

August 14, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brian Babin
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space
and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space
and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Charman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, Chairman Babin, and Ranking
Member Lofgren,

On behalf of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), I am writing to share our serious concerns regarding the Office of Management and Budget's proposed rule, *Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance*, published in the Federal Register on May 29, 2026. ASCE urges Congress to exercise its oversight authority and carefully review the proposed rule, and its impact on the Nation's research enterprise. ASCE is not alone in its concerns, by the close of the comment period OMB received 495,796 comments. ASCE represents civil engineers who plan, design, build, operate, and maintain the nation's infrastructure. Our members rely on independent, merit-based research and federal partnerships to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

As proposed, the rule would significantly restructure the federal grants framework by converting longstanding OMB guidance into binding government-wide regulations and altering how federal grants and cooperative agreements are reviewed, awarded, managed, and terminated. ASCE believes these changes could undermine the independence of scientific and engineering research, reduce the role of expert peer review, and give political appointees expanded authority over grant decisions that should be guided by technical merit, statutory purpose, and public benefit.

ASCE is apprehensive that the proposal could disrupt research and innovation essential to resilient infrastructure, hazard mitigation, water systems, transportation safety, and other areas where civil engineering expertise directly supports communities across the country. Federal research investments are most effective when decisions are transparent, evidence-based, and insulated from inappropriate political influence. The proposed rule risks replacing those principles with uncertainty for researchers, universities, nonprofits, professional societies, and other recipients of federal financial assistance.

Federal research and development funding has been a cornerstone of U.S. innovation and economic competitiveness. The proposed rule would make fundamental changes to a system that has served the Nation well. We believe Congressional oversight is critical to ensure any changes to grant rules do not inadvertently weaken the research enterprise that helps communities build safer, more reliable, and more resilient infrastructure.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. ASCE would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns with you or your staff and to serve as a technical resource as Congress reviews the potential impacts of the proposed OMB rule. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact ASCE's Senior Manager of Government Relations at mhight@asce.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Sevier', is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Caroline Sevier
Managing Director
Government Relations & Infrastructure Initiatives
American Society of Civil Engineers