

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
WRDA Member Day
January 11, 2023
Testimony

I want to begin by thanking Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen for convening this hearing and for welcoming member testimony as you craft this important legislation, the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

I am proud to represent the 17th district of Illinois. My district sits along the upper Mississippi River and is home to dozens of agricultural communities that depend on the Mississippi to move their goods to market. The Army Corps of Engineers and local communities along the Mississippi River work hand in hand to maintain and upgrade river water infrastructure.

As part of this work, the Army Corps requires that the non-federal sponsor, usually the state or local government, sign a project partnership agreement, many of which include provisions requiring the non-federal sponsor to take full responsibility for the operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation (OMRR&R) for the infrastructure asset the Corps are constructing on the behalf of the non-federal sponsor. I support a change to this standard practice change that

would allow the Corps and non-federal sponsor to enter into agreements where the obligation of OMRR&R expires at a set date.

Staying with PPAs, the standard PPA the Corps stipulates that the non-federal sponsor indemnify the federal government of any costs associated with a catastrophe involving the infrastructure asset constructed by the Corps. I support a modification to the current blanket indemnification in favor of a shared approach to liability costs.

As you all know, the authorization for the National Levee Safety Program has expired. I support language to reauthorize this program in WRDA 24.

I am supportive of the funding appropriated for the Inland Waterways Construction Projects in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which will fund the construction of seven water infrastructure assets throughout the country. One of these projects is Lock and Dam 25 on the Mississippi River.

The intent of the BIL funding was to fund these seven projects to completion all using federal funds. Unfortunately, the costs for the projects have increased and the appropriated funding is no longer sufficient. I

support the inclusion of language in WRDA to stipulate that all seven projects have a 100% federal cost share.

Additionally, like many other members, my district is home to dozens of drinking water and wastewater agencies that support the people of Illinois' 17th Congressional district. One way WRDA supports local communities is through Environmental Infrastructure authorizations. I am pleased that the Committee will accept EI requests for WRDA 24 and look forward to advocating for projects to support infrastructure projects in the communities I represent.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify on these important issues.