

March 24, 2025

The Honorable Mark Amodei, Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
2006 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lauren Underwood, Acting Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Amodei and Ranking Member Underwood:

As you draft Fiscal Year 2026 legislation for the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, the American Society of Civil Engineers urges 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 and prosperity.

ASCE's *2021 Infrastructure Report Card* rated the overall condition of our nation's infrastructure a cumulative grade of "C-," and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will be a significant step forward in raising the grades. Nevertheless, we must build smarter and stronger going forward, 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 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program and urges the Subcommittee to provide at least \$500 million in baseline funding for the program in FY26.

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. Congress should continue to provide baseline appropriations of \$500 million and continue the practice of setting aside unspent disaster relief funds to supplement the program, and also continue to prioritize the use of up to date building codes for awarding mitigation grants. **ASCE also urges the Subcommittee to provide \$350 million for the Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis (RiskMAP) program, as well as \$10.59 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. Programs like the RiskMAP program allow communities to better conduct risk and vulnerability assessments, and

receive critical data to enhance flood risk mitigation strategies. 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 is home to more than 92,000 dams and more than 24,000 miles of levees, which are critical components of risk reduction and provide protection to communities, critical infrastructure, and trillions of dollars in property. However, the nation's levees and dams are in need of significant repair and upgrades. This includes an estimated cost of \$165 billion to repair the nation's non-federal dams, according to the Association of State Dam Safety Officials. As such, *ASCE's 2021 Infrastructure Report Card* gave our nation's dams and levees each a grade of "D." **We urge the Subcommittee to support the following programs at their fully authorized FY25 levels:**

- **National Dam Safety Program (PL 118 – 2 Sec. 1132) at \$13.4 million;**
- **High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Grant Program (PL 114 – 322 Sec. 5006) at \$60 million; and the**
- **National Levee Safety Program (PL 117 – 263 Sec. 8387) at \$25 million**

The National Dam Safety Program (NDSP), first authorized in 1996, was recently reauthorized on a bipartisan basis in the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024. It is the primary source of federal support for state dam safety programs. The NDSP supports state programs with resources for training, staffing needs, emergency planning, and dam inspection and monitoring activity. However, the program is annually underfunded having only received just over \$10 million of its total authorization in FY 22 and 23 (the program's authorization had lapsed in FY 24). Both its funding and authorization levels are not nearly enough to keep up with the increasingly rising cost of bringing the nation's dams into a state of good repair. It is critical that the National Dam Safety Program be fully funded to ensure states are able to properly monitor the condition and safety dams that fall under their jurisdiction.

The High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Grant Program is the primary source of federal funds for repair and rehabilitation of high hazard potential dams- those dams which, in the event of a dam failure, would result in the loss of life. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, more than 2,500 high hazard potential dams are assessed to be in either poor or unsatisfactory condition. However, this critical grant program has not received an annual appropriations since FY 2022 when it received only \$12 million of its \$60 million authorization.

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 more than 24,000 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. The National Levee Safety Program was reauthorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2022, however, since its inception, it has yet to receive any funding other than for the levee inventory.

Funding for these critical programs is critical to protecting the lives of communities that live behind levees, and downstream of high hazard potential dams nationwide. Investing in dam and levee safety could save billions in recovery funds in the event of a levee breach or a dam failure.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Caroline Sevier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Caroline" being more prominent than the last name "Sevier".

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

cc: Chairman Tom Cole and Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro, House Committee on Appropriations