



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Norwich Flood Reminds Us: We All Have a Role to Play in Creating a Future Where All Dams Are Safe**

Lexington, Ky.- Wednesday, March 6, marks the 50th anniversary of the Great Flood of Norwich, Conn., which was caused by a collapse of the Spaulding Pond dam. The anniversary represents an opportunity to remember that everyone, including policymakers and residents in Connecticut, has a role to play in creating a future where all dams are safe. Fifty years ago tomorrow, the flood claimed six lives and caused more than \$6 million in devastation in the city of Norwich, Conn. After two days of steady rain, the eight foot-high, 220 foot-long earthen dam collapsed after showing signs of leaking, releasing a 10 foot wall of freezing water and ice into Norwich's Mohegan Park and city streets.

"The dam safety industry has made significant advancements since that day 50 years ago," said Lori Spragens, executive director of [Association of State Dam Safety Officials](http://www.asdso.org). "This anniversary is an important reminder that, when we all work toward maintaining and fixing dams and create mechanisms for mitigating the consequences of dam failures and incidents, we are helping to ensure a future where all dams are safe."

ASDSO works with dam owners and state and federal lawmakers to create strong dam safety programs. All Americans benefit from dams and need to understand the risks associated with potential incidents and failures. Dams provide drinking water, hydroelectric or water power, flood control, irrigation, recreation and many other benefits to people and local economies. However,

more than half of U.S. dams are more than 50 years old and many dams are not properly maintained. [According to ASDSO's data](#), as of last year, the number of high-hazard-potential dams, or dams whose failure would cause the loss of human life, increased to more than 11,300. Embankment dams such as the original Spaulding Pond dam and its current iteration are the most common type of dam in use today.

State and federal policymakers can increase the safety of dams by providing strong laws and resources to carry out safety programs. ASDSO supports federal legislation that would provide funds to be cost-shared at 65 percent federal to 35 percent state and local funding for the rehabilitation or removal of non-federal publicly owned dams. The legislation would provide funds to states based on the number of high-hazard dams in each of the participating states.

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The Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) is a national, non-profit organization founded in 1984 and dedicated to improving dam safety through research, education and communication. Web: [www.damsafety.org](http://www.damsafety.org)