

# WHY SKIPPING A FEASIBILITY STUDY HURTS OUR CHANCES OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING

## The Board's Current Approach

Start with permits for a preferred solution (e.g., floodgate), before completing a feasibility study.

## Government Funding Requires "Problem Definition" First

Federal and state programs (e.g., USACE CAP 205, FEMA mitigation, DNREC partnerships) expect:

- A clearly defined problem
- Multiple alternatives evaluated
- Data showing why a specific solution is appropriate

➔ Permits assume the solution is already chosen. Funding programs expect the study to justify the solution.

## Permitting ≠ Feasibility

Permitting studies focus on:

- Environmental compliance
- Wetlands impacts
- Hydraulic modeling for a specific design

Feasibility studies answer different questions:

- Which buildings are actually at risk?
- How much elevation or mitigation is truly needed?
- Are there lower-cost or hybrid solutions?
- What options qualify for grants or cost-sharing?

➔ Skipping feasibility skips the questions funders require answered.

## Grant Agencies Rarely Fund "Single-Solution" Projects

Most funding agencies prioritize projects that:

- Consider multiple alternatives
- Demonstrate cost-effectiveness
- Show community-wide benefit
- Are supported by independent technical analysis

➔ A permit-driven approach signals:

"The decision is already made – funding is just being sought after."

That is a common reason projects are not funded.

## Risk of Spending Money That Can't Be Recovered

Money spent on:

- Permitting
- Design
- Environmental studies for one solution

May not be reusable if:

- The solution proves ineffective
- It fails cost-benefit tests
- It doesn't qualify for grants

➔ A feasibility study protects the community from sunk costs.



## What Government Partners Expect to See

- ✓ Independent feasibility or site assessment
- ✓ Multiple mitigation options evaluated
- ✓ Data-driven justification for any selected solution
- ✓ Clear linkage between problem, solution, and funding pathway

## A Better Path Forward

Do the feasibility study first, then:

- Select the right solution
  - Strengthen grant applications
  - Improve odds of federal/state cost-sharing
- Avoid spending money on the wrong approach

## Bottom Line

Jumping to permits before feasibility doesn't accelerate funding – it often disqualifies it.

