

Representative Robert J. Wittman, VA-01

**Introduction:**

Chairwoman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today. I am honored to highlight some of the needs facing Virginia as you consider oversight on the implementation of the Water Resources Development Act of 2022.

The Water Resources Development Act is necessary legislation that provides for improvements to the Nation's ports, inland waterways, flood protection, ecosystem restoration, and other water resources infrastructure and policy. Water infrastructure is vital to moving goods throughout the country, from products we all use in our everyday lives, to crops and goods we produce domestically and send abroad. I hope this committee and the House upholds its duty to authorize nationally important water infrastructure improvements that are more locally driven.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the Army Corps of Engineers as they work hard to manage more than 1,500 water resource projects with many of them in Virginia. The Army Corps of Engineers is critical to our commonwealth, from the Norfolk Harbor Channel Widening and

Deepening Project to the public waterways restorations projects across Virginia.

### **Port of Virginia:**

As a proud representative of the Commonwealth of Virginia, home of the Port of Virginia—one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard—advancing the work being done by the Port of Virginia to improve and expand its operations is critical. The Port manages cargo that is shipped to all 48 contiguous states.

The Port of Virginia is a national gateway for commerce, supporting businesses across the country. Moreover, in Virginia's 1<sup>st</sup> District 234 businesses utilize the services of the Port of Virginia.

As a catalyst for commerce, the Port is attracting growth, fostering development, and creating jobs. On the state level, cargo moving through the Port supports more than 436,667 jobs statewide and generates in excess of \$100.1 billion in annual economic impact for Virginia.

### **WRDA Proposals Submitted:**

I would like to take this time to highlight some WRDA priorities the subcommittee should look at while conducting oversight of its implementation.

### **1. Norfolk Harbor and Channels: Anchorage F Expansion**

Anchorage F is currently designed as a 3,000-foot diameter circle for free-swinging bow anchoring. The anchorage in its current design is used primarily as an emergency anchorage in inclement wave weather in the harbor or in situations of unexpected delays. For vessels to effectively utilize the anchorage, it is imperative – and common-sense - for the anchorage and approach depths to match that of the Federal Channel.

A deeper and wider anchorage will allow further use of the anchorage beyond the primary function and permit use by larger vessels calling on our port. Additionally, an improved anchorage and anchorage approach could provide passing vessels safe harbor during storm conditions.

The modification includes widening the Anchorage F beyond its currently authorized diameter of 3,620-feet to a diameter of 3,840-feet and deepening the anchorage to 55-feet consistent with the 1986 authorization and the project depth of the Federal Channel.

## **Virginia Coastal Resilience Feasibility Study**

I request oversight to ensure the USACE includes Federal properties in their feasibility studies for the Norfolk-Hampton Roads, Virginia.

By allowing the USACE to include Federal properties for an upcoming Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRМ) study of the Peninsula and greater Hampton Roads area, it would solve the restriction problem in incorporating these installations and facilities into the Civil Works planning and construction processes. I believe this is a commonsense issue that will ultimately produce a better report of action by a range of actors in the region.

### **Conclusion:**

I want to thank the Chairwoman, Ranking Member, and the Members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with the Committee and the Corps to ensure WRDA 2024 is implemented as intended.