

Washington, DC -- The House of Representatives passed legislation on Monday cosponsored by U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) which would provide grant assistance to states for rehabilitation or removal of publicly-owned dams that do not meet minimum safety standards and pose an unacceptable risk to the public.

“This is a critical step towards improving our aging infrastructure and making sure our communities are protected from flood damage,” **said Arcuri, a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee**. “Old dams threaten commercial areas and family homes alike, and it is long past time to invest the necessary resources into their upkeep and repair. Without federal investment in our aging infrastructure, we could be faced with more flood damages like we saw in the Southern Tier earlier this year. As our cities expand, we must make sure that the watersheds we are building on are protected.”

The Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act (H.R.3224) would authorize \$201 million over five years for a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant program to repair, rehabilitate, or remove publicly owned dams that present high or significant hazards to local communities.

FEMA would be required to develop a risk-based priority system for identifying deficient dams for which such grants may be available. The bill limits the federal share of rehabilitation costs to 65%.

There are a total of 1,969 dams in New York State and 377 are classified as “high hazard.” Of the 281 dams located in the 24th district, 62 are classified as “high hazard.” 53 dams in the 24th district are publicly owned and would be eligible to apply for federal grant money under H.R. 3224 for repair, rehabilitation or removal.

Out of approximately 80,000 large dams in the United States, more than 10,000 of them have state reported deficiencies making them susceptible to failure. More than 29 dam failures in the past two years have caused over \$200 million in damages nationwide. The number of high-hazard potential dams is increasing as downstream development increases. Many state dam safety programs do not have sufficient funding or qualified staff to effectively regulate dams under their authority.

H.R.3224 is supported by the American Society of Civil Engineers and environmental groups such as American Rivers.

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