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# News Release



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## **Statement of the Water Resources Coalition on the National Academy of Sciences Critique of Council on Environmental Quality Revisions to Water Resources Principles Guidelines**

The National Academy of Sciences report on the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) proposal to revise the nation's primary water resources planning document proves what nearly every expert in the industry has known for a very long time -- that the proposed revisions lack clarity, consistency and focus. The draft P&G is filled with ambiguity and is in dire need of substantial revision and clarification. The Water Resources Coalition (WRC) calls on CEQ to revise the document and release the revision for another round of public comment and peer review before the document can come close to final release.

WRC expressed its concerns when CEQ took control of the P&G revision in 2009, in direct violation of the directive made by Congress when it enacted the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007 over a presidential veto. Section 2031 of the Act directed the Secretary of the Army to revise the P&G adopted by the U.S. Water Resources Council in March 1983.

The 2009 proposal would require federal agencies to "incorporate public safety" into the planning process, but the CEQ version does not contain any explanation of ways to achieve the goal. Specifically, nothing in the proposal identifies the unequivocal need for resiliency in the design and construction of federal civil engineering projects. Most importantly, the revisions to the P&G should include a national public safety standard. The devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 underscore the need for the planning of water resources projects to integrate national objectives with the development of a national public safety standard to protect human life.

The WRC calls on CEQ to follow the recommendations of the NAS clarify whether a revised P&G document will be used as general policy guidance, or as a decision document that specifies planning steps to be followed, or both. If the proposed revisions are to provide a document that specifies planning steps and analytical procedures, the many challenges that would attend creating a document to be uniformly applied to the large range of modern water projects—locks and dams, levees, navigation channels, ecosystem restoration, flood risk management, watershed

protection, water supply projects —managed across an array of federal agencies, should be considered carefully. In the words of the NAS report, “The national objective for water resources development and management activities should be stated more clearly.” Therefore, the Coalition strongly urges CEQ to revise the document and release the revision for another round of public comment and peer review