



**ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN STATE ENGINEERS  
2016 POSITION STATEMENT  
DAM SAFETY**

Dams contribute to the efficient management and conservation of the nation's water resources. However, inadequately constructed, operated, or maintained dams can pose a serious threat to public and private property and the health and safety of our citizens.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers conducted a national dam inspection program in cooperation with the states under Public Law 92-367. Furthermore, the Association of State Dam Safety Officials, in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, issued a report reviewing state non-federal dam safety programs (1989). Both of these efforts demonstrate that dam safety is an important issue and one that needs increased attention on a national and state level.

The National Dam Safety Program Act (NDSPA) of 2014, Title III, Subtitle A of the Conference Report to HR 3080, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRDA), reauthorized this modest, yet vital program enabling the states to improve their dam safety programs, which translate into reduced risks to life and property. The NDSPA provides training, technical assistance, research funding, and support to states through incentive grant awards that encourage states to improve their programs. The funds are targeted to support states and to advance the national effort to improve dam safety. The Association of Western State Engineers appreciates the reauthorization of the NDSPA. The Association of Western State Engineers urges Congress to further consider support of this Act during the current reauthorization of WRDA.

The Association of Western State Engineers encourages all federal agencies that own or regulate dams ensure that the dams are properly inspected, and that the information from these inspections is shared with the state dam safety agency to provide for better coordination of dam safety activities. If a federal agency does not have a dam inspection program, it should be required to contract with another federal agency that has a competent dam inspection program.

The Association of Western State Engineers also recognizes that many of the dams constructed in this country were constructed many years ago and have reached or will reach their maximum expected life in the next few years. Many of the dams continue to serve useful and important functions as a part of our nation's infrastructure, but will need rehabilitation to be maintained in a safe status. The Association of Western State Engineers supports federal programs to rehabilitate many of the over 10,000 watershed dams constructed with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (Public Law 83-566) and similar programs.

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