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On February 23rd, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Adam Telle, announced the [“Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork”](#) initiative aimed at maximizing USACE’s ability to deliver national infrastructure, cutting red tape with a focus on efficiency, increasing transparency and accountability, and strategically prioritizing resources on core missions that serve the national interest.

The initiative sets out five main areas of effort – we have summarized them below although the details of their meaning have yet to be made clear:

(1) Maximizing the ability to deliver on national infrastructure

- a. The Secretary is displeased with increased dredging costs and frequent non-awardable contracts (bids 25%+ over government estimate)
- b. Elevates dredge contracting to HQ to enable the Corps to have a national picture of dredging needs and costs so that it can better bargain with the dredging companies on specific contracts
- c. Greater reliance on USACE Centers of Expertise (In-house experts)

Goal: Reduce dredging costs, improve delivery efficiency via streamlined contract estimating and awards

(2) Cutting Red Tape

- a. Clarifies uncertainties in WOTUS and water permitting decisions to enable faster decision making
- b. Continued investment into the Regulatory Request System to make applying for and getting a permit easier and faster
- c. Expands some environmental windows

Goal: Better align project permitting with POTUS Agenda

(3) Focus on Efficiency

- a. Focuses Corps on administration priorities only
- b. Prohibits employees from advocating for programs not in the PBUD

Goal: Ensure consistent communication and alignment on Administration priorities

(4) Transparency & Accountability

- a. Provides greater transparency in how federal funds (salaries) are spent on Corps projects
- b. Establishes consequences for cost-overruns
- c. Consolidates USACE websites

Goal: Stop using feasibility studies to pay salaries, allowing study costs to reflect true costs.

(5) Prioritization

- a. Imposes strategic discipline by focusing all resources on core missions that serve the national interest, while terminating legacy efforts that divert focus and waste money.
- b. Enables greater reliance on the private sector
- c. Early Federal Interest Determination

Goal: Deliver projects faster and cheaper

We will be monitoring the USACE news releases and other communications for updates over the coming weeks. Stay tuned for more.

Thanks for reading WaterLog!

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