the locals and tribes.

Other topics discussed included the importance of the Engineering Research Design Center, western region drought and desalination projects, timelines for permits for oil and gas projects versus solar and wind projects, and the definition of Waters of the United States and implementation of the Supreme Court Sacket decision. Secretary Telle noted the Corps implemented guidance on WOTUS and is working with the EPA to finalize rulemaking.

To watch the hearing, click [here](#).