



United States Congress

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Western Washington Lawmakers Push for Funding to Reduce Risk of Flooding in Green River Valley

(Washington, D.C.) - Today, Senator Patty Murray, Senator Maria Cantwell, Congressman Adam Smith, Congressman Dave Reichert, Congressman Norm Dicks, Congressman Jim McDermott, Congressman Jay Inslee, Congressman Brian Baird and Congressman Rick Larsen sent a letter to Lieutenant General Robert Van Antwerp urging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to make unused funding available for short term fixes to protect the tens of thousands of residents and 95,000 jobs of the Green River Valley from catastrophic flooding while permanent fixes to the Howard Hanson Dam are underway.

"As we all know, a permanent fix for the Howard Hanson Dam is not a simple task, and that such construction projects take time to execute properly and safely. We appreciate the hard work of the Corps to quickly complete the study and design phase," wrote members of Congress. "In order to ensure the well-being of the people and the region while the permanent fix is completed, it is imperative that the Interim Risk Reduction Measures move forward as quickly as possible. We realize that this may involve reprogramming funds previously appropriated to other projects, but as you are aware, this project is critical to the safety of our constituents and the economy of the Green River Valley, and therefore should be a priority for any unspent Corps funding."

A copy of the full letter appears below.

Lieutenant General Robert Van Antwerp

U.S. Army Chief of Engineers and Commanding General

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

441 G Street, NW

Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Lieutenant General Van Antwerp:

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and work on a permanent fix for the Howard Hanson Dam in Washington State. We write to express our continued concern about the level of protection offered by the Howard Hanson Dam and the increased flood risk it poses to the Green River Valley.

We appreciate the progress that has been made to date on interim measures, including an initial grout curtain, work on the dam's drainage tunnel, and deployment of flood barriers in the most vulnerable areas. The result of this work has reduced the estimated probability of flooding from 1 in 3 to 1 in 25, which has been an important achievement toward improving the safety of those who live, work, or own businesses in the Green River Valley.

As you may know, tens of thousands of people are at risk if the Green River Valley were to flood. In addition to the threat to peoples' lives, the Green River Valley would suffer enormous negative economic impacts as it is home to the second largest industrial park on the West Coast, and is the fifth largest in the nation. Over 95,000 jobs in the area make up approximately 8 percent of all jobs in King County. This represents \$107 million per day in total economic output - 12 percent of Washington State's gross state product.

Until the full protection offered by the Howard Hanson Dam is restored, it remains difficult for residents and businesses in the Green River Valley to feel secure. Toward that end, we have been briefed by Major General William Grisoli and other Northwest Division-based officials on additional Interim Risk Reduction Measures for the dam that will further reduce the risk of flooding to an estimated probability of 1 in 140 by extending the grout curtain over a deeper and wider area of the right abutment. We understand that this will allow the dam to store higher levels of water for short periods of time and protect the Green River Valley from several severe rain events, at a cost of \$44 million.

It is our intent to continue to work closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to come up with funds to allow the Corps to move forward expeditiously with the Interim Risk Reduction Measures as outlined to us, as well as moving forward with a long term solution. Given the enormous economic consequences to the Green River Valley, and that we are currently in the middle of an appropriations cycle, it is imperative that the Corps work diligently to find funds within its budget. Therefore, we request that you, without delay, critically review and assess your budgets and previously obligated funds to determine the availability of funding to reprogram for this vital project.

We ask that you look at all previously appropriated funds, including regular order appropriations, previously appropriated disaster or supplemental funds, and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. It is our understanding that the Interim Risk Reduction Measures are ready to go and construction on an extended grout curtain can begin quickly once funding is made available.

As we all know, a permanent fix for the Howard Hanson Dam is not a simple task, and that such construction projects take time to execute properly and safely. We appreciate the hard work of the Corps to quickly complete the study and design phase. In order to ensure the well-being of the people and the region while the permanent fix is completed, it is imperative that the Interim Risk Reduction Measures move forward as quickly as possible. We realize that this may involve reprogramming funds previously appropriated to other projects, but as you are aware, this project is critical to the safety of our constituents and the economy of the Green River Valley, and therefore should be a priority for any unspent Corps funding.

Thank you for your attention to this request, and we look forward to hearing back from you on the availability of funding for the Interim Risk Reduction Measures at Howard Hanson Dam.

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