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Funding for the High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Program

Recently, the US Senate Committee on Appropriations passed its Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Homeland Security Appropriations bill. The $48.334 billion bill includes $15 million for the High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Program. The Homeland Security Appropriations bill now awaits consideration by the full US Senate, and must be passed by the US House of Representatives as well.

The program was enacted in the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act of 2016 which provides federal grant assistance for the rehabilitation, repair, or removal of non-federal high hazard potential dams. This marks the first time since the program’s enactment that it has received a line-item funding amount in the Homeland Security appropriations bill.

Earlier this year, US Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) led a group of 16 Senators in sending a letter to the US Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security requesting the High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Program’s full $25 million authorization in FY19.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), “the average age of the 90,580 dams in the country is 56 years. As our population grows and development continues, the overall number of high-hazard potential dams is increasing, with the number climbing to nearly 15,500 in 2016. Due to the lack of investment, the number of deficient high-hazard potential dams has also climbed to an estimated 2,170 or more. It is estimated that it will require an investment of nearly $45 billion to repair aging, yet critical, high-hazard potential dams.”

The High Hazard Potential Dam Rehabilitation Program could be a vital tool in protecting and improving Oklahoma’s dam infrastructure. The OWRB Dam Safety Program and agency leadership welcomes the potential for additional resources while the leadership of commending Oklahoma’s Congressional delegation for their leadership on these important issues.

OWRB Welcomes New Staff

The OWRB would like to welcome Jessica Schons, the newest member of the floodplain management team. Jessica will be performing Community Assistance Visits and Community Assistance Contacts, maintaining the Floodplain Administrator accreditation database, and hosting floodplain workshops. Additionally, a portion of Jessica’s time will be spent in the dam safety program performing low hazard-potential dam inspections. Jessica holds a bachelor’s degree in conservation biology from Arizona State University. Prior to joining the OWRB, she worked as a liability claims adjuster and a horticulturist. She is excited to be a part of the OWRB team.
Dam Safety Workshop Wrap-Up

Last April, the OWRB hosted a Dam Safety Workshop at UCO’s Outdoor Adventure Recreation Boathouse at Lake Arcadia. About eighty participants representing dam owners, engineering firms, local and regional dam safety officials, and vendors attended the workshop. Participants learned about dam inspection techniques, maintenance recommendations, and monitoring for common deficiencies. The workshop concluded with a guided tour and inspection at the Arcadia Lake Dam.

We’d like to thank our expert presenters, including Freese and Nichols, Olsson Associates, Hydropower International Services, LLC, US Army Corps of Engineers, National Resources Conservation Services, Oklahoma Emergency Management, and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.

This event would not have been possible without our sponsoring vendors, including Contech Engineered Solutions LLC, International Erosion Control Systems Inc., Olsson Associates, Guernsey, and Freese and Nichols.

Licensed Realtor Workshop Wrap-Up

Last April, OWRB Dam Safety and Floodplain Management staff led a free three-hour workshop for fifteen realtors at the Keller Williams office in Edmond. Dam Safety staff focused on the responsibilities of dam ownership and how realtors can help their clients avoid or ease associated liabilities. Staff also discussed the hazard-potential reclassification process and its impact on real estate sales.

To date, more than 300 real estate agents have received training on dam ownership, inspection techniques, and the identification of structural deficiencies. The OWRB, in cooperation with the Oklahoma Real Estate Commission, will continue to offer these free workshops to licensed realtors and brokers across the state. Attendees may earn up to three Continuing Education (CE) credits based on the length of the workshop. Future workshops will be scheduled based on interest, so please email Emma Moradi or call (405) 530-8800 if you would like to attend.

Upcoming Events

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jul 17</td>
<td>ASDSO Seminar: Georgia Dam Safety Workshop for Owners and Operators</td>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul 24-26</td>
<td>ASDSO Seminar: Inspection and Assessment of Dams</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 14</td>
<td>ASDSO Webinar: Human Factors in the Oroville Dam Spillway Incident</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 9-13</td>
<td>ASDSO 2018 Dam Safety Conference</td>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
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The Oklahoma Dam Safety Act recognizes that properly constructed, operated, and maintained dams used to impound water and create reservoirs for public and private beneficial uses constitute vital parts of the State of Oklahoma’s water resources, and authorizes the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to regulate the construction, operation, and maintenance of dams to protect lives and property. Please e-mail comments and article ideas to pubinfo@owrb.ok.gov.