Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2019

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur, Chairman
The Honorable Mike Simpson, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Kaptur and Ranking Member Simpson,

As you develop the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2020, we urge you to provide $79 million for the National Levee Safety Program, as authorized.

30,000 miles of levees protect communities, critical infrastructure, and trillions of dollars in property nationwide. Upgrading levees prevents billions in flood damage and provides a more than 20:1 return on investment for taxpayers. The average levee in the United States is 50 years old, with an estimated $80 billion in repairs and maintenance needed in the next 10 years. The American Society of Civil Engineers’ most recent infrastructure report card gave the nation’s levees a “D” grade.

Authorized in 2014, the National Levee Safety Program seeks to promote consistent safety standards, create levee safety guidelines, and provide funding assistance to states. However, the program has yet to receive funding other than for the national levee inventory. A 2016 Government Accountability Office report found that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have made little progress implementing the National Levee Safety Program to date, due to lack of funding. Approving our request to fully funding the National Levee Safety Program would:

- Improve coordination and raise risk awareness
- Complete the national inventory of levees outside of the Army Corps’ authority
- Support levee rehabilitation and repairs nationwide

Communities across the nation rely on levees for flood control to reduce risk to homes, businesses, and property. With more than 50 percent of Americans living within 50 miles of a coastline or in floodplains, levees play an important safety role as our nation faces increasingly frequent and severe flooding. Thank you for your leadership on the Subcommittee and for considering this bipartisan request.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

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Member of Congress

BRUCE WESTERMAN
Member of Congress
STEVE COHEN  
Member of Congress

MAX ROSE  
Member of Congress

AL GREEN  
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