

February 27, 2020

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard, Chairwoman
The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann, Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Roybal-Allard and Ranking Member Fleishmann:

As you draft Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations for the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, we urge you to provide robust funding to the agencies and programs that play a vital role in protecting the nation's public health, welfare, and security. From securing our nation to responding to disasters or working to mitigate the impact of disasters before they occur, the Department of Homeland Security is critical to ensuring our national security.

ASCE's *2017 Infrastructure Report Card* rated the overall condition of our nation's infrastructure a cumulative grade of "D+." Going forward, we must build smarter and stronger, as well as utilize new approaches, materials, and technologies to ensure our infrastructure is more resilient in order to recover quickly from significant weather and other hazard events.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

ASCE strongly supports the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Disaster Program and urges the Subcommittee to provide \$250 million for the program in FY21. This program is a critical tool in helping state and local governments reduce their risk to future hazard events; not only does it fund pragmatic disaster risk management strategies that protect our nation's communities and safeguard infrastructure systems, but it is a prudent use of taxpayer dollars. In fact, a January 2018 National Institute of Building Sciences report found that every \$1 spent in federal government agency hazard mitigation saves the nation \$6 in future disaster costs. **ASCE also urges the Subcommittee to provide \$263 million for the Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Assessment (RiskMAP) program, as well as \$8.758 million for the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program.**

Natural and man-made disasters have repeatedly demonstrated the vulnerability of the nation's infrastructure. The federal funding for mitigation, preparedness, research, and standards has been insufficient to provide the resources necessary for mitigating natural and man-made hazards. Such funding is critical to the health and safety of the nation, its citizens, and to the resilience of the nation's critical infrastructure.

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." **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 \$13.9 million;**
- **National Levee Safety Program (PL 115 – 270 Sec. 1144) at \$25 million; and the**
- **High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Program (PL 114 – 322 Sec. 5006) at \$60 million.**

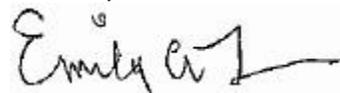
Investment is needed to rehabilitate deficient dams and to complete the national inventory of levees. ASCE was pleased that the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (PL 115 – 270) reauthorized the National Dam Safety Program and the National Levee Safety Program through FY23. The former program provides federal grant assistance to state dam safety agencies for: 1) training dam safety engineers, 2) research, 3) the creation of a National Inventory of Dams, and 4) a public awareness and outreach program, while the latter program promotes consistent safety standards, creates levee safety guidelines, and provides funding assistance to states for establishing participating levee safety programs. The High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Program was authorized in the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act of 2016 to provide federal grant assistance for the rehabilitation, repair, or removal of non-federal high hazard potential dams, or those dams whose failure would result in the loss of life.

Since its inception, the National Dam Safety Program has helped inventory dams across the country, assessing their condition, and providing training and tools to state dam safety programs. 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 programs' successes, the National Dam Safety Program consistently receives only a portion of its annual \$13.9 million appropriations, while the National Levee Safety Program has yet to receive any funding other than for the levee inventory. The High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Program received \$10 million of its authorized \$40 million in FY20.

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: Chairwoman Nita Lowey and Ranking Member Kay Granger, House Committee on Appropriations