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# ASSOCIATION OF STATE DAM SAFETY OFFICIALS

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*Working to improve dam safety in the USA*

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## **ASDSO 2013-2014 Board of Directors**

**Tom Woosley, P.E.**  
(President)  
Georgia

January 28, 2014

Senate Homeland Security & Governmental  
Affairs Committee  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Michael Johnson, Ph.D., P.E.**  
(President Elect)  
Arizona

Re: Hearing entitled "Examining Conference and Travel Spending Across the Federal Government"

**James T. Pawloski, P.E.**  
(Treasurer)  
Michigan

The Association of State Dam Safety Officials is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, individual membership organization representing more than 3,000 dam safety officials nationwide. Our members come from state and federal regulatory agencies and dam owning agencies, from the private dam owning community, from the consulting community and from academia. We host meetings, educational and scientific events designed to provide and share information and to offer training with the most up-to-date information and best practices in the dam safety industry.

**Dusty Myers, P.E.**  
(Secretary)  
Mississippi

As you examine the issue of internal federal conferences and the progress made on oversight, we ask that you note the differences between government conferences and association conferences. For federal employees, the opportunity to meet professionals in the private sector at association meetings and conferences is critical to the policymaking process.

**Jason Campbell, P. E.**  
(Immediate Past President)  
Illinois

***In every sector, a federal agency needs to hear and learn from the experts in their field, and very often those experts come together under the umbrella of a trade or professional society.*** From breakthroughs in technology, to improvements in public safety procedures, to better building techniques for dams, ***the knowledge and technology that can save the government money while creating better public policy is offered at association meetings and educational programs.***

**Charles F. Cobb, P.E.**  
Alaska

**James W. Gallagher, P.E.**  
New Hampshire

**Jonathan D. Garton, P.E.**  
Iowa

**Michele Lemieux, P.E.**  
Montana

**David Marble, P.E.**  
Utah

The ability to bring together so many knowledgeable experts takes place at meetings and conferences held by associations and is a significant resource to government employees. Oftentimes, significant working relationships are formed by post-speech discussions following up on the topics presented. ***Further, at these meetings association members learn best practices in order to work most productively with government, are apprised of the latest developments in state and federal policy and regulations, and learn of challenges on the horizon to their industries. This interaction is mutually beneficial for both the private and the public sector.***

**Steven McEvoy, P.E.**  
North Carolina

**John H. Moyle, P.E.**  
New Jersey

**Paul R. Simon, P.E.**  
Missouri

Because of the need to reduce the federal deficit, it is important to eliminate unnecessary spending. However, blanket restrictions that prohibit travel in response to isolated incidences are shortsighted. ***The dual goals of public-private partnership and good government can be achieved simultaneously without severing attendance at private meetings.***

**Hal Van Aller, P.E.**  
Maryland

**Terry Arnold, P.E.**  
MWH Americas  
Advisory Committee Chair

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We urge caution on legislative proposals, that while well-intentioned, would have unintended consequences of limiting the kinds of meetings and information exchange that is in the best interest of everyone. We also caution Congress and the Obama Administration to not, intentionally or inadvertently, wholly restrict federal employees from attending association conferences and educational events.

I encourage you during this important hearing to consider the value of education and training meetings for the federal workforce and how the association community is driving this sector of the economy. I am happy to work with you on the issue and am ready to provide numerous examples of how ASDSO is driving public safety, technology transfer and the economy through our meetings and training programs. If I can answer any question, please contact me at 855.228.9732 or [lspragens@damsafety.org](mailto:lspragens@damsafety.org).

Sincerely,

Lori C. Spragens  
Executive Director