America Builds/Clean Water Act Permitting/Project Delivery/ U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment Hearing: Mr. Buddy Hasten, President/Chief Executive Officer Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Testimony



Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

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The Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a February 11th hearing titled:

America Builds: Clean Water Act Permitting and Project Delivery ("Hearing").

The Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mike Collins (Georgia), in his opening remarks noted in regard to the Clean Water Act:

- The statute has improved the quality of rivers, lakes, and streams throughout the country.
- Congress recognizes the importance of a federal-state partnership in improving water quality and to provide a regulatory system that communities could realistically follow.
- The statute has had many successes but has also been used to slow or stop progress on importance projects.
- It is important to balance the goals of water quality with ensuring:
- Project completion.
- Improving supply chain networks.
- Delivering economic prosperity.
- States, manufacturers, energy producers, cities, farmers, builders, homeowners, utilities, and others rely on a Clean Water Act permitting process that is easy to follow/easy to implement.

One of the four witnesses invited to testify was Mr. Buddy Hasten, who serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas.

Mr. Hasten provided a review of the Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation, Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., and the State's 17 Electric Cooperatives (collectively known as the Electric

Cooperatives of Arkansas). This included a description of their role in providing power for approximately 1.2 million Arkansans.

A particular focus of his testimony was the role of permitting programs under the Clean Water Act to potentially affect the timing of projects such as transmission lines or powerplants. He noted:

…It is essential that federal permitting programs – including those under the CWA – are implemented as intended by Congress and do not unnecessarily delay or hinder critical infrastructure projects essential to delivering electricity to homes, businesses, and farms across the country.

The testimony also addressed Clean Water Act permitting issues such as:

- Section 404 Permits.
- Nationwide permits.
- Approved Jurisdictional Determinations.
- Section 402 Permits.
- Waters of the United States.

The other three witnesses at the Hearing included:

- Robert D. Singletary.
- Executive Director, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.
- Honorable Shawn M. LaTourette.
- Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.
- Noah Hanners.
- Executive Vice President, Nucor Corporation, on behalf of the National Association of Manufacturers.

A link to the hearing and the respective written statements can be downloaded here.