

**R.D. James**  
**Nomination Hearing for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works**  
**Opening Statement Before the Senate Armed Services**  
**Committee**

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member, Mr. Reed, honorable members of the Committee, I wish to express my gratitude for allowing me to testify before this distinguished committee this morning.

I also thank you for allowing me to recognize my family here with me today. My wife, Virginia James, our son, Riley James, and his wife, Lydia Fowler. I would also like to recognize our daughter Elizabeth, who departed this life 22 years ago at the age of 19 years. Their love and support encourage and sustain me.

I would be remiss if I did not express my grateful appreciation to President Trump for considering me for this important position. I find it deeply humbling to have the trust of the President and the support of Secretary Mattis.

I am R. D. James from New Madrid, Missouri. I'm a farmer, a business man, a civil engineer, and for the past 37 years, a presidential appointee to the Mississippi River Commission.

Our nation was blessed from its creation with an abundance of natural resources. Due to the vision and commitment of those that came before us and the determination and sacrifice of American people, we now enjoy a system of inland waterways that contains more miles of navigation channel than the rest of the world combined. The interior of our country is also blessed with one of the largest contiguous agricultural areas in the world – an asset that feeds our nation and others around the globe. The inland waterway system not only overlays vast acreages of fertile productive farm land, but it also connects the major industrial centers of the interior with the largest deep draft coastal ports that link us to the world in trade and defense.

Owing largely to the natural geographic advantage, the strong multi-generational commitment by successive Congresses and Administrations to a program of civil works, this nation became the economic power that it is today, all while keeping our rivers viable for recreation and water supply.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers delivered that civil works program and will continue to execute future commitments made by the legislative and executive branches.

We can also be proud that we have improved and will continue to improve our water resources and its interconnected ecosystems and environmental enhancements to restore past damages and mitigate present impacts so that our investments can be sustained for future generations. In addition, our U.S. Army Corps operated hydropower projects contribute more sustainable energy to our nation than any other generators of power.

Acknowledging all infrastructure investments made throughout our history, my experience as a civil engineer on the Mississippi River Commission has demonstrated that much of our infrastructure investments and commerce would not remain viable without reliable flood control infrastructure to provide protection.

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to sit before this committee. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging and working with you, Mr. Chairman, and all of the Congress to address the vital navigation, hydropower, flood control and environmental sustainability challenges of the nation. I hope to be a part of our generation's legacy in continuing the nation's commitment to delivering world class infrastructure and maintaining our economic advantages.

I'm grateful for your consideration of my nomination and I look forward to your questions.