



# National Dam Safety Program

## Brief for National Committee on Levee Safety

22 October 2008

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## History

- "An Act to authorize the Secretary of the Army to undertake a national program of inspection of dams," approved August 8, 1972 (33 U.S.C. 467 et seq.)
- Amended – P.L. 99-662 (Water Resources Development Act, 1986)
- Amended – P.L. 104-303 (Water Resources Development Act, 1996)
- Amended – P.L. 107-310 (Dam Safety and Security Act, 2002)
- Amended – P.L. 109-460 (2006) (Dam Safety Act)

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## Other Actions

- Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety
  - FEMA 93, June 1979
  - Written by Ad Hoc Committee of Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology
- Interagency Committee on Dam Safety
  - 10 Federal Dam Owning or Regulating Agencies
  - Established 1980

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## Vision

- ***“The vision of the National Dam Safety Program is a future in which the public safety, economic strength, environment, and national security of the United States are not threatened by the risk from dam failure”.***

(Strategic Plan for the National Dam Safety Program, FEMA, July 2007)

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## National Dam Safety Program Purpose

- To **reduce the risks to life** and property **from dam failure** in the United States **through** the establishment and maintenance of an **effective** national dam safety **program** to bring together the expertise and resources of the Federal and non-Federal communities in **achieving** national dam safety **hazard reduction**.

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## Elements of Program

- National Dam Safety Review Board
  - 5 Federal Members
    - FEMA (Chair)
    - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
    - Department of Interior (USBR)
    - Department of Agriculture (NRCS)
    - Department of Defense (USACE)
  - 5 State Dam Safety Officials
  - 1 Member from Private Sector
    - USSD or other
- Interagency Committee on Dam Safety
  - Established in legislation
- The Director shall establish an advisory board to be known as the 'National Dam Safety Review Board' to monitor the safety of dams in the United States, to monitor State implementation of this section, and to advise the Director on national dam safety policy. \$7.6M authorized for:
  - Board Activities
  - ICODS Activities
  - Biennial Report
  - Assistance to States

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## Bylaws of the National Dam Safety Review Board

- Monitor Safety of Dams
- Advise Director of FEMA:
  - Consult with Director for establishing and maintaining a coordinated National Dam Safety Program that meets 7 specific objectives
  - Amount of funds to be distributed to States
  - Monitor Assistance Funds Usage
- FACA and conflict of interest applies
- Robert Rules of Order
- Board meets at least twice per year
- Quorum is 8 members
- Chair approves observers
- Compensation: only travel and per diem
- Three Standing Work Groups:
  - Training
  - Research
  - National Inventory of Dams
- Ad Hoc Task Groups

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## Elements of Program (Cont)

- National Inventory of Dams
  - Managed by USACE – Updated every two years.
  - Authorized \$700K in FY08, Appropriated \$400K
- Assistance for State Dam Safety Programs
  - Criteria for providing assistance to the various states to improve state programs – Funds provided for assistance
    - Authorizing State Legislation
    - Budgeting Requirement
    - Maintenance of Effort (Budgets)
    - Work Plan

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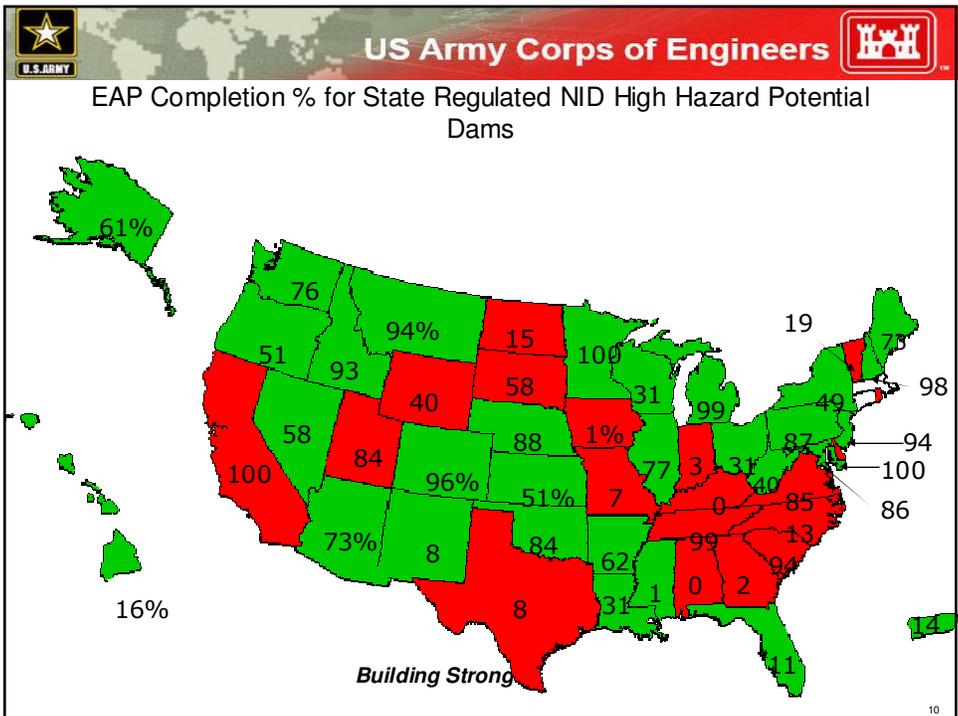
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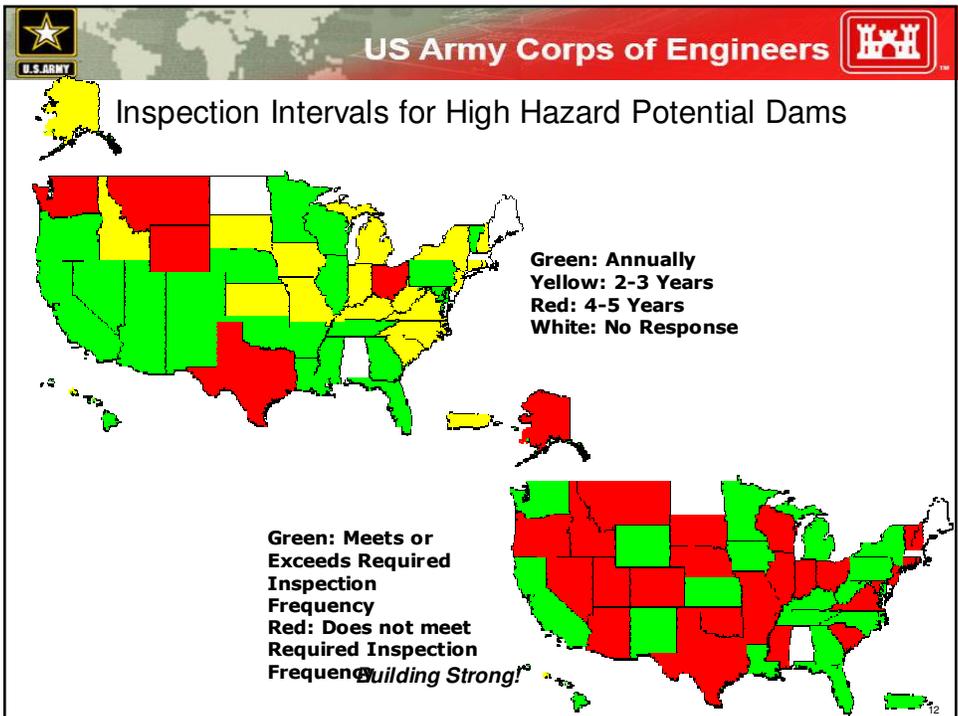
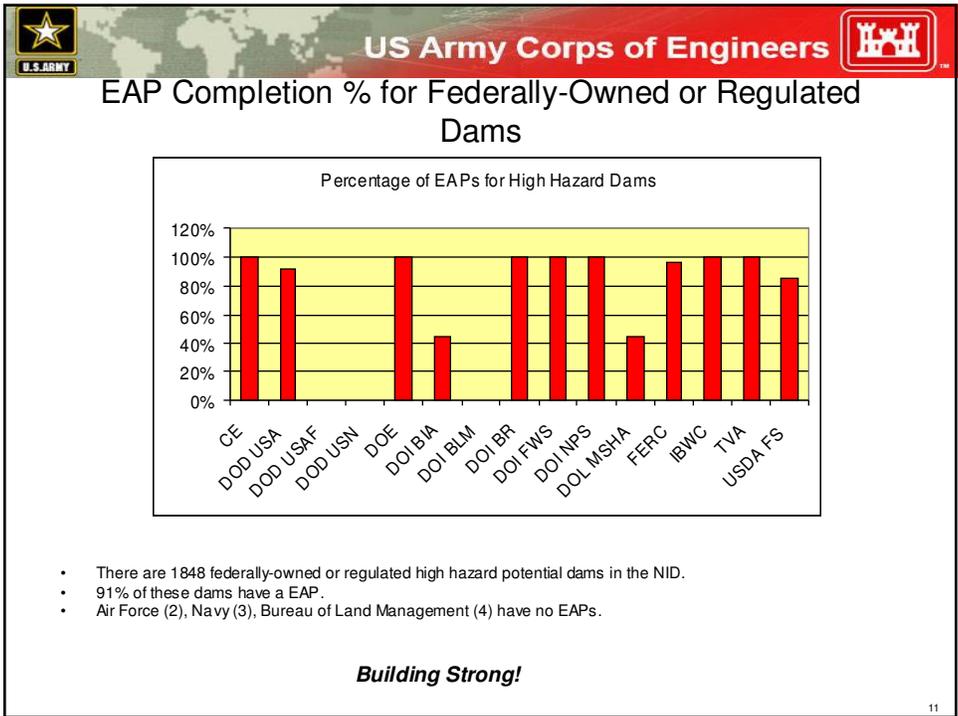
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### Elements of Program (continued)

- **Dam Safety Research**
  - Funding for research to improve the safety of dams. \$1.7M authorized in FY08
- **Dam Safety Training**
  - Funding for state dam safety personnel to attend dam safety training courses – The program also has established a number of training courses. \$600K authorized in FY08
- **Biennial Reports to Congress**
  - A report on the status of the program covering two years – Prepared at the end of the odd numbered fiscal years
- **Dam Safety Program Staff**
  - Funding authorized for staffing the program. \$800K authorized.

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## Reauthorization Changes and Keeps

- The FEMA Dam Safety program Budget:
  - Not a Priority.
  - Lacks Transparency
  - Lacks Advocacy.
- Should an Engineer-Owner Chair the Board?
- Feedback from Chair?
- Biennial Report Effectiveness?
- Sovereignty?
- Outreach?
- Grant Effectiveness?
- Very Strong Training Program and Inventory
- Excellent Technical Materials
- Good Board Makeup
- Research – could be have more robustitude
- ASDSO Organization is key organization
  - Conduit for Issues
  - Implementation
  - Cohesiveness of States

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