AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS

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February 10, 2026

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann, Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development, and Related Agencies
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur, Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development, and Related Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Fleishmann and Ranking Member Kaptur:

As you draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 legislation 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 systems such as dams and levees 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 FY27 to the U.S. Army Corps of Civil Engineers (USACE) Civil Works Construction account to help offset the growing backlog, cited at over $100 billion, 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 $1.8 billion in the FY25 to address the current project backlog– a decrease of $633 million compared to the FY22 funding level.

The growing water resources project backlog at USACE threatens the financial viability of projects by creating project delays, and increased cost to taxpayers. It may also result in challenges not only with project delivery, but shifting timetables can affect project development and design which can affect the resilience and overall performance of infrastructure systems. To address this, ASCE also requests the following language be inserted into this year's bill:

"The committee recognizes the challenges that the growing backlog of water resources construction projects poses to the development, cost, and overall performance of water resources infrastructure. To

address these challenges, the committee is directed to coordinate with all relevant committees in both the House and Senate, as well as with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to develop strategies to reduce the growing project backlog in order to lower costs, enhance resilience, support economic growth, and improve the overall performance of infrastructure systems."

Additionally, ASCE encourages the Subcommittee to support incorporation of sustainability considerations into project design and construction. Emphasizing sustainability can help to ensure infrastructure systems are built to withstand growing challenges caused by extreme weather. An effective approach to this is the utilization of the Envision Sustainable Infrastructure Framework. The Envision framework is a decision-making tool that allow stakeholders- including engineers, architects, and contractors -to evaluate projects through the lens of sustainability indicators addressing economic, environmental, and other key factors. This allows for more systemic change and improvement of infrastructure performance. With this in mind, **we ask that the committee direct USACE to utilize the Envision framework in its project design and construction.**

ASCE was pleased that progress has continued in implementing the USACE's Water Infrastructure Financing Program (CWIFP) in support of non-federal dam safety projects. While the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) portion of the WIFIA program has been implemented with much success, the USACE portion of the program has only in recent years received funding, and ongoing support is necessary to address the rising cost of rehabilitating the nation's non-federal dams. **We urge the Subcommittee to fund the USACE's WIFIA program in FY27 at no less than the FY 26 enacted level of $7.2 million.**

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 flood 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 2025 *Report Card for America's Infrastructure* gave our nation's dams and levees each a grade of "D+." **We urge the Subcommittee to support robust funding for the following programs:**

- **National Dam Safety Program (PL 118 – 272, Sec. 1132) at $2,200,000 for the National Inventory of Dams, equal to the FY 26 level;**
- **National Levee Safety Program (PL 117 – 263 Sec. 8387) at $54 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 (WRDA) of 2024. It is the primary source of federal support for state dam safety programs. The NDSP also supports the continued development of the National Inventory of Dams, which is overseen by USACE and provides an accounting of the nation's 92,000 dams and records vital information regarding those dams -including hazard potential, condition assessment, and dam age. This critical tool is an invaluable resource to engineers tasked with monitoring and maintaining the safety of the nation's dams, and to policy makers who rely on tools such as the inventory to monitor the dam safety needs of their states and communities.

Additionally, the 2024 WRDA supported progress in the development of the authorized the National Low Head Dam Inventory. Low-head dams are man-made structures that stretch across an entire river

or stream and can create dangerous currents that are difficult to see with the naked eye. These structures have been known to pose safety hazards, and have resulted in the loss of life. In many cases nationwide, these low-head dams are not properly marked, so it is difficult to be able to assess the danger they pose. In 2024, the Congress built on progress made in 2022 by requiring USACE to begin the process of incorporating low-head dams into the National inventory of Dams, a process which is currently underway. This will allow for greater safety measures to be put in place around low-head dams in order to protect public safety. We encourage the Subcommittee to provide adequate support to the continued development of the National Low-Head Dam Inventory to ensure a proper accounting of these potentially hazardous structures.

Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF)

Waterside infrastructure needs, such as maintenance dredging, are paid for through the federal Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF). The HMTF collects revenue through a 0.125% user fee on the value of cargo shipped. WRDA 2020 included full utilization of the $10 billion balance of the HMTF by allowing $500 million to be appropriated in FY 21, with an increase of $100 million annually until 2030. **To help ensure continued functionality of our nation's ports, ASCE urges Congress to increase FY 27 expenditures accordingly and continue to spend down the balance of the HMTF on maintenance dredging activities.**

Dredging is a critical and continuously needed activity for ports. Channel depth determines the size of vessels that can call at a port, and maintenance dredging is important for making sure ports can safely accommodate large ships and compete with one another. Ports received the highest grade on ASCE's 2025 *Report Card for America's Infrastructure*, earning a grade of "B". ASCE's *Bridging the Gap* report indicates water transportation needs from 2024 to 2033 are about $45 billion, of which nearly $38 billion is specific to ports.

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,

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