

STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, CHAIRWOMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
HEARING ON “PROPOSALS FOR A WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2008”
APRIL 30, 2008

Good afternoon.

This hearing of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment will come to order.

Today, the Subcommittee begins its work on a Water Resources Development Act of 2008. Enactment of a new water resources bill is a high priority of mine, and, I am certain, of all of our Committee members.

Last year, this Committee, on a bipartisan basis, was successful in clearing out close to seven years worth of project studies, new authorizations, and project modifications. This was a historical achievement, and one that had been illusive since 2000. In fact, I believe that the presidential veto that occurred last year was the first veto of a water resources development act, and only the 107th veto override in the history of the nation.

I thank my colleagues, from both sides of the aisle, for their hard work and dedication to investing in the water related infrastructure of the nation. I want to take this opportunity to, again, recognize my former Subcommittee colleague, Mr. Baker, for efforts in resolving some of the last-minute sticking points on the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.

I also look forward to working with my newest ranking member, Mr. Boozman, in continuing the cordial, bipartisan work of putting together a water resources bill. Water related infrastructure should not be a partisan issue – these flood control, navigation, environmental restoration, and other water related projects are far too important to our constituents, our local economies, and the American people's lives and livelihoods.

This afternoon, we will receive testimony from distinguished Members of Congress, the administration, and interested stakeholders regarding projects and policies for consideration in the upcoming Water Resources Development Act.

Our intent today is to receive testimony and gather information and individual project requests over the next several weeks so that we can be in a position to move a new bill later the summer.

This is no small task, but given the growing needs and opportunities to improve our water transportation infrastructure and restore the environment, we must rise to the challenge and move forward without delay.

As noted by Secretary Woodley in his testimony today, “public policy is much improved when the Congressional authorization and oversight processes are robust and effective.” I agree with this statement, and believe that it is consistent with this Committee’s efforts to have a water resources bill signed into law this year.

It is my hope that, after seeing the strong bipartisan, bicameral support for investment in our nation’s water related infrastructure, should the President be presented with a new water resources bill later this year, he will sign it.

I yield to my ranking member, the gentleman from Arkansas, Mr. Boozman, for any comments he would like to make.