



January 26, 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Dave Obey
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee

Dear Senator Inouye and Cochran, and Representatives Obey and Lewis:

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 new water resources challenges.

We applaud your leadership for taking this key step and urge Congress to move quickly to deliver a bill to President Obama. Our nation's water resources are critical to our economy and our ability to compete in the world market. They are equally critical to the protection of human life, public infrastructure, and private property as well as the preservation and enhancement of environmental resources. Much of our water resources infrastructure is aging, compromising its ability to meet the needs for which it was created.

As you finalize the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we strongly encourage the inclusion of at least \$7 billion in funding for the construction of water resource facilities through the Army Corps of Engineers and at least \$2 billion for construction of water resource facilities through the Bureau of Reclamation. These funds can be put to use over the next two years to stimulate the local and national economies and to ensure the security and longevity of critically-important infrastructure.

The Corps of Engineers 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

improve, prevent, save
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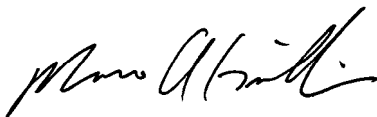
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coastline that is disappearing because of a national policy of neglect. Providing \$7 billion in funding for construction projects through the Army Corps of Engineers would help to address the backlog in authorized projects, creating good jobs in communities across America. The proposed stimulus legislation is a tremendous opportunity to improve our national water resources infrastructure to address flood control needs, navigation improvement, and environmental restoration efforts. Additional funding would be a shot in the arm that would allow communities to address their specific local needs, and within two years the combined economic effects of the projects that receive funding would likely show a strong yield for the federal investment.

We also ask that you provide \$2 billion for construction on water resource projects at the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau has a broad portfolio of responsibilities for natural resource management. Additional funding would allow the agency to address aging water resource facilities and to make significant progress on environmental restoration, irrigation structures, water recycling, and rural drinking water systems. As with providing additional funding for the Corps of Engineers, additional funding for the Bureau of Reclamation could be put to use over the next two years to put shovels in the ground, fortifying critical pieces of infrastructure and creating good-paying construction jobs that would stimulate the economy.

Given the large number of ready to go projects and the economic benefits of water resources investment, we believe this requested level of investment – just over one percent of the total cost of the stimulus package – is reasonable and necessary. 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.

Sincerely,



Marco A. Giamberardino
Co-Chair



Brian T. Pallasch
Co-Chair