

## ***House Panel Criticizes Corps Budget Proposal for 2007***

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The Bush administration believes Congress has burdened a proposed water resources authorization bill with extraneous matter that will inhibit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from focusing in its central mission, John Paul Woodley told a House subcommittee this week. The White House is concerned about plans in the Water Resources Development Act approved by the House last July that would authorize the corps to issue grants to local agencies for environmental infrastructure projects, including water and sewage treatment plants, explained Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

"Using the corps as a grant making agency is a waste of time," Woodley said after the hearing on the administration's budget request for the Corps for fiscal year 2007. The Corps wants the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to handle infrastructure grant programs, he said.

The hearing was held by the Water Resources and Environment subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Committee members criticized the administration's budget plan, which calls for total Corps expenditures for civil works programs of \$4.7 billion in FY 2007. A memo prepared by the subcommittee staff said the Corps needs \$9 billion in FY 2007 to complete all of its work.

The Bush proposal, released last month, would decrease overall funding for flood control, navigation, storm protection, and environmental-restoration projects nationwide by nearly \$700 million from what Congress appropriated for the corps in fiscal 2006.

The most startling aspect of the budget request, said subcommittee Chairman John Duncan (R-TN), is the recommended termination of more than 500 current projects and studies. "This budget request abandons our constituents and calls into question the credibility of the federal government to live up to its obligations," he said. The budget funds 91 projects that reflect the agency's effort to "fund those activities that are expected to provide the highest net returns to the nation," Woodley testified.

For more information on the hearing, visit the Committee's website at <http://www.house.gov/transportation/>

This weekly report is written by the ASCE Government Relations Staff. If you have any questions or comments about any items in this report please email [govwash@asce.org](mailto:govwash@asce.org).