

United States Senate

April 16, 2024

The Honorable Michael Connor
Assistant Secretary of the Army – Civil Works
U.S. Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary Connor:

I am writing to you today concerning the lack of action by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and failure to release your review of USACE easement policies for construction projects, including for hurricane and storm damage risk reduction and coastal storm risk management (CSRMs), as required in Section 8235 of the Water Resources and Development Act of 2022.¹ Stakeholders in Florida have been desperately waiting on the USACE to act on these congressionally authorized and approved projects to protect Florida's coastlines. Floridians deserve answers on why USACE internal policies are stalling these critical projects.

Time is of the essence. Any further delays on these projects could cause catastrophic damage to the coastal communities where these projects are located. I have repeatedly heard from stakeholders that damage caused by recent storms and hurricanes increases the likelihood that further USACE inaction will greatly accelerate the deterioration of impacted areas. As another hurricane season approaches and these projects remain uncompleted, your congressionally-mandated report is past due, and communities are losing valuable time to take needed actions to increase hurricane resiliency.

Floridians have seen enough inaction from the USACE, and therefore, I ask that you:

- Provide your review on how the USACE's easement policies for construction projects are impeding project work and completion, and include a list of all outstanding projects in Florida;
- Detail how you will work to complete the projects in Florida impacted by the USACE's easement policies for construction projects,
 - Please provide a list with timelines;

¹ "Text - H.R.7776 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023." *Congress.gov*, Library of Congress, 23 December 2022, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/7776/text>.

The Honorable Michael Connor

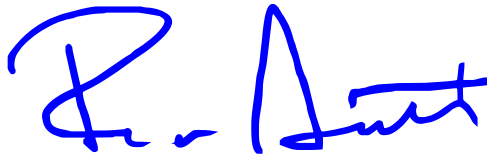
April 16, 2024

Page Two

- Commit to meeting with local and county governments across Florida, before the upcoming hurricane season, who have congressionally authorized USACE projects that are incomplete and impacted by your policies; and
- Respond with your availability to meet directly with Floridian stakeholders so they may hear directly from USACE regarding the agency's plans to act on all applicable outstanding projects.

I look forward to your prompt response and hosting you in Florida soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott

United States Senator