

**Mr. Michael Connor**  
**Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works**  
**Senate Armed Services Committee**  
**July 13, 2021**

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of this Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA-CW). I am grateful and appreciative of your consideration of my nomination, and I will quickly summarize some key points of my written statement.

Thank you for the opportunity to recognize my wife, Shari, and daughter, Gabriela, who are with me today. They, along with my son Matthew who could not be here, have made sacrifices that have allowed me the opportunity to engage in public service for many years. I continue to deeply appreciate their support.

I am also appreciative of the colleagues and organizations that have weighed in with their support of my nomination.

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works is an important position under any circumstances given the responsibilities of USACE for Infrastructure; Ecosystem Health; Maintaining Waterways; Managing Flood Risks; and Protecting Wetlands.

These are all incredibly important functions for communities across the nation. Today, these responsibilities take on new significance amid the backdrop of a pandemic-impacted economy that must also build resiliency to the effects of climate change, while ensuring equity amongst the communities being served.

I am humbled to be nominated to work with the military leadership of the Corps of Engineers and the talented civilian workforce to carry-out these important responsibilities. While humbled, I also believe I am well-prepared to address the challenges ahead given my extensive experience, both inside and outside of government. As a former Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, I directed strategy and managed a large Federal water resources agency responsible for facilities and programs similar to the Corps.

My prior positions also provided extensive experience working directly with USACE. At the Bureau of Reclamation, I worked closely with the Corps in developing climate resilience strategies, coordinating flood control and water management operations in numerous river basins, protecting endangered species and engaging in river restoration projects, and collaborating on dam safety risk management efforts. As Deputy Secretary,

I worked with USACE in its role as a regulator, and even collaborated on an international issue involving poorly maintained infrastructure that threatened the United States' interests in the Middle East. And as Counsel to the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I worked on numerous legislative initiatives related to USACE authorities. I believe that this experience, coupled with my work and educational background as a both an engineer and lawyer, provide a unique set of qualifications to be an effective ASA.

If confirmed, my personal background will also inform my views as I oversee the vast responsibilities associated with the Corps. I grew up in New Mexico, a state rich in natural resources (except water) and which has a land base that is one-third in federal ownership. I am proud of my Native American heritage and my roots in an agricultural community, Las Cruces, NM. I grew up witnessing, on a daily basis, the important role the Federal government plays in supporting and protecting the economic foundation of many communities and providing access to the recreational resources that enhance the quality of life for our citizens.

If confirmed, I will be focused and committed to the work necessary to fulfill my responsibilities and meet the challenges facing USACE and its stakeholders – your constituents. Of course, the Corps cannot be successful on its own, and my years in public service have reinforced the importance of collaboration. I am absolutely committed to this principle and commit to the task with a sense of humility and a keen understanding of the need to work with state and local leaders, the public, affected stakeholders, and members of Congress to most effectively carry out USACE's mission. I am equally committed to increasing coordination within the Federal government—a “whole of government approach”—to more effectively use each agency's resources and expertise to creatively address a changing landscape in many areas of the country.

Finally, with your permission and support, I will be proud to join a Department led by Secretary Austin, Deputy Secretary Hicks, and Secretary Wormuth who have made clear their intent to lead with transparency, integrity, and the highest ethical standards in carrying out the Defense Department's and the Army's vital missions. I am equally committed to these principles.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. I look forward to answering your questions.