

## DAM SAFETY COALITION MEMBERS CALL FOR SUPPORT OF DAM REHABILITATION AND REPAIR LEGISLATION

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RESTON, VA —While the nation watched nervous officials in Taunton, Massachusetts, monitor several dams nearing failure after the weekend's extreme storm event, the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) this week urged support for the Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2005 (H.R. 1105), legislation that would create a federal funding program to repair the nation's unsafe public dams. Introduced by Representative Sue Kelly (19th District-NY), the bill would begin to address the thousands of public dams that threaten lives and livelihoods in communities across 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.

"Inspections alone do not make dams safe. Owners have to be responsible and make needed improvements. They have to be vigilant about the condition of their dam. Obviously, this means funding for rehabilitation and repair," said ASDSO president Ken Smith (Indiana Department of Natural Resources).

ASCE and ASDSO urge all 50 governors and state legislative leaders to study the lessons of Hurricane Katrina and the Northeastern storm event of this past week. These extreme storm events will continue to threaten dams and the large populations at risk below these dams. Every state, except Alabama, has a dam safety regulatory program. ASDSO and ASCE recommend a full review of unsafe dams regulated by states—which constitutes 95 percent of the nation's more than 79,000 dams. States and the federal government should work to repair or remove unsafe high-hazard dams. ASCE and ASDSO also recommend all states budget to provide an adequately staffed dam safety regulatory department.

"Dam owners, government officials and state and federal policymakers cannot wait for events to occur, such as those happening this week in the Northeast, to address the concerns for keeping dams safe," said Smith. "All states should review their dam safety programs and find ways to repair dam deficiencies before a similar event occurs in other locations across the country."

If enacted, the Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2005 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.

*Founded in 1852, ASCE represents more than 139,000 civil engineers worldwide and is America's oldest national engineering society. The Society celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2002. On March 9, 2005, ASCE released its 2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure, assigning a grade of D to the nation's infrastructure based on 15 categories, including Dams. For more information, visit [www.infrastructurereportcard.org](http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org).*

*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](http://www.damsafetycoalition.org).*