



Statement of
The Water Resources Coalition
On the Fiscal Year 2011 Budgets
Of The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program
And the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Before the Energy and Water Resources Development Subcommittee
House Committee on Appropriations
March 19, 2010

I. Introduction

The Water Resources Coalition (WRC) is pleased to provide this statement for the record on the administration's proposed budgets for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works program and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for Fiscal Year 2011.

The WRC was established in 2007 to promote the development, implementation and funding of a comprehensive national water resources policy. With member organizations representing state and local governments, conservation, engineering and construction, ports, waterways and transportation services, the Coalition works to ensure that a comprehensive, national water resources policy is developed, implemented and funded to provide a sustainable, productive economy; a healthy aquatic ecology; and public health and safety.

The Coalition's members are the American Council of Engineering Companies; the American Public Works Association; the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association; the American Society of Civil Engineers; the Association of California Water Agencies; the Associated Equipment Distributors; the Associated General Contractors of America; the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway Association; the Coast Builders Association; the Dredging Contractors of America; the Everglades Trust; the Florida Inland Navigation District; the Missouri Corn Growers Association; the National Association of Regional Councils; the National Sand, Stone and Gravel Association; the Oregon Water Resources Congress; and the Upper Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri Rivers Association.

improve, prevent, save
www.waterresourcescoalition.org

ASCE
101 Constitution Ave., NW
Ste. 375 East
Washington, DC 20001
202-789-7850 (ASCE)

AGC
2300 Wilson Boulevard
Suite 400
Arlington, VA 22201
703-837-5435 (AGC)

Our nation's water resources are critical to our economy, our infrastructure, public safety, and the preservation and enhancement of our environmental resources. Much of our water infrastructure is aging, compromising its ability to meet the needs for which it was created. With a commitment from Congress to a plan that increases funding for its civil works program over the next five years, critical water resources projects could be executed at levels that will eliminate the backlog of projects and meet the nation's water resources needs.

II. Increase Civil Works funding to \$7 billion in FY 2011.

In recent years, national investment in water resources projects has not kept pace with the level of economic and social expansion. Over the last 30 years, the U.S. population has increased more than 40 percent while GDP has grown from \$2.5 to \$7.5 trillion. Capital investment in public water resources infrastructure, however, has decreased by 70 percent. The combination of an expanding population and economy coupled with a decline in infrastructure investment has created a substantial investment gap.

With each passing day, the inability of our nation's aging infrastructure to meet the needs of our growing population further threatens our economy. To complete ongoing infrastructure projects in a timely and efficient manner and to save future costly repairs by adequately addressing the existing backlog of critical deferred maintenance, Civil Works funding must increase to at least \$7 billion for FY 2011. In subsequent years, annual increases of at least \$400 million to \$600 million will be required to reduce the "benefits foregone," keep the Civil Works program on schedule and save the nation the costs of paying for more expensive "crisis" repairs in the future.

Moreover, the committee should ensure that the Corps is fiscally capable of:

- Substantially reducing the backlog of critical maintenance and repairs at hundreds of multiple purpose flood control, hydropower, recreation, water supply, irrigation and navigation projects.
- Repairing several high risk dam safety projects.
- Rehabilitating and upgrading hydropower plants.
- Recapitalizing the oldest and most at-risk projects on our inland waterways system.
- Fully dredging the nation's highest use, deep draft, commercial ports to authorized depth.
- Fully dredging the inland waterways to their authorized depths and widths.

III. Fund the WRDA water resource priorities report

This report, mandated by Congress in section 2032 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, has not been implemented. This section asks for a report on the vulnerability of the United States to flooding, an assessment of the extent to which federal programs are reducing risk or may be adding to risk, and proposals to change.

Given the persistence of serious floods over the past few years and the prospect of an increase of the risks associated with flooding, the failure to implement section 2032 is unacceptable. This inaction is due to the failure of Congress to appropriate funds the Corps needs and has requested.

The need for risk assessment is obvious. Section 2032 of WRDA 2007 provides the Corps with the direction and authority to look at risk assessment and risk reduction in the broadest and yet most practical approach imaginable. The implementation of this provision is long overdue, and this committee must fund the project.

IV. Direct the Corps to complete the national shoreline erosion control development program

This program was established in 1992. It was designed to test new technologies that will improve or reduce the cost of federal beach restoration projects. There are nine testing sites.

Section 2038 of WRDA 2007 contains important modifications to the program. For example, the original program did not permit the Corps to cost-share these projects with local governments. In addition, where the technology was demonstrated to work, the 1992 law did not permit the technology to be seamlessly integrated into existing federal beach restoration projects. These weaknesses have been corrected in WRDA 2007.

Section 2038 moves this program into the Continuing Authorities Program for small shoreline protection projects. The more pressing issue is the lack of implementation guidance for Section 2038. The old program apparently remains in force until the guidance is adopted by the Corps. This leaves both the Corps' Coastal Hydraulics Laboratory, which administers the program, and local project sponsors and firms that wish to bid in the competitive process for designs of new technology in limbo.

The changes made in Section 2038 were designed to make this program more attractive to federal taxpayers and local sponsors. Apparently the Corps of Engineers feels this is a low-priority issue and has, therefore, issued no guidance.

This is an important program. Coastal areas of the nation are at risk from serious storms that endanger lives and property. Europe, Australia, New Zealand and other nations have done far more than the United States to test new beach restoration technologies to fulfill their coastal stewardship responsibilities. They have done far more than the U.S. to test new technologies that will reduce the cost and improve the effectiveness of beach restoration projects. We cannot afford the lack of implementation guidance for section 2038 to stall this critical program. The committee should direct the Corps to use funds in FY 2011 to complete the program required by Congress in 2007.

V. Repair and upgrade critical coastal protection projects that serve as defense to key population centers.

Investment in this sector will greatly expedite the construction of critical environmental projects, completing projects sooner and returning critical ecosystems to a more natural state. Projects producing beneficial impacts on more than 1 million acres could be expedited. Of these outputs, approximately 90 percent are nationally significant and would contribute greatly to long-term environmental sustainability.

VI. The committee should increase the FY 2011 budget for the Bureau of Reclamation

The administration is proposing a budget of \$1.10 billion for the Bureau of Reclamation in FY 2011. The committee should appropriate \$1.2 billion to bring the inflation-adjusted budget to roughly the \$1.12 billion level enacted in FY 2009.

Water is the lifeblood of communities and economies throughout the West. Those supplies are managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. Drought conditions, climate change impacts, and water use conflicts are undermining the reliability of water supplies for municipal and agricultural use. Small farmers are pressed to convert their lands for development. Improving the reliability of water supplies requires innovative approaches and coordination with local water managers.

Over the past fifteen years, it is clear that the era of large, new federal water projects is ending. New water supplies for a growing West will come from water reuse projects, water conservation efforts, or appropriately scaled storage. The demand for water reuse projects is increasing yearly and outpacing federal funding.

At present, there is a nearly \$1 billion backlog in water reuse funding at the Bureau of Reclamation. The committee should ensure that these projects are funded and that the Bureau is adapting to the changing needs of water managers facing a host of new challenges. The committee should investigate aging water infrastructure across the West, and assess whether the health of the economy and climate change could have detrimental impacts on water infrastructure.

Additionally, the committee should provide \$75 million for Western water reclamation programs under title XVI of the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992 (Pub.L. 102-575, 106 Stat. 4600, 4663). That program authorized the Secretary of the Interior carry out studies “to identify opportunities for water reclamation and reuse” in the 17 states under the Bureau’s jurisdiction. The law authorized projects and studies to assess the scientific and environmental impacts of reclaimed water. There is a backlog of \$ 624 million of congressionally authorized water reuse and reclamation projects at the Bureau. These projects, if funded, can deliver much-needed water across the West and jobs for communities and businesses.

The Bureau of Reclamation has played an important role in the development of the 17 western states over the past one hundred years. The WRC recognizes the importance of such investment given the aging of the infrastructure and the harsh climatic conditions of the western United States. We believe there should also be a greater

emphasis to drought preparedness and the expected challenges from climate change with regard to the Reclamation program.

This concludes the WRC statement on the Corps' civil works and Bureau of Reclamation budgets for FY 2011. For more information, visit the Water Resources Coalition Web site at www.waterresourcescoalition.org.

Respectfully submitted,

The Water Resources Coalition

For further information, please contact:

Brian Pallasch
Co-Chair, WRC
101 Constitution Ave. NW, Suite 375 East
Washington, D.C. 20001
PHONE: 202-789-7842
EMAIL: bpallasch@asce.org

Marco Giamberadino
Co-Chair, WRC
2300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 400
Arlington, VA 22201
PHONE: 703-837-5325
EMAIL: giamberm@agc.com