

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 17, 2021

The Honorable Michael L. Connor
Assistant Secretary for the Army for Civil Works
108 Pentagon (Army)
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Lt. Gen. Scott A. Spellmon
Chief, Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20314-0001

Dear Assistant Secretary Connor and Lt. General Spellmon:

We write to express our strong support for allocating \$66.25 million from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) to execute the design agreement and complete design and construction for the Little Colorado River at Winslow Levee project in northern Arizona. As you know, there are several Army Corps of Engineers projects in Arizona that have been authorized but need funds to be complete, which is why we strongly supported inclusion of language to address this backlog and provided an additional \$5.15 billion for Corps construction projects.

Winslow, Arizona, home to 9,467 residents, is located 57 miles east of Flagstaff, Arizona along Interstate 40 (I-40). The median household income is \$37,756 and the median home price is \$92,400 with a total of 23.1 percent of the population living in poverty (2019 estimates). The average price for flood insurance in the City is approximately \$487 per house which equates to nearly 1.5 times the amount of an average monthly mortgage payment.

The Winslow Levee project commenced shortly after the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) decertified it in 2008. The decertification of the levee placed nearly two-thirds of Winslow residents, many of whom live below the federal poverty line, into the position of needing to carry flood insurance they cannot afford. In addition, more than 700 Navajo and Hopi tribal residents were involuntarily placed in the flood zone because of the Navajo Hopi Land Settlement Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-531). 25 percent of Winslow's population are children and 33 percent of Winslow's residents are single parents who have limited income and lack access to transportation. 10 percent of Winslow's residents are over 65 and more than 500 live in assisted living facilities all of which reside in the flood plain. The current levee is a public health and safety risk. It is also an economic justice issue for many of those that live in the flood plain.

Winslow also serves as a critical link in the movement of billions of dollars in goods between Long Beach and Chicago. Approximately 120 BNSF trains per day carrying more than \$35 billion per year worth of goods continue to cross Winslow's existing levee system which is at a tremendous risk of failure and could cripple the supply chain at a time when we can least afford it. Nearly every home, business, school, hospital and emergency service provider are also located in a 100-year flood zone and each annual flooding event causes on average \$10 million in damage to more than 1,600 structures located in the flood zone.

Thus far, the project has received \$5.9 million to complete the feasibility study. In December 2018, the Corps published the Chief's Report that showed a benefit-to-cost (BCR) of 2.68 to 1. The project was authorized for construction in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (WRDA 2020). Both the House and the Senate have included community-directed funding of \$500,000 in the fiscal year 2022 Energy and Water Development bills to execute the design agreement that can be completed in a short timeframe. The Los Angeles District has informed us that the remaining cost of the project will include \$4.55 million for preconstruction engineering and design (PED) and \$61.2 million for construction.

Therefore, we ask that you allocate \$66.25 million in IJA work plan funds to execute the design agreement and complete the remaining design and construction for the Winslow Levee because of the public health and safety risks as well as the environmental justice issues that would be alleviated by completion of this critical project.

In accordance with all existing rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines, we respectfully request you give this project proposal full and fair consideration as you make this important funding decision.

Sincerely,



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

cc: Col. Antoinette Gant, Regional Commander
Col. Julie A. Balten, District Commander