



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

Don Young
Chairman

December 18, 2001

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Ranking Democratic Member

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Hon. George W. Bush
 President of the United States
 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:


The purpose of this letter is to respectfully draw your attention to the vital need for an increase in the fiscal year 2003 budget of the civil works program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Such an increase is necessary to: arrest erosion in the nation's premier engineering capability; reverse the draconian reductions proposed by the previous Administration; and secure our competitiveness in international markets with an appropriate investment in waterways infrastructure.

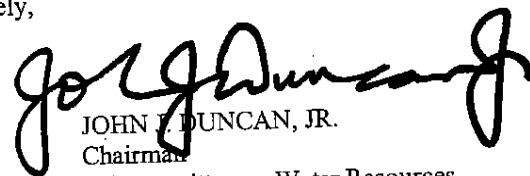
The previous Administration demonstrated an unwarranted antipathy toward civil works, proposing annual budgets designed to decimate the Corps of Engineers and offset enormous increases in other parts of the budget. The civil works program, however, should be a priority for an economically conservative Administration that recognizes that scarce Federal resources are best invested in programs offering a demonstrable economic return to the taxpayer. Indeed, the Corps of Engineers is unusual among Federal agencies in the extent to which it relies on econometric analysis to ensure that economic benefits to the nation exceed project costs.

The proposed budget for civil works for fiscal year 2002 was an unrealistic \$3.9 billion. At this level, it would have been necessary to cancel contracts, increase programmatic costs, terminate ongoing projects, delay construction schedules, and forego untold benefits for the local communities that share project costs. Recognizing the unusual complications of the presidential transition and the difficulties of assembling a fully vetted independent budget on a dramatically compressed schedule, Congress was able to restore needed funds for the Corps this past year. To sustain a competent civil works program for fiscal year 2003, however, it will be critical for the Administration to express its support of, and confidence in, the Corps of Engineers with a more realistic and reasonable budget request. To this end, the Administration would be well advised to submit a civil works budget of not less than \$5 billion.

Mr. President, thank you for your personal attention to this extremely important domestic issue. With warm regards and best wishes for every continued success, we are

Sincerely,


 DON YOUNG
 Chairman
 Committee on Transportation
 and Infrastructure


 JOHN F. DUNCAN, JR.
 Chairman
 Subcommittee on Water Resources
 and Environment