“Today, many dams in the United States are approaching the end of their economic life cycle and are in critical need of repair.”

“Our best weapon in preventing damage from dam failures is planning. Emergency Action Plans developed by dam owners are essential. These life-saving documents identify potential emergency conditions and lay out exactly what will be done to save lives and property if they arise.”

“FEMA’s leadership initiatives in dam safety are providing the opportunity to more fully demonstrate how a modest investment in dam safety will actively mitigate the effects of dam failures and incidents.”

Senior FEMA Officials

“As existing dams age, dam safety has become an extremely important issue.”

“Throughout the history of the world, dams and reservoirs have been used successfully to collect, store, and manage water resources needed to sustain civilization.”

“To ensure the continued and dependable delivery of benefits from a dam, the owner must have a comprehensive plan for operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation. As dams become older, safe performance becomes a concern. This requires more attention in the form of inspections, evaluations, modifications, and upgrades of the older dams so they meet current technology, statutes, and regulations.”

United States Society of Dams

“Dams bring water, power, flood control, recreation, economic possibilities, and many other advantages to people. But people must understand that safe operation and maintenance is key to sustaining these advantages and avoiding potential disaster.”
“The majority of dams in this country are quickly approaching their 50-year life span, and rehabilitation of these structures is a major concern. In fact, it was estimated, based on dam inventory data, that by year 2000, 30 percent of dams will be 50 years old. In the year 2020, 80 percent of dams will reach the half-century mark.’

“Dam safety needs the support and recognition of state and federal legislators, dam owners, municipalities, developers, and the general public, all of whom depend on dams every day. Awareness is the first step.’

Association of State Dam Safety Officials

“As the rural communities continue to grow and expand, the surrounding small dams will be severely impacted. Most of these effected dams are approaching their design life. In order to mitigate potential hazards associated with this aging dam infrastructure, localities will need to pursue both a vigilant inspection program and the development of a comprehensive plan for effective and economical dam repairs/retrofits.”

John Sullivan, American Portland Cement Alliance

“We didn’t see it but we heard the noise of it coming...It was like a hurricane through a wooded country. It was a roar and a crash and a smash...”

John Hess, Survivor of the Johnstown Flood of 1889

“Words cannot lend impressiveness to the simple statement that only nine or ten families in Woodvale (a suburb of Johnstown) were not deprived of a father, mother, brother, or sister...Two hundred and fifty-five habitations were swept away, leaving not one house in Woodvale proper. Woodvale had ceased to exist!”

J.J. McLaurin, Survivor of the Johnstown Flood of 1889