



April 15, 2008

The Honorable Norman Dicks  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiaht  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Tiaht:

As you begin work on the FY09 Interior and Environment spending plan, AMWA urges you to sufficiently fund the National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP) and the Cooperative Water Program (CWP) within the United States Geological Survey (USGS) budget. Each of these programs provides essential data about the health and vitality of the nation's streams, and we encourage you to craft a spending bill that enables them to provide robust streamflow information.

USGS has measured the flow of the nation's rivers and streams since 1887, and the compilation of this data has been used for planning and decisions related to agriculture, industry, water supplies, navigation, riverine and riparian habitat, and flood hazard identification. More recently, streamflow data has offered early warning signs about the early impacts of climate change on regional water supplies.

Today, NSIP and CWP – along with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, and more than 800 state and local partners – all contribute funds to maintain the operation of approximately 7,300 USGS streamgauges across the United States. Unfortunately, the total NSIP and CWP contribution for streamflow research has remained flat over the past several years, forcing nearly 200 streamgauges in 31 states to be taken out of service or threatened with discontinuation since 2006. As a result, federal researchers and local entities have lost data sources that help inform important water quantity decisions.

AMWA urges you to craft a spending plan that provides USGS with the tools it needs to continue this important research. President Bush's FY09 budget takes a step in the right direction by proposing an additional \$3.7 million in NSIP funds, some of which will restore 50 discontinued gauges. However, the budget proposal would also cut CWP funds by more than \$500,000 (following a \$2.2 million cut enacted in FY08) – further restraining the ability of the program to provide its share of streamgauge support. This cut should be reversed, and CWP funding should be restored to at least its FY07 level.

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**Diane VanDe Hei**  
*Executive Director*

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As water systems threatened by climate change are in increasing need of data upon which to make vital water supply planning decisions, USGS streamflow data will continue to grow in value to federal, state, and local researchers. Therefore I urge you to sufficiently fund NSIP and CWP in the FY09 Interior and Environment appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Diane VanDe Hei  
Executive Director

cc: Committee Members