



March 4, 2008

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman
Senate Budget Committee
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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 infrastructure is aging, compromising its ability to meet the needs for which it was created.

Last year, Congress took the important step of enacting into law the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. That legislation authorized over \$23 billion in new water resources projects and studies in an effort to keep America economically strong, reduce storm and flooding risks, and promote recreational opportunities for Americans as well as the increasing number of tourists who visit our beaches, lakes, and parks. The FY 2009 President's budget continues a pattern that does not support these new projects, or the growing backlog of water resource construction and maintenance projects. The proposed FY 2009 funding level of \$4.74 billion for the Corps of Engineers is nearly \$1 billion less than the enacted level of \$5.6 billion for the current year.

Unfortunately, the Corps has been operating during the last several years with a severely constrained budget. With a commitment from Congress to a plan that increases funding for its civil works program over the next five years, the Corps will be able to have the contracts in place so that it could execute at levels that will eliminate the backlog of projects and meet the Nation's water resource needs. Given the fact that Congress has not yet made that commitment, the Coalition recommends the budget resolution provide \$6.8 billion for the Corps' civil works program.

improve, prevent, save
www.waterresourcescoalition.org

ASCE
101 Constitution Ave., NW
Ste. 375 East
Washington, DC 20001
202-789-7850 (ASCE)

AGC
2300 Wilson Boulevard
Suite 400
Arlington, VA 22201
703-837-5435 (AGC)

This would be comprised of the following funding for the various Corps accounts:

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| INVESTIGATIONS: | \$ 200 M |
| O&M: | \$2,900 M |
| CONSTRUCTION: | \$2,600 M |
| MR&T: | \$ 400 M |
| REG: | \$ 220 M |
| FCCE: | \$ 60 M |
| FUSRAP: | \$ 200 M |
| EXPENSES: | \$ 200 M |

The coalition also believes that a minimum of \$200 million should be added into the FY 2009 Water and Related Resources Budget for the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau has played an important role in the development of the 17 Western states over the past 100 years. However, we are greatly concerned with the almost \$200 million reduction in the FY 2009 Reclamation program as proposed by the Administration. When the Water and Related Resources (construction) account of the Bureau is examined, 51% of the funding is now for facility maintenance and rehabilitation. The Coalition recognizes the importance of such investment given the aging of the infrastructure and the harsh climatic conditions of the Western United States. However that component of funding only leaves about \$250 million for the construction work in the water and energy component of the program – a program with a significant backlog of authorized work that holds the potential for meeting critical water needs in the West.

The Water Resources Coalition urges the Budget Committee to take these important water resource infrastructure needs into account as you develop the FY 2009 Congressional Budget Resolution.

Sincerely,

American Society of Civil Engineers
Associated General Contractors
American Council of Engineering Companies
American Shore and Beach Preservation Association
American Public Works Association
Association of California Water Agencies
Dredging Contractors of America
National Association of Regional Councils
National Stone Sand & Gravel Association
Oregon Water Resources Congress

cc: The Honorable Judd Gregg, Ranking Member