The Association of State Floodplain Managers is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the Fiscal Year 2017 budget request of the Army Corps of Engineers for Civil Works. ASFPM is a non-profit association of state and local officials, as well as engineers, planners and other professionals who support those officials. ASFPM has 17,000 members nationwide and 36 chapters that represent 41 states. The mission of the membership is reduction of loss of life and property due to flooding.

ASFPM has long supported the technical assistance programs of the Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program. Corps expertise in assisting communities to develop solutions to flood challenges can make major strides toward reducing flood losses without taxpayer investment in large Corps projects. The technical assistance programs include Section 22 Planning Assistance to States, Flood Plain Management Services, National Flood Risk Management Program and the Silver Jackets program.

It appears that the overall amount in the FY17 budget request for these programs has been reduced from the FY16 requested and enacted levels of $31 million. The FY16 budget documents featured these programs prominently, but this is not the case with the FY17 request. It appears that the overall amount may be under $26 million.

These programs represent a relatively small portion of the budget for the Army Corps of Engineers, yet have a significant return on investment. Many smaller jurisdictions, which would never qualify for a major Corps project, nor be able to afford the long-term operation and maintenance costs, can develop smaller projects that can involve long-term non-structural measures. The Silver Jackets program has the added advantage of being able to bring in other programs in the federal family to assist in addressing flood-related challenges.

ASFPM members urge that these technical assistance programs be funded at least at the enacted FY16 level of $31 million. We strongly recommend expansion of Corps engagement with such programs because of their great value in assisting states and communities to reduce their future losses due to flooding.

We would also urge the subcommittee to continue funding for the Corps’ Water Resources Priorities Study. The FY17 budget request includes $1 million for this purpose. The study will assess the nation’s flooding vulnerabilities across all regions of the U.S. and will analyze effectiveness of programs, authorities, policies, roles and activities for flood damage and flood risk reduction. This unique study, originally authorized in WRDA 2007 (Section 2032), will provide Congress with a broad overview perspective of federal flood risk reduction programs and trends, including ways to potentially reduce costs by improving the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of existing programs and strategies.

We are disappointed that the Administration’s budget request does not contain start-up funding for the National Levee Safety Program. That program was authorized in the Water Resources Reform and
Development Act of 2014, but has not yet been stood up. There are 30,000 miles of levees in the US. Helping states and communities ensure that those levees are properly built, operated and maintained is critical to reducing future disaster costs. **ASFPM urges the subcommittee to consider funding this program.**

Thank you for considering the views of the Association of State Floodplain Managers. We would be glad to respond to any questions. Please contact ASFPM Executive Director Chad Berginnis at cberginnis@floods.org.