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Association of State Dam Safety Officials reports on achievements of National Dam Safety Program

The Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) report, *Success and Challenges: National Dam Safety Program 2002*, highlights the importance of the National Dam Safety Program (NDSP) and the achievements realized over the past five years as a result of the National Dam Safety Program Act (NDSPA). The NDSP, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), has fostered many significant improvements in state dam safety programs, provided critical training to state engineers, and established unprecedented cooperation between state and federal dam safety programs.

The report details improvements in state dam safety programs since the 1996 passage of the NDSPA. Since that time, the number of dam safety inspections has increased, more dam owners have prepared Emergency Action Plans (EAPs), and state dam safety personnel have become better trained and equipped for effective program management.

Although the National Dam Safety Program Act of 1996 expires in FY 2002, much remains to be done to increase the safety of dams in the U.S. Among the most pressing needs noted in the ASDSO report:

- 1) Increased training, number of dam inspections and EAPs
- 2) Improved mapping of dam failure flood inundation areas below dams
- 3) Funding low interest loans for dam repairs
- 4) Improving dam security

This last challenge calls for an urgent response from state and federal leaders, as dams have been the focus of terrorist threats. As states shoulder the responsibility for regulating the safety of approximately 95% of our nation's dams, ASDSO strongly recommends that states allocate funds from FEMA's First Responder Initiative Grant Program for improvements to dam security, e.g., conducting vulnerability assessments, updating dam failure inundation areas maps, and improving physical security systems around high-hazard-potential dams.

For more information, please contact ASDSO (info@damsafety.org).