



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 12, 2004

Jim Nussle  
Chairman  
House Committee on the Budget  
309 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Nussle:

We are writing to express our concern with the severe funding cuts for the Army Corps of Engineers that were recommended in the President's fiscal year 2005 budget, and to ask that you restore funding for this vital agency as you work on a fiscal year 2005 House Budget Resolution.

The Army Corps of Engineers plays a critical role in the American economy, as it facilitates navigation and protects property in communities throughout the country. The Army Corps plays a particularly important role on Long Island, where a fragile coastline poses a constant threat to homes and the stability of local commerce. The Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point study is a comprehensive initiative that would provide for storm protection and beach erosion control along a stretch of the south shore of Long Island covering nearly 83 miles. A draft Environmental Impact Statement for this project, decades in the making, was due to be released at the end of this year. Unfortunately, the President's budget eliminated funding for this crucial study, risking further delays in the project for minimal short-term savings.

The elimination of funding for the Fire Island to Montauk Point Study represents just one piece of a disturbing collection of cuts to projects that would yield tremendous economic benefits. Shore protection projects alone were cut by 25.6 percent below the funding level requested by the President in fiscal year 2004. While the administration professes to be dedicated to reducing the backlog of current Army Corps projects, its cuts to projects underway and near completion are inconsistent with this claim. It is critical that Congress restores funding for this vital agency, and we urge you to facilitate this increase in your fiscal year 2005 House Budget Resolution.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to working with you as the budget process progresses.

Sincerely,

---

Timothy H. Bishop  
Member of Congress

---

Steve Israel  
Member of Congress