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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2508

January 12, 2017

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The Honorable Donald Trump
President-Elect of the United States
Transition Team Headquarters-Trump Tower
New York, NY

President Elect-Trump:

I write to you today in support of the Honorable Ricky Dale "R.D." James for the position of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Mr. James's background as an entrepreneur and engineer and decades of experience with the Army Corps of Engineers through the Mississippi River Commission make him well qualified for the position and an excellent candidate for your consideration.

As someone who was elected to represent a region that has 220 miles of the Mississippi River along its border, issues involving flood control, navigation and water management are some of my chief concerns. I work with the Corps on a regular basis to provide better communication between them and those who I represent and to ensure that projects carried out by the Corps are true to its core mission of providing vital engineering services, energizing the economy, and reducing the risk of disaster.

As a presidentially appointed civilian member of Mississippi River Commission (MRC), a partnership between civilian engineers and the Corps of Engineers, Mr. James has been heavily involved in shaping Corps policy since 1981. Not only has Mr. James been involved in policy recommendations for flood control, navigation and environmental projects carried out on the Mississippi River, this role has also given him the opportunity to engage with the public and to hear and understand their views and concerns towards Corps projects.

Mr. James is also a self-employed farmer and owner and manager of cotton gins and grain elevators in New Madrid, Missouri, a small town in the region I serve which sits on the Mississippi River. As an independent businessman, Mr. James understands the impact Corps decisions can have on the livelihood of everyday Americans.

I believe Mr. James is exactly what you are looking for to fill the position of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. His background as a self-employed businessman, his deep knowledge of the mission and inner workings of the Corps and his many longtime relationships with members of its leadership and staff make him the perfect fit for your administration. Mr. James will work hard to ensure that Corps projects are to the benefit of those affected by them, in line with the Corps mission and not bogged down by red tape. I appreciate your consideration of Mr. James for this role and I feel confident he would be your best choice.

Sincerely,



JASON SMITH
Member of Congress