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COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON SELECT REVENUE MEASURES



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Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

Testimony: Member Day Hearing, Water Resources Development Act 2024

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

I write today in support of the termination of USACE Contract DA-19-016-CIVENG-56-203, regarding the Colebrook River Reservoir, Connecticut. This contract is between the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Metropolitan District (MDC), the non-profit municipal corporation which provides clean water to the Greater Hartford, CT region.

More than fifty years ago, the USACE and the MDC entered into a contract to construct the Colebrook Dam. While primarily constructed for flood control, the dam also created a reservoir. In return for 10 billion gallons of emergency drinking water storage, the MDC agreed to pay a portion of the capital cost of the dam and a portion of maintenance and operations costs over a fifty-year period. In 2019, the MDC completed their capital expense obligation.

Unfortunately, the reservoir has proven to be unsuitable for emergency water storage. Through the history of the project, the water has never been utilized. The Connecticut Department of Public Health has found that under severe drought conditions, most, if not all, of the 10 billion gallons would be unavailable. They additionally found that the requirements needed to connect this water source with existing water supply infrastructure make the water unsuitable for use even under non-drought circumstances.

In light of this, the MDC attempted to end their work with the USACE upon completion of their obligations in 2019, believing the project completed. Unfortunately, the USACE considers the MDC liable in perpetuity for operations and maintenance expenses, barring termination by legislation. As a result, unless this committee takes action, the MDC, and by extension, its ratepayers, are contractually bound to fund the operations in which they receive no benefit. At a

time when utility costs have risen, removing this cost is a common sense way to benefit thousands of households, many of them low income.

I urge the committee to recognize that the agreement between USACE and the MDC has run its course and to end this contract.

Sincerely,



John B. Larson
Member of Congress