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April 13, 2022

The Honorable Scott Peters  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2338 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Peters:

I am writing on behalf of the 150,000 members of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)<sup>1</sup> to thank you for your leadership on climate change and in sponsoring H.R. 6461, National Climate Adaptation and Resilience Strategy Act (NCARS). ASCE believes that this bipartisan bill to streamline the federal response to climate hazards would have a beneficial impact on the public health, safety, welfare, as well as our nation's critical infrastructure.

Climate resilient communities depend on modern, reliable infrastructure to support them. Civil engineers are responsible for the planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance of physical infrastructure, including communication facilities, energy generation and distribution facilities, industrial buildings, transportation networks, water supply and sanitation systems, and flood control structures. Most infrastructure is built to provide long service lives (50 to 100 years) and are expected to remain functional, durable, and safe. However, the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, combined with increasing population densities, and system interdependencies have demonstrated vulnerabilities in the nation's infrastructure.

A coordinated federal response is necessary to ensure the nation's infrastructure systems continue to provide critical services and a low risk of failure over time. Engineers, designers, planners, and policymakers must incorporate system resilience into the decision-making

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<sup>1</sup> ASCE was founded in 1852 and is the country's oldest national civil engineering organization. It represents more than 150,000 civil engineers individually in private practice, government, industry, and academia who are dedicated to the advancement of the science and profession of civil engineering. ASCE is a non-profit educational and professional society organized under Part 1.501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. [www.asce.org](http://www.asce.org),

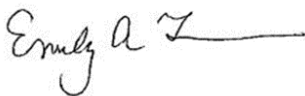
process. Communities across the country and their foundational infrastructure are only as strong as the weakest link — if our roadways become too rough or flooded to travel, if our bridges close to heavier traffic like ambulances, if a region’s energy grid is devastated by high winds, or if our levees protect one community at the expense of the one next door, quality of life deteriorates, and the economy grinds to a halt. Therefore, the foundational step in improving climate resilience is first assessing the nation’s existing infrastructure needs and conditions.

H.R. 6461 is a needed step in addressing our changing climate and ensuring a coordinated federal response, particularly when paired with other measures including PRECIP Act (H.R. 1437) and the FLOODS Act (H.R. 1438) which would address the out of date, but critical data that engineers, flood plain managers, dam safety officials, and local government require when designing structures, implementing evacuation orders, and planning zoning changes to minimize climate risks.

Similarly, the most reliable way to ensure our nation’s infrastructure is climate resilient is the widespread adoption and enforcement of modern, up to date building codes. Model building codes are developed by experienced volunteer professionals working together under a multi-step, consensus-based process. Most professional engineering organizations maintain code development committees that initiate code provisions based on the practice in their technical areas and are often augmented by research. Many of these provisions are gathered and published as design guidelines. Eventually the guidelines are transformed into standards and incorporated into the model code. Standards, such as ASCE 7, Minimum Design Loads and Associated Criteria for Buildings and Other Structures (ASCE/SEI 7-16) are currently an integral part of U.S. building codes. Any steps Congress can take to support and encourage the development and implementation of codes and standards, in a step toward climate resilience.

Once again, thank you for your leadership. Extreme weather events repeatedly demonstrated the vulnerability of the nation’s infrastructure, and ASCE offers its full support of NCARS. If you need more information or ASCE can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at [efeenstra@asce.org](mailto:efeenstra@asce.org) or 202-789-7851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily A. Feenstra", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emily Feenstra  
Chief Policy and External Affairs Officer  
American Society of Civil Engineers