

December 7, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader Schumer, and Leader McConnell:

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) writes to express its support for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2022, as included in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 7776 entitled the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023. We commend the leaders of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works for keeping WRDA on track to pass on a biennial schedule and urge swift action to take up the bill on the House and Senate floors prior to the end of this year.

Several provisions in this year's WRDA are critical to ensuring that the nation's water infrastructure is built to withstand increasingly harsh conditions, provide more effective services to the American people, and protect the health and safety of communities. As climate change continues to drive more intense and less predictable weather patterns, it is critical that infrastructure resilience remains a key priority for water resources policy. This bipartisan agreement includes several provisions which will allow for the chance to build on progress made over the past several years and provides new opportunities to enhance the resilience of infrastructure systems.

First, ASCE strongly supports WRDA's five-year reauthorization of the National Levee Safety Program. The National Levee Safety Program, which was first authorized in 2014, is tasked with establishing national levee safety guidelines, supporting levee rehabilitation efforts, assisting with the standing up of levee safety programs at the state level, and providing technical assistance for effective management of the nation's levees. Every state relies on levees to protect communities from flooding. However, the average age of the nation's levees is over 50 years

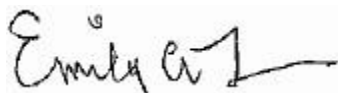
old, with many having been built without the benefit of current robust codes and standards. ASCE estimates that moderate-to-high risk levees under the purview of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) require approximately \$21 billion in improvements to ensure public safety. The National Levee Safety Program plays a vital role in supporting the safety of the nation's levees. The program, however, is set to expire at the end of FY 2023. Reauthorization of this critical program is a top priority for ASCE during consideration of this year's WRDA, and we appreciate Congress taking on this challenge.

Second, ASCE supports efforts made in WRDA to address the safety of the nation's dams. ASCE's *2021 Report Card for America's Infrastructure* gave the condition of our nation's dams a "D" grade. According to the Association of State Dam Safety Officials, more than \$75 billion is needed to address the conditions of the nation's non-federal dams and ASCE is encouraged by provisions in this year's WRDA agreement to address certain dam safety issues. Specifically, ASCE supports the establishment of a national inventory of low-head dams, which are small, man-made structures that stretch across riverways which produce flows that can create strong yet undetectable currents, posing a significant public hazard. An accurate inventory of low-head dams will support public safety and ensure greater awareness of the danger posed by these structures.

Finally, ASCE appreciates the decision to make permanent the cost share formula of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF). The general fund-IWTF cost share formula of 65-35 percent was set to expire within the decade, and the removal of that sunset provision offers a measure of certainty for future construction and rehabilitation projects. While the final WRDA bill does not adjust the cost share requirement to the 75-25 percent split that ASCE advocated in favor of, the provision that makes the cost share formula permanent is still a positive step in supporting future construction efforts and reducing the inland waterways project backlog.

We thank you again for your efforts to promptly consider the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 and urge all Members of Congress to support its passage. Congress must continue to prioritize investment needs for water infrastructure systems to protect public health, ensure a strong economy, and build a modern, efficient network of infrastructure that can compete on a global stage.

Sincerely,



Emily A. Feenstra
Chief Policy and External Affairs Officer
American Society of Civil Engineers

cc:

Hon. Peter DeFazio, Chairman, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Hon. Sam Graves, Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

Hon. Grace F. Napolitano, Chairwoman, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

Hon. David Rouzer, Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

Hon. Thomas R. Carper, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works

Hon. Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Environment & Public
Works

Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin, Chairman, Senate Environment & Public Works Subcommittee on
Transportation and Infrastructure

Hon. Kevin J. Cramer, Ranking Member, Senate Environment & Public Works Subcommittee on
Transportation and Infrastructure