Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2018

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio,

As you develop the Water Resources and Development Act of 2018, we urge you to include in it a clean reauthorization of the National Levee Safety Initiative (NLSI).

The NLSI, which was enacted in the Water Resources Reform & Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014 and is authorized through Fiscal Year 2019, seeks to promote consistent safety standards, create levee safety guidelines, and provide funding assistance to states for establishing participating levee safety programs. To prevent a lapse in authorization between WRDA 2018 and WRDA 2020, we urge the Committee to reauthorize the program a year early in WRDA 2018.

America's 30,000 miles of levee provide a critical service to the public. Every state in the nation and the District of Columbia rely on levees for flood control to reduce risk to homes, business, and property, and with more than 50 percent of the U.S. population living within 50 miles of a coast or in developments in floodplains, levees play an increasingly important safety role. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 13,700 miles of levees alone protect an estimated $1.3 trillion in property. The average age of nation's levees, however, is 50 years old, and it is estimated that $80 billion is needed in the next 10 years to maintain and improve them. Due to its aging infrastructure and the lack of investment in repairing and maintain them, the American Society of Civil Engineers' *2017 Infrastructure Report Card* gave the nation's levees a grade of "D."

As our nation continues to face the threat of flooding, reauthorizing the NLSI would allow for the establishment of a national levee safety program to improve coordination and raise risk awareness; the completion of the national inventory of levees outside of the USACE's authority; and the development of a levee rehabilitation and repair program.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to working with you on this important matter.

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Sincerely,

JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress

BRUCE WESTERMAN
Member of Congress

cc: Representatives Garret Graves and Grace Napolitano