

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

COMPLETE STATEMENT OF

LIEUTENANT GENERAL TODD T. SEMONITE

CHIEF OF ENGINEERS

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BEFORE

**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ON

**Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Implementation of
the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 and the
Water Resources Development Act of 2016**

JULY 19, 2017

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am honored to testify before your committee today, along with Mr. Douglas Lamont, the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), on the implementation of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014) and the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA 2016) – and the bigger picture of how to ensure we build and sustain 21st Century Water Resources Infrastructure for America. This is my first time to testify before this Subcommittee and I look forward to working together during my tenure as Chief of Engineers.

I have been in command of the Corps for just over a year, and I want to briefly update you on where we're headed.

As an organization, the Corps' credibility is measured by our ability to deliver results that are on time, on budget, and of exceptional quality. To do this, and to keep us "world class", now and into the future, we're focusing on three fundamentals we call "Strengthen the Foundation," "Deliver the Program," and "Achieve our Vision."

First, as with any structure, our **Foundation** must be our **Strength** – the bedrock upon which our present rests and our future is built. For the Corps, this means having the discipline to do the routine things to a high standard. It means demonstrating we are reliable and worthy partners to assist in a shared effort by all levels of government and the private sector to be responsible stewards of our nation's water resources – and to earn its trust – in all we do, from top to bottom, big to small, tactical to strategic. It means having teams and processes that ask and answer the right questions, like, "do we have the capabilities, capacity, and authorities," before we launch. And, it means empowering leaders to think strategically because they are confident in the discipline of our ranks.

Second, we earn our credibility, our reputation, and our value by **Delivering the Program**. This is our lifesblood. This is our passion. This is our mission. And this is our No. 1 priority. In all we do, we'll ensure that costs, milestones, and expected quality are both understood and met.

Finally, to **Achieve our Vision**, we'll do our best to anticipate the conditions, challenges, and opportunities in an unknowable future and take prudent, decisive steps today to prepare. We're doing this by operationalizing strategic change with our Campaign Plan and its four (4) Goals – Support National Security, Deliver Integrated Water Resource Solutions, Reduce Disaster Risk, and Prepare for Tomorrow.

First, we continue our work across the globe with presence in more than 110 countries **Supporting National Security** and our Combatant Commanders with Civil Works, Military Missions, and Water Resources Research and Development expertise. We are proud to serve this great Nation and our fellow citizens and we are proud of the work the Corps does to support America's foreign policy. Corps civilian employees nationwide

have volunteered – and continue to volunteer – to support our Nation’s missions and vital interests abroad, often in harm’s way. Many have served on multiple deployments.

Second, we continue to work at making the Corps more efficient and effective while **Delivering Integrated Water Resource Solutions** for national missions and to address infrastructure challenges. This involves modernizing the project planning process, enhancing budget development for more holistic outcomes, making better risk-informed investment decisions, and improving delivery methods.

Third, we continue to be proactive in **Reducing Disaster Risks** and responding to disasters under the National Response Framework, National Disaster Recovery Framework, P.L. 84-99 as amended, and Corps project authorities for flood risk management. I am so proud of our team for the work we do with our partners at FEMA and State and local agencies in this area.

Fourth, **Preparing for Tomorrow** remains about our people and ensuring we have a pipeline of the best Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics teammates, as well as strong Workforce Development and Talent Management programs. We continue to tailor development programs to employee aspirations to retain talent and instill a culture that embraces a career of service. We’ve enjoyed success here, and continue to significantly improve our agency ranking in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and on the list of best places to work in the Federal government. We are proud to say that we continue to help our Nation’s Wounded Warriors transition out of active duty into fulfilling careers. In fact, this year we set a goal to assist 225 transitioning Wounded Warriors. I’m proud to say that we’ve nearly reached this goal by assisting 185 Wounded Warriors through the end of the 2nd quarter. Over the past five years, we’ve helped just over 1,300 Wounded Warriors find meaningful careers within the Corps and other organizations.

In closing, may I say that our excellence demands the bone-deep commitment of every Corps employee. I’m striving to develop what GEN Shinseki, former Army Chief of Staff, called “irreversible momentum” toward being a “world-class” organization. I use those two words on purpose because when I talk with my Corps team, I want all of us to have something to relate to. Whether a regulatory biologist or construction engineer, a human resource specialist or dam operator, an administrative professional or general officer, “world class” means that for the Corps to continue “engineering solutions to the nation’s toughest challenges,” which is our vision, we all must be leaders of superior integrity and technical competence. We know our multi-billion dollar program doesn’t deliver itself. Nor is the Nation served just by the work that we do, but more importantly, by your entire Corps Team – 34,000 strong. Thank you for allowing me the time to address the committee.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WRRDA 2014 AND WRDA 2016

WRRDA 2014

WRRDA 2014 provided many new and revised authorities to the Secretary of the Army with regard to the Nation's water resources. Since enactment, the Corps has continued to maintain a strong focus and commitment on developing and completing the implementation guidance for the provisions under this legislation. To date, we have addressed 190 provisions, which represent 95% of the 202 provisions enacted. All of the individual guidance can be found at the following link:

<http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Project-Planning/Legislative-Links/wrrda2014/>

In an initiative undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers, we have streamlined the delivery of our feasibility studies, including those that provide recommendations to the Administration and the Congress on proposed water resources projects. This effort has been successful in reducing study costs and timelines, including 31 Chief's Reports completed since WRRDA 2014. WRRDA 2014 adopted this approach, by authorizing its programmatic improvements in law. In addition, we are synchronizing and integrating Corps investments with those that are being made by other federal, state, local and non-governmental organizations, and we are using risk informed decision-making to improve the reliability and resiliency of our infrastructure portfolio. Over time, the cumulative effect of these efforts will result in an improved culture that is oriented on producing outcomes that enhance performance, quality and timely delivery of products and services and collaboration.

WRDA 2016

We have begun to issue guidance on the provisions of the recently enacted WRDA 2016. This legislation, signed into law on December 16, 2016, is Title I of the Water Resources Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. In addition to its programmatic changes to Army Corps of Engineers water resources authorities, this legislation authorized 30 water resources projects, eight project reauthorizations, and 39 studies.

Today, I proudly report to you the significant progress made since enactment of WRDA 2016. Implementation guidance for 138 of the WRDA 2016 provisions, representing 67% of the 206 provisions in the Act, has been addressed and more are under review by our team. All completed guidance is posted on the Corps website at

<http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Project-Planning/Legislative-Links/wrda2016/>

The guidance that we have issued and will be issuing will enable the Corps to continue to be responsive to our customers and stakeholders. We continue to streamline our

delivery and performance processes, and are working to further deliver the Civil Works program. It is and will remain reliable, innovative, efficient, and responsive, and we are making additional changes to increase and enhance performance. Completion of implementation guidance for both WRRDA 2014 and WRDA 2016 is one of my top priorities. The Army Corps of Engineers has a strong tradition of working collaboratively with non-federal interests and other federal agencies. These partnerships are increasing and will likely continue to increase, as we share a common goal of having reliable and resilient water resources infrastructure for our Nation.

CONCLUSION

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is fully committed to doing what it can to for the Nation to assist in addressing the water resources challenges of the 21st Century.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of Subcommittee. This concludes my statement. I look forward to answering any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have.