



September 28, 2009

Senator Byron Dorgan
US Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Robert Bennett
US Senate
431 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Peter Visclosky
US House of Representative
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen
US House of Representative
2442 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dorgan, Ranking Member Bennett, Chairman Visclosky, and Ranking Member Frelinghuysen:

With each passing day, the inability of our nation's aging infrastructure to meet the needs of our growing population further threatens our economy. And so does the need to bring new projects under construction to completion to meet pressing water resources challenges. As you work to resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions of the Fiscal Year 2010 Energy & Water Appropriations legislation, we strongly encourage the inclusion of at least \$5.5 billion as recommended in the House-passed version of the bill in funding for the construction of water resource facilities through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("The Corps") and at least \$1.13 billion for construction of water resource facilities through the Bureau of Reclamation as recommended in the Senate-passed version of the bill.

The Water Resources Coalition was founded in 2007 to ensure that a comprehensive, national water resources policy is developed, implemented, and funded to provide a productive economy; a healthy aquatic ecology; and ensure public health and safety. Our organization is comprised of groups representing state and local governments, engineering and construction companies, ports, waterways, transportation services and conservation organizations that have an interest in a national water resources policy.

The Corps has a construction backlog of \$61 billion. There are ports and waterways to be dredged so they can handle the ships that will otherwise be turned away as our economy recovers. There are dams and levees to be repaired and wetlands to be restored so that people, the communities they live in and the factories they work in are not wiped out by floods. There is critical infrastructure and environmental resources along every mile of America's coastline that is disappearing because of a national policy of neglect. In fact, this past weekend there was a

improve, prevent, save
www.waterresourcescoalition.org

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101 Constitution Ave., NW
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Washington, DC 20001
202-789-7850 (ASCE)

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2300 Wilson Boulevard
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“catastrophic” lock break on the Ohio River near Warsaw, Kentucky stopping all traffic on the river.

Additionally, there are several policy issues that we also believe need to be addressed as well in order to develop a final package that best addresses our nation’s water resources infrastructure needs.

New Starts – We urge the removal of the prohibition on “new starts” that is currently in the Senate bill. We believe this is not in the best interest of the Corps’ work on our waterways, flood control needs and ecosystems restoration. The Congress took a strong stand and made a serious commitment to the American people when it voted to override President Bush’s veto of the 2007 Water Resources Development Act and authorized over \$23 billion in new projects for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is time to meet that commitment by addressing this backlog of funding needs and provide additional funding for this critically important program. However, not moving on new projects, that have been authorized, will stop the Corps from addressing pressing needs.

Continuing Contracts –The Coalition agrees that use of the continuing contract is an important contracting mechanism given the vastly varied scope of projects executed by the Corps. The Coalition shares the belief that the Corps, as the contracting agent, holds administration of the pace of expenditures. The Coalition does not agree with the implication as outlined in previous Conference Reports that somehow contractors “dictate” the pace of expenditures; in the normal performance of public and private construction projects nationwide, additional funds to accelerate project execution under optimum circumstances should be considered an overall benefit to the nation, not a breaking of violation of the public trust. The Coalition is willing to provide whatever expertise is can to this issue to bring about greater mutual understanding.

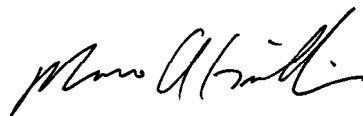
As this process moves forward, we understand that you will be faced with many difficult decisions. We appreciate your leadership on the Appropriations Committees, and look forward to working with you on this important legislation.

Thank you for your attention to our request.

Sincerely,



Brian Pallasch
Co-Chairman
American Society of Civil Engineers



Marco Giamberardino
Co-Chairman
Associated General Contractors