



Position Statement – Dam Decommissioning

USSD Position

USSD supports decommissioning of dams and restoration of the associated reservoir pool area when the dam has become a safety hazard and is not economical to repair for its intended purpose; or the dam is deemed undesirable by its owner via an acceptable public and regulatory review process. Decommissioning is defined as the full or partial removal of an existing dam, reservoir, and their associated facilities or significant changes to the operations thereof, such that the structure no longer meets the regulatory definition of a dam.

Dams may deteriorate and can create public safety hazards. Some dams may eventually be considered undesirable from an owner's economic perspective, or environmental, cultural, historical, aesthetic, recreation, or other public interest. Selection of dam decommissioning requires careful consideration of benefits, costs and risks for each alternative, which can be expressed monetarily, quantitatively, or qualitatively. Decommissioning must be considered on a case by case basis and consider regulatory requirements and environmental factors such as potential contaminated reservoir sediments, endangered species, and many others.

USSD Guidelines for Dam Decommissioning Projects are available at: www.usdams.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/15Decommissioning.pdf .

Prepared by the USSD ACPA Committee in cooperation with the USSD Dam Decommissioning Technical Committee.