

**Opening Statement**  
Chairman Blake Farenthold  
“Examining the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers”  
Tuesday, March 6, 2018

*Good morning. Today the Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy and Environment will examine the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which plays a critical role in the development and execution of engineering projects across the nation. Today, we will discuss ways in which communications and interactions between the Corps, localities, and the public, can be improved, and project delivery can be streamlined.*

*The Army Corps of Engineers is one of the largest engineering agencies in the world. They manage a wide range of projects that affect our constituents on a daily basis, from dredging to flood protection to construction at our military bases. Americans rely on the Corps' ability to complete projects that keep their communities safe and keep vital transportation lanes open to grow the economy.*

*For example, in the district I represent in Texas, we've been working with the Army Corps of Engineers for three decades on the Corpus Christi Ship Channel Improvement Project. This project would allow larger ships that can now transit the wider and deeper Panama Canal to access the Port of Corpus Christi Channel from the Gulf of Mexico, lowering transportation costs and making U.S. energy more competitive. While many dredging projects facilitate imports from foreign countries, this project will result in roughly \$7 billion in increased exports from US produced energy products.*

*With the recent announcement of the President's budget, we received the good news that the Trump Administration proposed \$4.8 billion for the Corps' civil works budget, which includes \$13 million in funding for the Corpus Christi Ship Channel Expansion project for Fiscal Year 2019. This was not an easy win for our district. Despite having been authorized by Congress three times, this project has been continuously delayed by bureaucracy and what I believe to be the prior Administration's hostility to oil and gas.*

*This project is not alone in that manner. The Army Corps of Engineers currently has a stunningly large backlog for their projects. Approximately \$96 billion worth of projects are being bogged down in red tape, and quite frankly Congress' broken appropriations process.*

*Recent flooding in the Houston area during Hurricane Harvey can also be linked to long overdue public works projects that the Corps is involved with to update, improve, and add reservoirs and levees.*

*Corps delays and congressional hurdles to funding are costing billions of dollars in lost economic benefits and increased cost in areas with flood control issues, are costing lives. In talking to my colleagues in Congress, it seems like every member has a Corps issue. In fact, we have quite a few members who do not serve on this Committee who have asked to participate because they see a problem in their district. We expect to see some of them today.*

*We need to ensure that the Army Corps of Engineers is doing what it can to get these projects done in a timely, cost effective, and safe manner.*

*I look forward to hearing ideas and suggestions from our panel today and am hopeful this committee can help create solutions to improve the working relationship between the Corps and our localities, our businesses and the American people.*