

Advance Policy Questions for R.D. James
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works

Department of Defense Reforms

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 included the most sweeping reforms since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

1. Do you support these reforms?

Answer: Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Army to ensure I understand the impacts of these reforms and implement them fully.

2. What other areas for defense reform do you believe might be appropriate for this Committee to address?

Answer: I believe it would be appropriate to continually assess the Department's institutions to identify areas where reform measures could more efficiently and effectively execute Title 10 responsibilities. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Army to implement the NDAA 2017 reforms and identify additional reforms that might be necessary. I look forward to working with this committee on any recommendations.

Duties and Qualifications

3. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works?

Answer: I firmly believe that the constructed and natural infrastructure associated with this Nation's Civil Works program is vital to the economic strength and our quality of life in this country. I also appreciate that the Civil Works program is extremely complex and diverse, ranging from navigation to flood risk management to hydropower to ecosystem restoration and beyond. If confirmed, my responsibilities would be to provide oversight and policy direction to the Corps, in collaboration with the Administration, Congress, and cost-sharing partners, to strengthen performance and improve the timely delivery of the Civil Works program. In doing so, I will work closely and collaboratively with the Corps to achieve that shared goal.

4. What background and experience do you possess that qualify you to perform these duties?

Answer: I believe there are several things I would bring to the table, if confirmed as the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. First, my professional training as a degreed Civil Engineer gives me a unique perspective and sound technical grounding to

understand and provide oversight of the complex Civil Works infrastructure of this Nation. Second, my long-standing service as a Presidential appointee on the Mississippi River Commission has provided me extensive on-the-ground insight into the value of the Civil Works program, along with the importance of relationships and sound partnerships between local cost-sharing sponsors, the Congress, and the Administration. Finally, I've spent my entire adult life working with and owning a small family business. I understand first-hand what the people of this country expect from their government, from the Corps, and from our Nation's water resource programs.

5. Do you believe that there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works?

Answer: While I have a whole lot to learn and would approach this challenging position with humility if confirmed, I also believe my training as a Civil Engineer, my extended public service working with the Corps and industry on the Mississippi River Commission, and my time as a small business owner, have collectively prepared me for this position about as well as anything could.

6. If confirmed, what duties and functions do you expect that the Secretary of the Army would prescribe for you?

Answer: If confirmed, I would owe the Secretary of the Army my complete loyalty and unwavering support for the priorities he sets for the Army particularly those that intersect with the Civil Works program. Beyond that, I will need to afford the Secretary the opportunity to convey his expectations for me, which, of course, I will vigorously pursue, if confirmed.

Major Challenges and Problems

7. In your view, what are the major challenges that will confront the next Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works?

Answer: In my view, the next Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works will confront challenges involving greater demands on our Nation's water resources, aging infrastructure, and resource constraints. If confirmed, I look forward to working on these challenges with the Congress, the Administration, and our cost-sharing partners.

8. If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?

Answer: The challenges of aging water resources infrastructure require a collaborative approach and efficient use of available funding applied to the highest performing projects. With congressional support, opportunities to leverage non-traditional funding mechanisms should be pursued where they make sense, such as public-private partnerships. If confirmed, I will focus on this collaborative approach as a priority.

9. What do you consider to be the most serious problems in the performance of the functions of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works?

Answer: I have not yet had the opportunity to view the problems facing the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works first hand. However, high performing organizations are ones in which individuals exercise trust, work collaboratively, build effective relationships internally and externally, and delegate decision authority to the most appropriate level. If confirmed, I will work to ensure these characteristics are the hallmark of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

10. If confirmed, what management actions and timelines would you establish to address these problems?

Answer: If confirmed, I would want to engage immediately with the Congress and the Administration, including collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget, Environmental Protection Agency, the Departments of Interior, Agriculture and Commerce, and other stakeholders. I see this as key to the overall success of the Civil Works program. Another key priority would be to visit Corps Headquarters and all Divisions. Management success is highly dependent on knowing the challenges at all levels of the organization.

11. If confirmed, what broad priorities would you establish in terms of issues that must be addressed by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works?

Answer: One of the things I feel most strongly about is the importance of strengthening relationships, collaboration, and trust between the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, the Administration, and Congress. There is power in partnerships and I believe we owe it to the American people to do the very best we can to work together in their common interest. Building and strengthening those relationships will be an early priority for me, if confirmed. Another early priority would be to work closely with the Corps to strengthen the performance and improve delivery of the nation's Civil Works program within schedule and cost commitments, recognizing the significant investments made by project sponsors. Finally, having heard a consistent and pervasive degree of concern regarding implementation of the Section 408 program for permitting non-Federal alterations to Corps projects, I would, if confirmed, make streamlining and improving the responsiveness of the Section 408 program another early priority.

Relations with Congress

12. What are your views on the state of the relationship between the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?

Answer: If confirmed, the relationship between the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and Congress will be strong and productive. The Army's Civil Works mission is broad in scope and congressional oversight responsibilities are shared among several committees, including the Senate Armed Services Committee. I understand that the Army works hard to provide all of the oversight committees with the information they need to conduct proper oversight of this important mission, and if confirmed, I intend to do the same.

13. If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works?

Answer: If confirmed, I will ensure that the Army emphasizes a transparent and cooperative relationship with Congress concerning all Civil Works efforts. I will be proactive in providing information to this Committee and other Members regarding Civil Works matters of interest. I will be responsive to all congressional inquiries and I will make myself and senior leaders from my staff and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers available to answer questions quickly and thoroughly. I understand that the best way to address issues of concern to Congress is through close cooperation and, if confirmed, this will be one of my top priorities.

Civilian Oversight of the Army Corps of Engineers

14. What is your view of the relative authority of the Chief of Engineers, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, the Secretary of the Army, the Army Chief of Staff, and the Secretary of Defense with regard to the civil works function of the Army Corps of Engineers?

Answer: I view the relative authority of the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, and the Chief of Engineers, as it relates to the Civil Works functions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as follows:

Secretary of Defense

As provided under 10 U.S.C. §113, the Secretary of Defense is the head of and principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the Department of Defense. Subject to the direction of the President, Title 10 of the U.S. Code, and Section 2 of the National

Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. §3002), the Secretary of Defense has full authority, direction and control over all elements of the Defense Department. He exercises power over the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers through the Secretary of the Army, whose responsibility for and authority over all affairs of the Army is subject to the Secretary of Defense's authority, direction and control. If confirmed, I will cooperate fully with the Secretary of Defense in supporting the national defense priorities of this Administration and in overseeing the administration of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers consistent with policies of the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The Secretary of the Army

As provided by 10 U.S.C. §3013, the Secretary of the Army is the head of the Department of the Army. Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense and to the provisions of Chapter 6 of Title 10, the Secretary of the Army is responsible for, and has the authority necessary to conduct all affairs of the Department of the Army. As further authorized by 10 U.S.C §3013, the Secretary of the Army may assign such of his functions, powers and duties as he considers appropriate to the Under Secretary of the Army, as well as the Assistant Secretaries of the Army, and require officers of the Army to report to these officials on any matter.

The Chief of Staff of the Army

As provided by 10 U.S.C. §3033, the Chief of Staff of the Army is the senior military adviser to the Secretary of the Army and is the Army's senior military officer. The Chief of Staff of the Army is directly responsible to and performs his duties under the authority, direction and control of the Secretary of the Army. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of Staff of the Army also performs duties prescribed by law under 10 U.S.C. §151. If confirmed, I will develop a close, professional relationship with the Chief of Staff of the Army, including communicating with him directly and candidly as he performs his duties.

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works

As provided by 10 U.S.C. §3016, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works is principally responsible for the overall supervision of the functions of the Army relating to programs for conservation and development of the national water resources (commonly known as the Army Civil Works program), including flood damage reduction, river and harbor navigation, environmental restoration and protection, water supply, shore protection, hydroelectric power, recreation, and related purposes. The critical national interests served by the Civil Works program require that the Assistant Secretary and Chief of Engineers develop a close, professional relationship built on open and frequent communication, active cooperation, and mutual trust and respect. If confirmed, I commit to establishing and maintaining this relationship with the Chief of Engineers, in order to effectively serve the President's priorities, as well as accommodate the policy prerogatives of the Congress.

The Chief of Engineers

The Chief of Engineers advises the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works on Civil Works functions of the Army, including those relating to the conservation and development of water resources and the support for others program and, as Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, executes the Civil Works program under the supervision of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. The Chief of Engineers is established by law as a member of the Army staff (10 U.S.C. §3031) and as one of four statutory Army chiefs of branches under 10 U.S.C. §3036. The Chief of Engineers is the principal adviser to the Secretary of the Army and other principal Army Headquarters officials for the formulation of policy related to engineering, construction, and real property activities for the Department. As a member of the Army Staff, the Chief of Engineers reports on military matters to the Chief of Staff, through the Vice Chief of Staff. In the area of installation activities, the Chief of Engineers advises the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations & Environment), who has principal responsibility for all Army matters related to installations and the environment.

15. In your view, does the Corps need to make fundamental changes in the way it operates? If so, what changes would you recommend?

Answer: I feel the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the best public design, planning, and construction agency in the world. However, if confirmed, I intend to assess its processing timelines, delegations of authority, internal and external relationships, and talent management processes to see what, if any, changes would improve the organization.

16. If confirmed, what procedures would you follow regarding consultation with Congress prior to issuing any secretarial decisions or announcements regarding reforms that may affect the execution of the civil works and environmental functions of the Corps?

Answer: If confirmed, I will follow established Army procedures, and improve upon them as appropriate, to ensure full and effective consultation with Congress as part of any decisions or announcements regarding reforms that may affect the execution of the civil works and environmental functions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

17. What is your view of the role of the civilian and military leadership of the Corps in developing goals for Corps programs and presenting these goals to Congress?

Answer: The respective roles of civilian and military leadership are long established and invaluable aspects of our Nation's government. It is particularly important in the context of providing strategic direction for the Army's myriad of critical military and civil missions. The Army's civilian appointees advance the policy direction of the executive branch's elected leadership, aided by trained leadership, expert advice, and skilled execution of senior military leaders and civilian executives. If confirmed, I intend to

provide the civilian leadership needed to consult and work with Congress to execute this Administration's strategic policy goals and to further advance the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' project execution, providing even greater contributions and value to the Nation.

Integrity and Accountability in the Army Corps of Engineers

In November 2000, the Army Inspector General found that three Army Corps of Engineers officials had manipulated data in a cost-benefit analysis in order to justify a \$1 billion project. Recently, we have seen a number of cost over-runs and schedule delays on major projects that the Corps manages.

18. If confirmed, what steps, if any, will you take to ensure that projects are appropriately analyzed and justified?

Answer: If confirmed, I would take whatever steps necessary to ensure that any U.S. Army Corps of Engineers analysis is fundamentally sound, unbiased, and transparent. To ensure that projects are fully justified, the Corps must complete a defensible technical analysis in a timely and cost-effective manner.

19. If confirmed, what steps, if any, would you take to ensure Corps-managed projects are completed on time and on budget?

Answer: I believe one of the most important things any agency (or any business) can do is to consistently deliver on the commitments it makes to Congress, the Administration, and project sponsors, whether it is a schedule commitment or cost commitment. If confirmed, I plan to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other Federal agencies who participate in project delivery to strengthen performance in this area.

Navigation

The Army Corps of Engineers has built and maintains an intra coastal and inland network of commercial navigation channels, and locks and dams for navigation, which comprise integral parts of the nation's critical infrastructure. The Corps also maintains 300 commercial harbors, through which pass 2 billion tons of cargo a year, and more than 600 smaller harbors. Significant amounts of heavy equipment and supplies bound for potential overseas military operations move by ship through ports maintained by the civil works program.

20. What do you view as the greatest challenges facing the Army with respect to the execution of its navigation mission?

Answer: Our Nation is blessed with more miles of inland waterways than the rest of the world combined. One of the greatest challenges with the execution of the Army's Civil

Works navigation mission is the maintenance, recapitalization and modernization of this infrastructure. Maintaining ports and waterways is critical to the Nation's economic well-being. Further, the dredging mission of inland and coastal waterways faces the continual challenge of disposition of dredged material in an efficient and beneficial manner. If confirmed, I will confront these challenges head-on.

21. Are there aspects of this mission that should be transferred from the Department of the Army?

Answer: No. If confirmed, however, I will closely review all aspects of the Army's Civil Works program and look for innovative ways to improve the execution of the navigation mission.

22. In your view, how can the Corps best respond to environmental concerns in carrying out its navigation mission?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with industry stakeholders to fully understand the environmental concerns related to the navigation mission. I know, for example, that opportunities exist for the non-Federal sponsors and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to partner along with State and Federal resource agencies to examine beneficial use options for dredged material.

Environmental Mission

The Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for environmental restoration projects at Department of Defense Formerly Used Defense Sites and also at Department of Energy Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program. Under the Department of Energy program, the Corps cleans up former Manhattan Project and Atomic Energy Commission sites, making use of expertise gained in cleaning up former military sites and civilian hazardous waste sites under the Environmental Protection Agency "Superfund" program.

23. What do you view as the greatest challenges facing the Army with respect to the execution of its environmental restoration mission?

Answer: I believe that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers faces a difficult challenge of balancing available funding, increased technological standards for restoration, and stakeholder expectations. If confirmed, I will work with the Corps to continue applying sound science and management practices that will help to increase remediation efficiency and continue to meet the commitments made to stakeholders.

24. Are there aspects of this mission that should be transferred from the Department of the Army?

Answer: No, I believe, at this time, that the Army is the most appropriate agency to perform these missions.

25. What is your vision for this aspect of the Corps mission?

Answer: I would like to see the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continue its strong performance in the Army's environmental remediation mission and continue to deliver with the same technical competency and integrity it has displayed, with a continued focus on applying science, technical innovation, and employing transparency and collaboration with its stakeholders in all operations.

26. If confirmed, how would you propose to address the Corps environmental funding requirements?

Answer: The Army has a clear and important environmental mission and, if confirmed, I would make it a priority to become much more familiar with this mission and the overall Civil Works program in order to make appropriate recommendations on funding requirements and prioritization.

27. If confirmed, how would you preserve the integrity of the Corps environmental and civil works mission?

Answer: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has established a set of Environmental Operating Principles that it uses as a guide in all its activities. If confirmed, I will listen to senior leaders of the Army and the Corps, as well as senior leaders of other applicable Federal agencies, in order to assess and advise on how best to preserve the integrity of the Civil Works and environmental missions.

28. What are your views about the potential performance of regulatory functions presently performed by the Corps by other governmental or non-military entities?

Answer: At this time, I believe that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should retain all of its regulatory functions. The Corps' execution of the Regulatory Program has evolved over the years to appropriately implement requirements under environmental laws, and the Corps maintains a solid base of experience and expertise to best execute these functions.

In general, I believe that the Corps' permit decisions reflect the national concern for balancing both protection and utilization of the Nation's important resources and are provided through a process rooted in sound science. I also believe that the Corps must continue to evaluate its processes to ensure that decisions are made in a timely and efficient manner, ensuring that permit applicants have the fidelity required to make important personal, business, and financial decisions.

The Corps is also responsible for Environmental and Ecosystem Restoration as part of its civil works mission. These include the Everglades, Western river systems, Coastal Louisiana, and the Great Lakes. There are many large ecosystem restoration projects around the nation.

29. If confirmed, how would you propose to balance the Corps' work between ecosystem restoration and traditional navigation?

Answer: If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to look for innovative solutions for balancing ecosystem restoration and traditional navigation. Furthermore, I will, if confirmed, ensure that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' execution of this important component of the Civil Works mission faithfully adheres to applicable laws and regulations.

30. How does the Corps view and prioritize river restoration projects?

Answer: If confirmed, I commit to working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to seek strategies that support ecosystem health, economic development, and resilient communities. Healthy river systems provide valuable fish and wildlife habitat, as well as vital goods and services to the Nation's communities, such as recreational opportunities and natural flood storage. I believe the Corps has tremendous opportunities to develop more multi-purpose projects that, for example, provide both flood risk management and ecosystem restoration benefits.

State Water Quality Standards

In the past, the Army Corps of Engineers has not always been required to meet state water quality standards in constructing and operating its water resources projects.

31. Do you believe that the Corps should be required to meet state water quality standards in constructing and operating Corps projects?

Answer: Yes, I believe that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should meet state water quality standards as required by law.

Budgeting

The Army Corps of Engineers has a significant backlog of operations and maintenance work and construction work throughout the country. This backlog has very real economic, environmental, and safety implications.

32. If confirmed, how would you plan to address the backlog of work? How would you prioritize certain types of projects above others?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work diligently with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to address the backlog. I understand the Corps has around \$76 billion in congressionally authorized projects that are either under construction or are waiting to begin. I also understand that portfolio is serviced with an annual construction budget of approximately

\$1 billion. When combined with servicing over a quarter trillion dollars in existing Civil Works infrastructure assets in the operations and maintenance program, it seems clear to me that current requirements significantly outpace available resources. I believe that part of the answer is to assure the Corps makes the best use of every dollar invested and that funding is applied to the highest performing projects. Working with the Congress, the Administration, and the Army and Corps leadership, I commit, if confirmed, to explore opportunities to leverage non-traditional funding mechanisms where they make sense, such as public-private partnerships.

33. What are your views on using the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which has approximately a \$4 billion surplus, to address the Corps' backlog?

Answer: The bulk of my experience has been with inland facilities, and I have seen the economic importance and value of our Nation's port and harbor from my time on the Mississippi River Commission. However, I fully recognize the critical importance of coastal ports to our economy, commerce, and international trade. The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund is a vital element of helping assure this nation's coastal ports continue to be open for business. If confirmed, I plan to work with the Congress, the Administration, and the port partners to promote these world class assets for U.S. trade and commerce.

Workforce in the Army Corps of Engineers

There has been much discussion and publicity about the reduction in engineers graduating from our nation's universities over the last 20 years.

34. How would you assess the overall health of the national engineering expertise and capability maintained within the Army Corps of Engineers workforce?

Answer: When it comes to the overall health of engineering expertise and capability within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers workforce, I believe that the Corps is simply a reflection of the national picture. Notably, in water resources infrastructure, the dwindling expertise in specialty areas, that are highly important to the execution of the Corps mission, is a concern. I believe that the Corps must continue its successful outreach to students, at all levels, to ensure that it is able to maintain its expertise. If confirmed, I will strive to ensure that America's youth continue to see the Corps as a remarkable career opportunity for engineers and scientists.

35. In your opinion, are adequate programs in place and funded to ensure the Corps engineering workforce is educated on the latest technologies and innovations?

Answer: In my opinion, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does have adequate programs available to ensure that the workforce is educated and adequately trained to perform its technical missions. If confirmed, I will work with the Chief of Engineers to ensure that the Corps' training and education program continues to improve and update

these opportunities as requirements change over time.

36. Do you see any challenges or opportunities for improvement to the workforce?

Answer: I believe that recruiting, maintaining employee engagement and retaining the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' cadre of scientists, engineers, project managers, and disaster responders is crucial to the success of the Army's Civil Works program. There is keen competition from private industry and other Government agencies for top talent. Key to future success lies in having the best possible people. If confirmed, I will give my strongest possible support to the Chief of Engineers in his efforts to recruit, engage, and retain a world-class team.

Acquisition Processes for the Army Corps of Engineers

In the last five years, the Army Corps of Engineers has increasingly relied upon a contract process known as "design-build," which requires a design agent to partner with a construction agent to compete for a contract. This differs from the traditional design-bid-build process, where the Corps contracts first for a design product and subsequently issues a separate solicitation for the construction. While there are many benefits to a collaborative process between a designer and the construction agent, there are also drawbacks. These include the reduced oversight by the Corps engineers in the design/construction process, and the systematic elimination of small to medium size engineering/architecture firms, as well as construction contractors who do not have the resources to compete for design-build contracts.

37. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses in each acquisition process?

Answer: If confirmed, I commit to delving deeper into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' acquisition process. My understanding is that the Corps generally uses Design-Bid-Build (DBB) as the primary contracting method in the Civil Works program. Projects that require historical context and broad technical knowledge tend to be successful using the DBB. Design-Build (D-B) may be a good choice if a project has an urgent timeframe or if there are multiple solutions available to meet clear and stable performance goals. Innovation for D-B is not only in engineering design, but can be realized in other project aspects such as construction. In addition to the acquisition method, effective project management and contract administration are critical to the success of Corps projects. Whatever the acquisition method, I believe that the Corps must be integrally involved throughout all phases of the design and construction process.

38. How should the Corps determine which acquisition process to use?

Answer: If confirmed, I will look into this issue to better understand the challenges that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers faces in this area. I believe that the Corps must analyze each project for its size, complexity, uniqueness, urgency, and other factors in

order to determine the most effective and appropriate acquisition process. One primary consideration for Design-Build (D-B) is that it generally requires full up-front funding. Generally, Civil Works projects are not funded that way and are instead funded incrementally.

39. Do you believe the use of design-build contracts has any effect on the proficiency of the Corps engineering and contract management workforce? If so, can you elaborate?

Answer: There is a balance to maintaining a highly skilled workforce with ability to both execute project delivery and provide oversight of project delivery by others. Evaluation of a project typically requires an understanding of the steps it takes to achieve the delivery of a successful project. In order to achieve this balance, there must be enough “hands on” engineering and construction contract management by internal engineers. Based on my experience, I believe that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers excels as a design and construction agent because of its ability to manage a large portfolio of public projects, as well as execute in-house designs. Design-build contracts may be an effective strategy for executing certain types of projects, but to be effectively managed, the Corps must maintain its own technical competence developed through executing designs in-house.

40. Do you foresee any issues over the long term emerging from the preponderant use of design-build contracts?

Answer: With the knowledge that I have at this time, I do not believe that there are issues with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ use of Design-Build contracts. However, it is important that the Corps ensures the reliability of its projects and it must continue to take the correct steps and actions to support adequate staffing and technical expertise to achieve that goal.

Nation-Wide Levee Systems and Flood Control

The fragility of the United States’ levee systems continues to be a safety and financial hazard.

41. How would you assess the health of these systems?

Answer: If confirmed, I will review the Nation’s levee systems to increase my understanding of their overall health. Levee systems, like much of the Nation’s infrastructure, are aging. Many levee systems are over 50 years old and require additional examination to ensure that they can continue to perform as designed. In addition, some levee systems may need rehabilitation to ensure continued proper performance.

42. In your opinion, is the process used by the Army Corps of Engineers to

prioritize national levee requirements adequate?

Answer: Yes, I currently believe that the process that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers uses to prioritize levee requirements nationwide is adequate. If confirmed, however, I intend to conduct a comprehensive review of how the Nation's levees are assessed and prioritized.

43. Are the resources provided to date to address these requirements adequate?

Answer: Based on my experience and understanding I would say no. I understand, however, the Corps has effectively utilized available funding to assess and manage the risk associated with levee systems across the Nation.

44. If not, what additional resources are needed, in your opinion?

Answer: If confirmed, I would quickly work to understand the requirements and resource shortfalls. I would then work with Congress, the Administration, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to address these shortfalls.

The Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 required the Corps and FEMA to take the lead on certain national levee-safety-related activities.

45. If confirmed, how will you implement these activities going forward?

Answer: I am generally familiar with this provision of law. If confirmed, I will work closely with interagency partners and stakeholders to ensure that risks are properly managed across programs and within respective authorities.

Prioritization Process in the Army Corps of Engineers

The Army Corps of Engineers has always been subject to pressure from various levels of government to carry out certain projects of special interest.

46. Do you believe the prioritization process used by the Corps for civil works projects is adequate?

Answer: If confirmed, I plan to look into the prioritization process in considerable detail. Challenges for Civil Works center on requirements and resource mismatch more than the prioritization process used to allocate those limited resources. This is an important issue and, if confirmed, I intend to look further into this process.

47. If confirmed, will you adhere to the established prioritization processes, barring any unforeseen circumstances?

Answer: Yes, if confirmed, I will adhere to the established prioritization process. However, if confirmed, I plan to look into this in greater detail to determine if there are

opportunities to improve the process. I am also committed to ensuring that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' prioritization process reflects congressional and Administration policies and priorities.

48. What is your opinion of using peer reviews of Corps projects to get an outside opinion on the need, urgency, and assessment of effects caused by Corps projects?

Answer: Both internal and external peer reviews of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects, including the need, urgency, and assessment of effects, increase the transparency of these projects and strengthen the overall product by incorporating additional technical expertise. To be effective, it is my opinion that peer review should be integrated into the process from the beginning of a study to avoid the potential for increases costs and timelines later in project development.

Climate Change

Secretary Mattis stated to the Committee, “where climate change contributes to regional instability, the Department of Defense must be aware of any potential adverse impacts,” “climate change is impacting stability in areas of the world where our troops are operating today,” and “the Department should be prepared to mitigate any consequences of a changing climate, including ensuring that our shipyards and installations will continue to function as required.” The report accompanying the Committee-passed National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 directs the Department to conduct a comprehensive threat assessment and implementation master plan on the risks and vulnerabilities to Department missions and infrastructure associated with climate-related events.

49. Do you share Secretary Mattis' views on climate change?

Answer: Yes. As an engineer and after years as a member of the Mississippi River Commission, working with multiple Civil Works water resource projects designed to perform under extreme climatic conditions, I believe it is critical that we look at hydrologic data, analyze hydrologic trends, and understand what is happening on the ground at Army Civil Works projects. That kind of understanding is crucial to assuring those projects continue to perform as designed and that they are sufficiently resilient to face whatever future climatic events may occur.

50. Do you agree that the Department should be prepared to mitigate any consequences of a changing climate?

Answer: Because most Army Civil Works projects are specifically designed to safely perform and reduce risk under the extremes of the hydrologic cycle, from extreme floods to prolonged drought and everywhere in between, I believe we owe it to the communities, industries and economic sectors that depend on Civil Works systems to assure those systems are sufficiently resilient in order to dependably perform regardless of what future climatic conditions are presented.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

51. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress?

Answer: Yes.

52. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works?

Answer: Yes.

53. Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate committees in a timely manner?

Answer: Yes.

54. Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted committee, or to consult with this Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Answer: Yes.

55. Do you agree to answer letters and requests for information from individual Senators who are members of this Committee?

Answer: Yes.

56. If confirmed, do you agree to provide to this Committee relevant information within the jurisdictional oversight of the Committee when requested by the Committee, even in the absence of the formality of a letter from the Chairman?

Answer: Yes, if confirmed, I agree to provide appropriate responses to all Congressional oversight requests.