Association of State Dam Safety Officials

Resolution 9-96
Transfer of Federal Dams to Private or Local Government Ownership

WHEREAS, the federal government has begun a policy to sell federally-owned dams to private sector entities or to local governments in order to reduce the federal budget deficit or to comply with federal mandates to downsize existing federal programs, and

WHEREAS, transfer of ownership would likely cause these dams to come under the regulatory control of the state in which they are located, and

WHEREAS, in most states, federally-owned dams are not currently under the review and regulatory authority of the state dam safety programs and are therefore not taken into account when state resources are earmarked for dam safety, and

WHEREAS, most state dam safety programs do not have the resources to address the added workload, financial obligation, and technical manpower and are not prepared to address the potential liability such transfers may entail, and

WHEREAS, in most cases, private owners and local governments do not have sufficient resources, financially or technically, to address the dam safety issues attached to these structures,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by a majority vote of the member states of the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) by a ballot vote cast on November 15, 1996, that ASDSO strongly opposes the transfer of ownership of dams currently owned by the federal government to the private sector or local governments unless 1) sufficient funding is provided to the states to alleviate the added workload to regulate these dams, 2) documentation is provided to demonstrate that the condition of each dam meets or exceeds state dam safety criteria prior to transfer, 3) the transfer is acknowledged through a written approval by the state dam safety agency, or appropriate level of state government, prior to transfer; and, 4) the new owner is both willing and capable of assuming the financial and legal responsibilities of the dam(s).

Dec. 13, 1996   Alan E. Pearson, President