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July 17, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
The Honorable Nita Lowey
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairman Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Member Lowey:

First, we would like to thank you for your commitment to bipartisan passage of the Energy & Water Development, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction & Veterans Affairs “minibus” Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations spending package. Long term, reliable funding for the maintenance and modernization of our water resources infrastructure system is vital to our nation’s economic competitiveness and national security. As such, we urge the conference committee to collaboratively work to ensure that the programs under the Energy & Water Development portion of the package receive robust funding. As you know, these programs play a vital role in operating our nation’s inland waterways, protecting communities and property from flood risk, and preserving and enhancing our environmental resources.

We are pleased that both the House and Senate FY19 Energy & Water Development appropriations bills include increased funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) compared to the FY18 enacted level. However, we urge the conference committee to adopt the House’s funding level of \$2.323 billion for the USACE’s 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. USACE’s Construction account is chronically underfunded and received only \$2.085 billion last year to address the current projects backlog of \$75 billion.

We also urge the committee to include USACE funding for implementation of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), a water infrastructure financing mechanism that was authorized in the Water Resources Reform & Development Act (WRRDA) 2014, as well as funding for the National Levee Safety Program, which was also authorized in WRRDA 2014. WIFIA, which is to be administered by both the USACE and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is modeled after the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA). 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 or inland harbor navigation improvement projects, and/or inland and intracoastal waterways navigation projects. **The FY18 omnibus included \$63 million for WIFIA, and we urge the committee to at least fund the WIFIA program at this level, which is \$13 million above its FY19 authorization of \$50 million.**

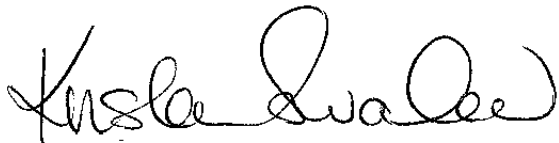
The National Levee Safety Program promotes consistent safety standards, creates levee safety guidelines, and provides funding assistance to states for establishing participating levee safety programs, yet it has received no funding other than funding for the levee inventory. Our nation’s 30,000 miles of levees are critical components of

risk reduction and protect communities, critical infrastructure, and trillions of dollars in property. As such, **we urge the committee to fund this program at its fully authorized level of \$79 million in FY19.**

ASCE supports both bills' provisions that include full use of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, and we are pleased that both bills include funding for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) well above the 2014 Water Resources Reform & Development Act's (WRRDA) allocation for FY19. The HMTF's balance currently sits at over \$9 billion. Dredging at our nation's ports and harbors has suffered from years of underinvestment; fortunately, significant dredging progress has been made as a result of the WRRDA 2014 agreement. Once full appropriations are made, however, it will take five years of complete HMTF funding to dredge and restore channel depths and widths.

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. Strategic, robust, and sustained investments, through long-term, reliable federal funding, as well as through the utilization of alternative financing mechanisms, must be made quickly if we hope to close the growing funding gap and restore America's world-class infrastructure. We thank you for your consideration of our funding requests and look forward to working with the conference committee to fund these existing successful federal infrastructure programs.

Sincerely,



Kristina L. Swallow, P.E., ENV SP, F.ASCE
2018 ASCE President

cc: Conference Committee

- Senator Lamar Alexander
- Senator John Boozman
- Senator Steve Daines
- Senator James Lankford
- Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Senator Brian Schatz
- Senator Chris Murphy
- Representative Mike Simpson
- Representative Jeff Fortenberry
- Representative John Carter
- Representative Ken Calvert
- Representative Chuck Fleishmann
- Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler
- Representative Scott Taylor
- Representative Marcy Kaptur
- Representative Tim Ryan
- Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz
- Representative Peter Visclosky

