

May 5, 2022

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur, Chairwoman
The Honorable Michael Simpson, Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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Dear Chairwoman Kaptur and Ranking Member Simpson:

As you draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 appropriations for the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies, we urge you to provide robust funding for the programs that play a vital role in maintaining our nation's inland waterways, protecting communities and property from flood risk, and preserving and enhancing our environmental resources. Reliable and long-term 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 at least \$2.7 billion in FY23 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 21st century economy.

The USACE operates and maintains a vast network of 25,000 miles of inland waterways and 241 locks that support half a million jobs, move nearly 830 million tons of cargo annually, and form 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 \$2.49 billion in the FY22 omnibus package to address the current project backlog of \$109 billion – a decrease compared to the FY21 funding level of \$2.69 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 and inland harbor navigation improvement projects, and 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 only recently received funding and those projects are now just starting to get underway. **We urge the Subcommittee to fund the USACE's WIFIA program in FY23 at no less than the FY 22 enacted level of \$7.2 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.

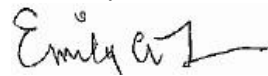
Since its inception, the National Dam Safety Program in partnership with USACE has helped inventory nearly 91,500 dams across the country, assessing their condition. The National Levee Safety Program has created an inventory of our nation's levees, which did not exist before Hurricane Katrina. In fact, 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)

The Water Resources Development Act of 2020 included full utilization of the \$10 billion balance in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) by allowing \$500 million to be appropriated in FY 2021, with an increase of \$100 million annually until it is fully expended by 2030. **Congress should increase FY23 expenditures accordingly and continue to allow for the unspent balance of the HMTF to be used for port projects.**

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

Chief Policy and External Affairs Officer at ASCE

cc: Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro and Ranking Member Kay Granger, House Committee on Appropriations