

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 27, 2024

Lieutenant General William H. Graham Jr.
Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

The Honorable Michael L. Connor
Assistant Secretary of the Army Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Lieutenant General Graham and Assistant Secretary Connor:

Alaska relies heavily on the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to do vital work throughout the state and provide the tools needed to support new infrastructure and improve existing projects. We appreciate this critical work undertaken by the Corps, especially in times of need. As such, we are writing to bring to your immediate attention the devastating Mendenhall Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding events in Alaska's capital city, Juneau, and requesting the Corps advance measures to mitigate the imminent threat of future unusual glacial flooding by prioritizing a long-term engineering solution for the community.

Since 2009, Juneau has seen annual glacial lake outbursts triggered by the sudden release of water from Suicide Basin near the Mendenhall Glacier. However, the yearly glacial lake outbursts have become more devastating as the Mendenhall Glacier recedes, twice exceeding what was previously thought to be the 200-year annual flood event. Consequently, on August 6, 2024, Juneau saw unprecedented glacial flooding, with the Mendenhall River breaking all previous records with a 16-foot flood stage in the densely populated Mendenhall Valley. On September 19, the State of Alaska requested a federal disaster declaration to respond to the imminent threat of unusual flooding. As we write this letter, the community is bracing for a novel second annual release of Suicide Basin.

We recently had productive and motivating meetings with leaders from Juneau and the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. There is a high level of community support for working with the Corps on this project to mitigate further damage that may occur because of the imminent threat of glacial lake outburst flooding. As a long-term solution, the community has already appropriated a local match for a feasibility study investigating flood damage and erosion associated with Mendenhall Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding events. Given the emergency circumstances, we ask that the Corps engage immediately and prioritize this study

to mitigate further damage from this ongoing event. In the near term, we support the community's request for flood-fighting technical assistance.

Juneau needs a long-term engineering solution to mitigate the ongoing glacial lake outbursts in the next few years. Therefore, we urge the Corps to institute all available authorities and funding to prioritize this project. We appreciate your attention to this matter, which is essential to the people of Juneau, Alaska. The Corps has been a valued partner in the State of Alaska, and we look forward to continuing that partnership through this project.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Mary Sattler Peltola
Representative for All Alaska

Cc: Colonel Jeff Palazzini, District Commander, Alaska District
Randall L. Bowker, Director of Programs and Project Management, Alaska District
Mr. Bruce Sexauer, Chief of Civil Works, Alaska District