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2025 REPORT CARD FOR AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Dams

SUMMARY

The U.S. has over 92,000 dams that support electricity, water supply, and flood control. Nearly 17,000 are classified as high hazard potential, meaning failure could cause deadly harm. Aging infrastructure, extreme weather, and growing downstream populations have driven up maintenance costs. The average dam is over 60 years old, and 70% will reach 50 years by 2025. The IIJA provided about $3 billion for dam safety, though much of that has since been redirected, and federal programs remain underfunded. Without increased investment in inspection, monitoring, and repairs, costs will rise and risks to downstream communities will grow.

FAST FACTS

- 7 out of 10 dams in the U.S. are more than 50 years old and therefore are often not designed to withstand increasingly heavy and frequent rain events.
- The cost to repair the nation's non-federal dams is over $165 billion.
- On average, a single state dam safety official can be responsible for overseeing 190 existing dams and the construction of new dams.
- In the U.S., more than 16,700 dams are classified as high hazard potential.

SOLUTIONS TO RAISE THE GRADE

- ✓ Encourage local land use planning that considers dam impacts to improve future decision-making and community awareness.
- ✓ Evaluate dam removal benefits and trade-offs, set realistic environmental recovery goals, share data from removal projects, and engage the public to balance safety and environmental concerns.
- ✓ Ensure all high-hazard dams have emergency action plans in place by 2030.

To explore more solutions to raise the grades check out infrastructurereportcard.org

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