

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Peters:

Thank you for introducing the Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM) Act of 2020. Promoting modern, smart, and resilient infrastructure is a key policy priority for our members, who represent the business community; conservation, engineering, and parks professionals; and mayors along the Mississippi Basin.

We believe that investments in predisaster mitigation for a host of challenges (e.g., droughts, floods, wildfire, and other natural and manmade disasters and extreme weather) facing communities and companies across America would save taxpayer dollars and would represent sound public policy.

Some studies highlight that resilience and mitigation spending pays back to the taxpayer more than \$6.00 for every \$1.00 invested.¹ The ongoing impacts from disasters will multiply the existing infrastructure investment gap and economic risks we face from failing to support critical infrastructure, the potential of nearly \$4 trillion in lost GDP, and 2.5 million jobs. The legislation would offer needed flexibility and another tool for states to provide low interest loans for projects that have the greatest effect and reduce future risks, including green infrastructure. We agree with the improvements to the House bill that focus on grants to states and including erosion as an eligible activity.

We urge the committee to call for FEMA and the states to consult with the private sector as the STORM Act is launched. The business community has expertise managing and addressing risks and a vested interest in ensuring more resilient infrastructure.

¹ [https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2018/01/11/every-\\$1-invested-in-disaster-mitigation-saves-\\$6](https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2018/01/11/every-$1-invested-in-disaster-mitigation-saves-$6)

There is broad bipartisan and public-private stakeholder support for this legislation. The Mississippi River Valley alone sustained over \$2 billion in actual losses in 2019 due to just one disaster. The Great Lakes region has also been experiencing record high water, causing erosion, flooding, and damage to seawalls and roads and placing communities at risk. We must act now on sustainable solutions.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

American Council of Engineering Companies
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Landscape Architects
Center for Climate and Energy Solutions
City Parks Alliance
Ecological Restoration Business Association
Interstate Council on Water Policy
Mississippi Rivers Cities and Towns Initiative
National Recreation and Park Association
The American Institute of Architects
The Nature Conservancy
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

cc: Members of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs