
News RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 4, 2005

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CIVIL ENGINEERING AND DAM SAFETY GROUPS SUPPORT REINTRODUCTION OF DAM REPAIR AND REHABILITATION ACT

RESTON, VA — The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO), members of the Dam Safety Coalition, today backed the reintroduction of the Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2005, a bill that will create a federal funding program to repair the nation’s unsafe public dams. Congresswoman Sue Kelly (19th District – NY) is reintroducing this important legislation to address the critical issue of deteriorating dam structures that pose a severe threat to many communities throughout the country.

“Dams provide tremendous benefits to society but they also represent a public safety issue. A dam failure can result in severe loss of life, economic disaster and extensive environmental damage,” said ASCE President William P. Henry, P.E., F.ASCE. “I commend Representative Kelly for working with the coalition to craft this crucial legislation.”

“Dam failures are largely preventable disasters. This bill would protect the crucial services that dams provide as well as the property of those communities they serve,” said Kelly.

“The Association of State Dam Safety Officials applauds Congresswoman Kelly for her leadership in reintroducing this necessary legislation that invests in our nation’s critical infrastructure and will undoubtedly help prevent tragic dam failures. ASDSO calls upon the other members of Congress and the Governors to recognize the growing number of unsafe dams and to support this bill,” said ASDSO President Meg Galloway.

Dams are a vital part of our nation’s infrastructure—providing drinking water, flood protection, renewable hydroelectric power, navigation, irrigation and recreation. These critical daily benefits are also inextricably linked to the potential harmful consequences of a dam failure.

In 2001, ASCE published the *Report Card for America’s Infrastructure* giving the condition of our nation’s dams a grade of D, equal to the overall infrastructure grade. State dam safety programs have identified more than 3,500 unsafe or deficient dams, many being susceptible to large flood events or earthquakes. The number of unsafe dams will continue to increase until a funding source is created to repair them.

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The ASDSO, in its October 2003 report entitled *The Cost of Rehabilitating Our Nation's Dams*, estimated that \$10 billion would be needed to repair the most critical dams over the next 12 years. The Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2005 is a legislative step to help address this need. If enacted, the legislation would mandate:

- Establishment of a program within the Federal Emergency Management Agency to fund dam rehabilitation, repairs and removal;
- Enactment of a public fund to award grants for assistance to publicly-owned deficient dams; and
- Authorization of \$350 million over 4 years to assist in the rehabilitation of deficient dams.

Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell and Michigan Governor Jennifer M. Granholm have called upon the Bush Administration to support the legislation to provide federal assistance in strengthening the state dam safety programs. With the aging of the nation's dams, many that do not meet current safety standards, and the dramatic increase in downstream development, this program would improve the safety of our nation's critical dams and ensure the continuing benefits that dams provide on a daily basis.

Founded in 1852, ASCE represents more than 137,000 civil engineers worldwide and is America's oldest national engineering society. The Society celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2002. On March 9, ASCE will release its 2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure, with updated grades in 15 categories.

ASDSO is a national non-profit organization of state and federal dam safety regulators, dam owners and operators, engineering consultants, manufacturers and suppliers, academia, contractors and others interested in dam safety. Our vision is to lead the US dam safety community with a strong, unified voice and effective programs and policies toward the furtherance of dam safety.

The Dam Safety Coalition formed in 2004 to educate Congress about the pressing need to rehabilitate our nation's aging dams. The coalition members are ASCE, Associated General Contractors, ASDSO, National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association, National Society of Professional Engineers, National Watershed Coalition, Portland Cement Association and the United States Society on Dams. For more information, visit www.damsafetycoalition.org.

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