

OPENING STATEMENT
The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman, Energy and Water Development Subcommittee
House Committee on Appropriations

Hearing on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Civil Works
FY 2012 Budget
March 9, 2011

I'd like to call this hearing to order. Good afternoon, everyone. Our hearing today is on the fiscal year 2012 budget request for the civil works program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy and Chief of Engineers Lieutenant General Robert Van Antwerp.

General, I understand your tenure as Chief comes to an end in May, so this likely will be your last hearing with us. I want to thank you for your service to our nation and to the Corps. You've performed your duties admirably. The motto Duty-Honor-Country comes to mind, and you've lived it.

So, too, the Committee would also like to salute others of you in uniform, and those civilian Corps employees (all volunteers), for your key roles in the War on Terror supporting construction and combat efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. While civil works are this committee's prime focus, we are all mindful of your service and thank you for it.

As I mentioned at our hearings last week, I want everyone who appears before this subcommittee to understand that it is highly unlikely there will be any new funding in fiscal year 2012 for our subcommittee. Our subcommittee must do its part to reduce spending and bring down our deficit.

However financially limited, we must find the right balance of investments into our most critical infrastructure needs, with an eye towards those that protect our nation, and support and improve our economy, and yes, provide jobs!

I firmly believe that the projects and activities undertaken by the Corps of Engineers fall into this category of spending necessary for a robust and thriving economy. A centerpiece, of course, is the civil works program responsible for maintaining our inland and coastal waterways in support of navigation. In 2009 alone, U.S. ports and waterways handled more than 2.2 billion tons of cargo, including more than 1.15 trillion dollars in foreign commerce as well as 16 percent of all domestic freight.

At the same time, this year, the Administration proposes to divert the harbor maintenance tax revenues – collected for the very purpose of dredging these waterways – to other uses. I don't see how diversions of this magnitude will support the President's focus on American competitiveness **OR** his goal of doubling exports by 2015 **AND** keep our ports and waterways dredged.

The President's budget request before us today represents a \$298 million, or 6 percent, cut from the fiscal year 2011 Continuing Resolution level. Historically, the Administration's budget request comes in lower than the level for the year before and Congress takes on the task of finding the additional funds necessary to meet our nation's water resources needs.

In these times of focusing on cutting such additional means – not increasing – spending, it will be much more difficult for Congress to find any additional money for the Corps. That makes it even more important for Congress to understand how the Administration prioritizes Corps projects. This hearing will hopefully aid in that process!

Again, I'd like to welcome our witnesses to the subcommittee. Secretary Darcy, please ensure that the hearing record, questions for the record, and any supporting information requested by the Subcommittee are delivered in final form to us no later than four weeks from the time you receive them. Members who have additional questions for the record will have until close of business tomorrow to provide them to the Subcommittee office.

With that, I'll turn to Mr. Pastor for his opening comments.