



# ADAPTATION POLICY STATEMENT

The primary and overarching policy document for USACE is the *USACE Climate Preparedness and Resilience Policy Statement*, signed by Assistant Secretary of the Army Jo-Ellen Darcy in June 2014.

As the Nation's largest and oldest manager of water resources, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has long been successfully adapting its policies, programs, projects, planning, and operations to impacts from important drivers of global change and variability.

It is the policy of USACE to integrate climate change preparedness and resilience planning and actions in all activities for the purpose of enhancing the resilience of our built and natural water-resource infrastructure and the effectiveness of our military support mission, and to reduce the potential vulnerabilities of that infrastructure and those missions to the effects of climate change and variability. USACE shall continue undertaking its climate change preparedness and resilience planning, in consultation with internal and external experts and with our districts, divisions, and Centers, and shall implement the results of that planning using the best available – and actionable – climate science and climate change information. USACE shall also continue its efforts with other agencies to develop the science and engineering research on climate change information into the actionable basis for adapting to climate change impacts. Furthermore, USACE shall continue to consider potential climate change impacts when undertaking long-term planning, setting priorities, and making decisions affecting its resources, programs, policies, and operations.

These actions, which USACE is now conducting and has outlined for the future, are fully compatible with the guiding principles and framework of the Council on Climate Preparedness and Resilience and its predecessor, the Federal Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force; with Executive Order 13653 and its December

19, 2013 instructions *Preparing Federal Agency Climate Change Adaptation Plans In Accordance with Executive Order 13653*; and with Executive Order 13514 and the *Implementing Instructions for Federal Agency Climate Change Adaptation* issued on March 4, 2011.

USACE understands and is acting to integrate climate adaptation (managing the unavoidable impacts) with mitigation (avoiding the unmanageable impacts). USACE recognizes the very significant differences between climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation in terms of physical complexity, fiscal and material resources, level of knowledge and technical readiness, and temporal and geographic scale. These differences mean that very different knowledge, skills, and abilities are needed to understand, plan and implement climate preparedness and resilience policies and measures as compared to the ones for implementing mitigation measures. It is the policy of USACE that mitigation and adaptation investments and responses to climate change shall be considered together to avoid situations where near-term mitigation measures might be implemented that would be overcome by longer-term climate impacts requiring adaptation, or where a short-term mitigation action would preclude a longer-term adaptation action.

Work to understand and adapt to the impacts of climate and global change is well underway at USACE, and the policy enunciated here is closely aligned with the USACE Campaign Plan and the USACE Civil Works Strategic Plan. USACE has several integrated programs directed at parts of climate change adaptation; in addition, many coordinated elements from other programs support the development of approaches to understand and mainstream climate change

adaptation. Mainstreaming climate change adaptation means that it will be considered at every step in the project life cycle for all USACE projects, both existing and planned, through a logical, rational, legally justifiable process that develops practical, nationally consistent, and cost-effective adaptation measures, both structural and nonstructural, to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance the resilience of our water-resource infrastructure.

The magnitude and complexity of climate change impacts facing water-resource managers in the US has spurred USACE to embark on closer, more fruitful interagency cooperation for developing methods supporting climate change adaptation. Close collaboration, both nationally and internationally, is the most effective way to develop the measures to identify and reduce the USACE mission vulnerabilities to potential future climate changes. USACE has demonstrated its commitment to engage and lead such collaboration through efforts including the “Building Strong Collaborative Relationships for a Sustainable Water Resources Future Initiative” and the federal interagency Climate Change and Water Working Group (CCAWWG).

It is the policy of USACE that these and other productive collaborative efforts around climate and global change adaptation shall continue.

This policy establishes the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works as the Agency official responsible for ensuring implementation of all aspects of this policy. This policy does not alter or affect any existing duty or authority and recognizes that USACE has established the USACE Committee on Climate Preparedness and Resilience to oversee and coordinate agency-wide climate change adaptation planning and implementation. The Committee is chaired by the USACE Chief, Engineering and Construction, and reports regularly to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

This policy statement reaffirms and supersedes the commitment made by USACE in its June 3, 2011 Climate Change Adaptation Policy Statement. This policy shall be effective beginning June 27, 2014, for all USACE missions, operations, programs and projects and shall remain in effect until it is amended, superseded, or revoked.

Signed,



**Jo-Ellen Darcy**

Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works




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“Adaptation is not optional.”

Mr. James C. Dalton, PE, SES, Chair of the USACE  
Climate Change Adaptation Steering Committee, January 19, 2012

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