

*April 25th, 2012*

**Energy & Water Subcommittee Ranking Member Rep. Peter Visclosky**

**- As Prepared For Delivery -** □

"Mr. Chairman, I want to congratulate you on the bipartisan and transparent manner in which you crafted the Fiscal Year 2013 Energy and Water bill. I also want to express my gratitude to Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Dicks, and the other members of the Subcommittee for their efforts. Finally, I would like to thank the majority Subcommittee staff and your personal staff for their great work.

"As you have already pointed out, the allocation for Energy and Water, \$32.1 billion, is nearly one billion below the President's budget request and \$88 million over 2012. I know you were faced with very difficult decisions with this allocation, and with a few exceptions that I hope we can rectify as we move forward; I support the product that we are marking up.

"Despite my general agreement with the bill we are considering today, I have tremendous concerns with the outlook for this year's Appropriations process. I am immensely proud that this Committee was able to get its work completed last year. This feat was due in no small part to the leadership of Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Dicks and I know that they are wholeheartedly committed to trying to duplicate their success. However, as everyone in this room is aware, House leadership has inexplicably made the decision to abandon the Budget Control Act (BCA) topline of \$1.047 trillion for 2013 and as a result we are moving forward with a topline of \$1.028 trillion.

"While, I did not support the BCA, I find the decision to disregard the discretionary caps it put into law just eight months ago indefensible and another example of how Congress no longer has the intestinal fortitude to stick by tough decisions and abide by pending deadlines. Also, I find it incredibly inconsistent that this body can overwhelmingly pass a payroll tax cut in February that adds over \$90 billion to the deficit, but a little more than a month later we are told that we will bust the budget if we do not cut \$19 billion from this year's discretionary cap. I just do not

see any logic behind those two actions.

"Interestingly enough, despite the decrease in the discretionary spending cap, this bill has a 'relatively decent allocation' to quote Ranking Member Dicks.

"Within this allocation, I would like to express my appreciation for the Chairman's inclusion of additional funds for core Nonproliferation activities and Vehicle Technology, funds for the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste disposal project, and the focus on American manufacturing. I cannot emphasize that last area strongly enough. I see very little merit to fostering technological advances or breakthroughs for products that are not ultimately manufactured domestically. I think both this bill and the Administration's budget place a significant emphasis on this, which is an excellent development.

"I would also note my support for some of the things you did not do – there are no new hubs or new starts in the Corps of Engineers. Given the current budget environment, I do not believe that we can support these new initiatives, nor can we afford to initiate new projects when we cannot adequately fund those that are ongoing.

"I am convinced that if we do not make proactive investments in our physical and research infrastructure we are risking the economic competitiveness of our nation. Unfortunately, despite the Chairman's best efforts on these fronts, the Subcommittee's allocation will result in a bill that continues the dramatic underinvestment in our nation's waterways and scientists.

"While I appreciate the Chairman provided additional funding for the Corps of Engineers, it remains insufficient. We must make preventative and proactive investments. In almost every circumstance, it makes more fiscal sense to prevent a disaster than to respond to one. Additionally, businesses and individuals are much more likely to invest in a community if there is confidence in its infrastructure.

"For many years now, you have heard me discuss program management. Not wanting to disappoint, I will be taking a moment to discuss the topic again today, but with a slight twist. In recent years I have focused on the Department of Energy and its two decade reign on the GAO's high risk list. That reign has not changed, but I would like to focus today to the Corps of Engineers' shortcoming in this respect, specifically, recent cost increases to Olmsted Lock and

Dam. This is a project that began, in 1988, as a \$775 million replacement for two aging dams on the Ohio River. The budget request this year includes legislative language that would raise that cost estimate to \$2.9 billion. I applaud the Chairman for not including this language and instead including a provision to limit the expenditure of funds on the project until the Corps has completed a review of the construction methodology and developed a plan for the completion of the project. Further, the report requires an independent review of the Corps work to ensure that the plan forward is the most effective alternative.

"This is just one example of the Subcommittee's continued efforts to improve program and project management at all of the agencies under its jurisdiction. I strongly support the Chairman on this and all the other provisions, old and new, aimed at increased oversight and improved project management at the Corps and DOE. However, I am disappointed that we continue to repeat so many of these provisions from year to year. It would behoove the agencies to incorporate these policies into their management structure.

"The Science account, critical for U.S. competitiveness, is just one percent below 2012. While I would have preferred that the amount be higher, within the constraints of the allocation it funds the most critical actions. The bill also provides funds for the continuation of ARPA-E; that can drive innovations to support our scientific competitiveness.

"I appreciate the Chairman's decision to include appropriate funding for fossil and nuclear energy. However, I am disappointed that renewable energy programs in this bill are drastically reduced. In providing critical research and development for those sectors that currently provide the bulk of our electricity generation, we cannot sacrifice the future. Renewable energy can achieve cost competitiveness, but a continued and sustained research and development program is necessary and appropriate in order to do so.

"In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate my appreciation for your work with us on many issues. You have ensured the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee continues its tradition of bipartisanship—the Subcommittee has operated collaboratively and effectively for many years and, within the constraints you were faced with, you have largely addressed the interests we have expressed. Yet, I continue to have concerns that this bill, due to an inadequate allocation, will not meet the needs of our country. Despite those concerns, I look forward to working with you and the members of the Committee to advance the process and complete the task before us.

"Thank you again, Mr. Chairman for the time."