

WRDA - Testimony for Congressman Pete Sessions

The Lake Waco Embankment Stabilization Project has been the top priority for the City of Waco and McLennan County for 5 years. Previous language in WRDA 2020 has proved insufficient to address the concern.

Lake Waco sits as one of the USACE lakes near the top of the Brazos River in Waco, Texas. Since 2015, excessive rainfall has caused the Army Corps of Engineers to maintain higher water levels in Lake Waco for longer periods of time, to prevent flooding in downriver reservoirs. This excess water and retention time has led to significant erosion along a main road, Lake Shore Drive, which now risks collapse.

Lake Waco Lake Shore Drive is a key artery to the City of Waco and its surrounding areas. Failure of the land beneath the roadway along Lake Shore Drive would cost nearly \$100 million in repair and remediation costs, as well as economic harm due to the loss of a key route for commerce in and around Central Texas.

The Lake Waco embankment instability presents a risk of deep landslides and shallow slope failures, including larger catastrophic failures that would represent a disastrous event for the USACE, Waco Lake, Lake Shore Drive and the City of Waco. Aside from the obvious impacts as well as life and safety considerations, a catastrophic landslide would negatively impact the mission of the USACE Civil Works.

As shown in the figures below, specific potential impacts to the Civil Works mission include:

- **Flood Risk Management:** A catastrophic landslide would result in the mobilization of many hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of landslide debris. This would damage slopes within the fee boundary and would also push a large portion of the debris into the flood storage boundary area. The debris would reduce available flood storage and could result in a floodwater rise.
- **Recreation:** A large landslide would disrupt operations and possibly harm park grounds at Koehne Park on the shores of Waco Lake.
- **Infrastructure:** In addition to potential damage at Koehne Park, a catastrophic landslide would destroy Lake Shore Drive and associated underground utilities, severing both local access and services for the community.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** A landslide failure would deposit a wide variety of debris into Waco Lake and could be devastating to the local environment. Significant water quality issues and environmental impacts would likely require mitigation.

A proactive approach of repairs to this looming threat will avoid the need for an emergency response from a catastrophic failure and serves the greater mission of USACE Civil Works. Compared to the cost of repairing and mitigating a catastrophic landslide, the capital costs of a proactive project will undoubtedly result in greater savings and construction efficiencies.

Thank you