

February 27, 2020

The Honorable Lamar Alexandar, Chairman  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Dear Chairman Alexandar and Ranking Member Feinstein:

As you draft Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations for the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, we urge you to provide robust funding to the programs that play a vital role in operating our nation's inland waterways, protecting communities and property from flood risk, and preserving and enhancing our environmental resources. Long term, reliable funding for the maintenance and modernization of our water resources infrastructure system is vital to our nation's economic competitiveness and national security.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Civil Works**

**We urge the Subcommittee to dedicate an additional \$2 billion in FY21 to the U.S. Army Corps of Civil Engineers (USACE) Civil Works Construction account** to help offset the growing backlog and to get our nation's water resources infrastructure systems modernized to meet the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

The USACE operates and maintains a vast network of 25,000 miles of inland waterways and 239 locks that support half a million jobs, deliver more than 600 million tons of cargo annually, and are the nation's connection to inland and ocean ports and international markets. The USACE also manages flood control, dam safety, water supply, recreation, shoreline protection, disaster response and recovery, hydropower, and environmental restoration and protection across the nation. USACE's construction account is chronically underfunded and received only \$2.6 billion in FY20 to address the current projects backlog of \$75 billion – a decrease compared to the FY19 funding level of \$2.8 billion.

ASCE was pleased that the Water Resources Reform & Development Act (WRRDA) 2014 authorized a new water infrastructure financing mechanism, the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) (P.L. 113 – 121, Sec. 5021), to be administered by the USACE and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Under this new program, the USACE is authorized to provide WIFIA support for an array of projects, including environmental damage reduction projects, hurricane and storm damage reduction projects, flood damage reduction projects, coastal or inland harbor navigation improvement projects, and/or inland and intracoastal waterways navigation projects. While the EPA portion of the WIFIA program has been implemented with much success, the USACE portion of the program has yet to be funded. **We urge the Subcommittee to fund the USACE's WIFIA program in FY21 at no less than the EPA's FY20 enacted level of \$60 million.**

**Dams and Levees**

Our nation's 91,468 dams and 30,000 miles of levees are critical components of risk reduction and protect communities, critical infrastructure, and trillions of dollars in property. However, it is estimated

that \$80 billion is needed in the next 10 years to maintain and improve the nation's levees, while the Association of State Dam Safety Officials estimates the cost of rehabilitating our nation's federal and non-federal dams to exceed \$70 billion. Included in this is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) estimate that more than \$21 billion will be required to address dam deficiencies for Corps-owned dams; at the current rate of investment, these repairs would take over 50 years to complete. As such, ASCE's *2017 Infrastructure Report Card* gave our nation's dams and levees each a grade of "D." As such, we urge the Subcommittee to fund these three programs at their fully authorized FY21 levels:

- **National Dam Safety Program (PL 115 – 270, Sec. 1163) at \$500,000 for the National Inventory of Dams; and the**
- **National Levee Safety Program (PL 115 – 270 Sec. 1144) at \$54 million.**

Investment is needed to rehabilitate deficient dams and to complete the national inventory of levees. ASCE was pleased that the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (PL 115 – 270) reauthorized the National Dam Safety Program and the National Levee Safety Program through FY23.

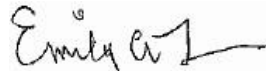
Since its inception, the National Dam Safety Program in partnership with USACE has helped inventory nearly 91,500 dams across the country, assessing their condition. The National Levee Safety Program has created an inventory of our nation's levees, which did not exist before Hurricane Katrina. In fact, we now know the location and condition of nearly 30,000 miles of levees; however, there is much work to be done to further inventory the thousands of miles of levees not yet in the database. Despite these program's successes, the National Levee Safety Program has yet to receive any funding other than for the levee inventory.

#### **Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF)**

**ASCE urges the Subcommittee to follow the agreement reached in WRRDA 2014 that established a 10-year plan to increase Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund expenditures incrementally to achieve full use of the receipts.** The HMTF's balance currently sits at over \$9 billion. Congress should continue that agreement and increase FY21 expenditures accordingly. The dredging of the nation's ports and harbors has suffered from years of underinvestment; since WRRDA 2014, significant dredging has occurred as a result of the agreement reached. Once full appropriations are made, however, it will take five years of complete HMTF funding to dredge and restore channel depths and widths.

In conclusion, ASCE believes our nation must prioritize the investment needs of our water resources infrastructure systems to ensure public safety, a strong economy, and the protection of our environmental resources. We thank you for your consideration of our funding requests and look forward to working with the Subcommittee to fund these existing successful federal infrastructure programs.

Sincerely,



Emily A. Feenstra

Managing Director, Government Relations and Infrastructure Initiatives

cc: Chairman Richard Shelby and Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy, Senate Committee on Appropriations