

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP  
AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY FOR S. 3021,  
AMERICA'S WATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT OF 2018

Oval Office

3:14 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Thank you very much for being here as we sign into law America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018. This important bill authorizes water infrastructure projects that benefit almost every state in the country.

I want to thank every member of Congress who helped pass this crucial legislation. I especially want to thank Senators John Boozman, John Barrasso, Ben Cardin, Tom Carper -- see, we got bipartisan on this one, folks. Don't be shy. We'll probably have a lot more over the years. And Representatives Jeff Denham, Garret Graves, Gregg Harper, and Greg Walden. Thank you all very much. We appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you, fellas. Appreciate it.

Thanks also to Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, R.D. James, for joining us, and to the commanding General of the Army Corps of Engineers, Todd Semonite. Thank you very much, fellas. Appreciate it. Good job.

As a candidate, I called for a great rebuilding of America's crumbling infrastructure. Today, we're taking another major step toward that goal. Very important. This bill authorizes needed funding and tools to enhance our coastal ports; reduce flood risks; restore ecosystems; upkeep our inland waterways, which are in deep, deep trouble, but they won't be for very long; upgrade our dams, hydropower, and irrigation systems; and improve drinking water treatment, storage, and delivery.

With this legislation, we will also better protect American communities from hurricanes and storms. And I'm particularly proud that this legislation extends the requirement that protects -- and projects supported by the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund use, construction materials, all made in the USA -- which is a good a thing. I love to hear that. We all love to hear that.

Under this administration, we are living by two simple, but very important rules: Buy American and hire American. After years of rebuilding other nations, we are finally rebuilding our nation. And as far as infrastructure goes, I have a feeling that the two gentlemen on my left, two great senators -- they happen to be Democrats -- we're going to be doing a lot of infrastructure together.

I really feel that you want it, and we want it. We feel very strongly about it. I think we're going to do a lot of infrastructure. This is the beginning. And I know how badly you want it on your side, too.

So with that, again, I'd like to thank you all. And maybe I'll ask a few of you to say a few words. Would you like to say? John?

SENATOR BARRASSO: Well, yes. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your leadership on this. You've called for this in the State of the Union. We have delivered it in a big bipartisan way -- the House and the Senate working together for infrastructure. This is a significant piece of legislation. This is good for our communities, it's good for the country, it's good for the economy, as well as good for the environment. So thanks for your leadership, Mr. President.

Thank you. Appreciate it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Please. Come on, (inaudible).

SENATOR BOOZMAN: Thank you so much. This is not glamorous, but it really is one of the underpinnings of our economy. Forty percent of the agriculture products in Arkansas are exported. Most of that goes to the inland waterways and then throughout our ports and harbors.

So as the President mentioned, again, this is a very bipartisan effort. It's something that we can all be very, very proud of.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Please.

SENATOR CARPER: I'm Tom Carper, and I approve this message. (Laughter.) Sir, if I could just add very quickly --

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Please.

SENATOR CARPER: I'm from a little state, Mr. President -- Delaware. And, for us, and for Delmarva, where Ben and I are from, we have great concerns for the quality of our drinking water. This legislation goes a long ways toward a partnership - - furthering a partnership between the state and the federal government to provide more clean drinking water for people to drink.

Also, we have beaches, and -- all up and down the East Coast, we have beaches that we're concerned -- the West Coast. We want to make sure they continue to be there, to be part of our economy, part of our tourism industry.

And the last thing, we want to make sure that our ports are getting the kind of attention that they deserve and they have the support from the Army Corps of Engineers. This fellow right here, Mr. President, R.D. James, the Assistant Secretary for the Army, is -- he's been a terrific partner, as has the General, in helping to craft this legislation.

People say to me all the time, back home -- they say, "Why don't you guys work together? Why don't you work together to get something done?" Well, we have. And it's good stuff. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. Thank you, Senator.

Ben?

SENATOR CARDIN: Well, Mr. President, first let me thank the leadership of our committee. The Environment and Public Works Committee worked in a very bipartisan matter to produce an extremely important bill. For the people of Maryland, this means jobs, it means cleaner water, it's good for the Chesapeake Bay, it's good for our economy, and I'm proud of our accomplishments.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Please, Greg?

REPRESENTATIVE WALDEN: Well, Mr. President, thank you for your support of this. And to my colleagues, as well, at the Energy and Commerce Committee, we did a lot of work in a bipartisan way to reauthorize the Safe Drinking Water Act; first

time in 20 years that's been done. This is the partnership we're all speaking about to clean up our water. So when a mom pours a glass of water for a kid, you know it's going to be safe.

You also have disaster relief in here for my Klamath Basin farmers who have been through enormous drought. We deeply appreciate that. And there's hydropower streamlining for licensing so we can get clean, carbon-efficient, carbon-neutral hydropower in existing facilities in an expedited way.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, and unrelated, I want to thank you, Greg, for all of the work -- and I think every one of you -- all of the work that you did on Right to Try. That's a very powerful thing that we signed. We're getting -- I have received more thank-yous for Right to Try. You all know what it is. It's a phenomenal thing. And, Greg, you really headed it up. I appreciate it. Thank you.

Please.

REPRESENTATIVE DENHAM: Thank you, Mr. President. This certainly goes right along with the executive order that you signed on Friday helping us to bring more water to California. The new Water Act, which is a part of this legislation, will actually have the upfront financing so we can start building Shasta, Temperance Flat, and Sites, some of these big reservoirs that had been on the drawing board for decades now. We can finally get them done under this bill. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Great job. And we will get that done in California. It's going to happen.

We're just about set from a federal level. The state has to get moving. And you'll get them moving, I know you will. Please.

REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Thank you, Mr. President. Gregg Harper from Mississippi. I just want to thank you for your continued support. This has been an emphasis of what you have been standing for, for our infrastructure. And the safe drinking water is critical across the country. So this is a great step, and we thank you for your support.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. And I just noticed a major celebrity is in the room. Pastor Andrew Brunson standing next to our great Vice President. And, Andrew, just

come here. (Applause.) Stay in the country for a while, Andrew. (Laughter.) Andrew, stay here for a little while.

Great. We really appreciate everything. You've been through a lot. And we appreciate it, Andrew. Thank you very much.

PASTOR BRUNSON: Thank you for all you did for us. We're very grateful.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Andrew. Appreciate it very much.

Would you like to say something?

MR. JAMES: Yes, I would, sir. I'd like to thank you and these fine gentleman of the Congress for passing a bill that I can now use, along with General Semonite, to get the good work of this country done. We have to balance water supply, recreation, flood control, navigation, hydropower, along with many other items, sometimes out of the same reservoir. With this legislation, we're more apt to be able to do that than we were before have you signed it, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Great job. And I'm going to see you later because we're talking about something on the border. We're looking at something on the border to give us a hand. And if you guys can't do it, then nobody can. Right?

LIEUTENANT GENERAL SEMONITE: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Please, would you like to say something?

LIEUTENANT GENERAL SEMONITE: Sir, I think this is a great example of where the entire federal government has really stepped up here to be able to help take care of the people and the infrastructure. It's everybody working together. It's requirements that come from the bottom up. But it's unbelievable support for the administration and from Congress. And this is where almost 99 percent of everybody bought into this particular bill. And it's what we need to do, as the Corps of Engineers, is be able to have that support. So now when We go down there to turn dirt, we're able to be able to put some products in the ground and be able to make America an awful lot stronger.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. With that voice, he should be a politician. (Laughter.) I'm saying, "Woah, that's pretty good." Thank you very much.

Go ahead.

REPRESENTATIVE GRAVES: Mr. President, thank you. Garrett Graves from South Louisiana. I was here two weeks ago when you signed disaster reform legislation into law, and it was major reform for how we prepare for and respond to disasters.

This is a really important component because this is how we actually prepare for and make our communities resilient. There's a \$100 billion backlog in Corps of Engineers projects. You're a builder, and you know that you don't get stuck in the studying and the (inaudible). This begins to cut the red tape, cut the bureaucracy, and allowing us, as the General said, to turn dirt, to make sure our ports are competitive, our ecosystems restored, and our communities are safe. So thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: You're right. And the Army Corps of Engineers, frankly -- and I'll say, previous to Trump, the Army Corps of Engineers was a -- wonderful people, but it was a tremendous holdup in terms of the bureaucracy we had to go through. And I know we've made tremendous strides in that. Sometimes we go through EPA much, much faster than the Army Corps. And the Army Corps never wanted that.

But they built up artificial roadblocks that just weren't letting the things get done that we had to have done. And we have gotten rid of many of them. We're getting rid of all of them. And EPA is moving very, very fast, and the Army Corps is starting to move very quickly, also. And I very much appreciate that. We've got some incredible projects to go, so I very much appreciate that.

REPRESENTATIVE GRAVES: We're all in, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Thank you very much.

Mike Pence. Would you say something, Mike?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Just a word, Mr. President, of gratitude to members of both political parties for putting a bill on your desk that is going to strengthen the economy of this country and water quality in this country. And I know your

passion for infrastructure -- your desire that in the next Congress we would focus on rebuilding America's infrastructure, and today is really a down payment on that. And we're very grateful for the bipartisan efforts to bring us to this point.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. Thank you very much.

Okay. This is a good one. The vote was 98 -- or 99?

PARTICIPANT: 99 to 1 in the Senate.

THE PRESIDENT: 99 to 1. I would say that's bipartisan. I won't tell you who the one was. (Laughter.) But that is very bipartisan. So, hey. Let me give you guys -- we don't do this much. Come here. (Laughter.)

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: We'll do a lot of them. We'll do a lot. I think we're going to do a lot more as time goes by.

(The bill is signed.)

Okay. This is so thick I won't bother holding it up. You've seen me hold it up. You've seen me hold it up before. I think maybe what I should do -- unless somebody disagrees, I think I'll give this pen to Pastor Brunson. Right? Where's Pastor Brunson? Please.

Pastor, on behalf of all of us, and for all you've been through, this is actually a very important pen because of the very important Water Bill. And you know where water comes from ultimately, right?

PASTOR BRUNSON: Well, God has blessed us with many natural resources as a country, and we need to be grateful to Him. And as long as we're seeking Him, He will continue to provide for us.

THE PRESIDENT: That's fantastic. Thank you very much. Thank you.

And what we'll do is we'll hand out some. Okay, fellas?

Thank you very much. You know, in the old days, the President would sign one letter at a time? And it looked

terrible. And you looked at the signature. (Laughter.) It really did look terrible.

Give this to Chuck Schumer. (Laughter.) Okay. We're very proud of this bill. A lot of work was in -- went in. This has been going on for a long time, and I think particularly 99 to 1 is something that's very special, especially in this day and age. And I think we're going to have a lot more of it, especially maybe with infrastructure, but other things also.

So thank you all for being here. I very much appreciate it.