



Nor'wester newsletter

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Senate approves FY2019 "minibus", includes funding for the Corps of Engineers

Today, the Senate passed their FY2019 Energy & Water Development Appropriations bill as part of a "minibus" which also funds Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and the Legislative Branch. The three-bill spending package was passed by a vote of 86-5, and comes after the House passed a similar minibus on June 8th.

As PNWA [reported](#) when the Senate's Energy & Water Development Appropriations bill was passed out of Committee, the Corps is funded at \$6.927 billion, an increase of \$2.142 billion over the President's FY2019 budget request. The overall navigation program would receive \$3.23 billion, with \$1.528 billion from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, well above the HMTF targets for FY2019. The bill also includes significant additional funding for small, deep draft, and inland navigation projects, and for donor/energy transfer ports. A comparison of the proposed funding in the House and Senate legislation can be found below:

	FY2019 PBUD	FY2019 House Bill	FY2019 Senate Bill
Overall Corps Funding	\$4,785,000,000	\$7,280,000,000	\$6,927,000,000
Corps Navigation Program	\$1,930,000,000	\$3,300,000,000	\$3,230,000,000
HMTF funding	\$965,130,000	\$1,600,000,000	\$1,528,000,000

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General Investigations	\$82,600,000	\$128,000,000	\$123,000,000
Flood Damage Reduction		\$7,500,000	\$7,500,000
Flood Control		\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
Shore Protection		\$2,250,000	\$2,000,000
Navigation		\$10,323,000	\$9,823,000
Coastal & Deep Draft		\$6,500,000	\$9,000,000
Inland		\$6,500,000	\$6,000,000
Other Project Purposes		\$6,750,000	\$5,000,000
Environmental Restoration		\$3,000,000	\$5,500,000
Construction	\$1,019,000,000	\$2,323,000,000	\$2,161,000,000
Flood Damage Reduction		\$200,000,000	\$150,000,000
Flood Control		\$180,000,000	\$150,000,000
Shore Protection		\$60,000,000	\$50,000,000
Navigation		\$525,067,000	\$500,250,000
IWTF		\$99,750,000	\$122,750,000
Other Project Purposes		\$125,000,000	\$70,000,000
Environmental Restoration		\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000
Environmental Infrastructure		\$80,000,000	\$75,000,000
Operations & Maintenance	\$3,193,000,000	\$3,820,000,000	\$3,740,000,000
Navigation Maintenance		\$32,902,000	\$25,000,000
Deep Draft Harbor & Channel		\$520,000,000	\$473,952,000
Donor & Energy Transfer Ports		\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000
Inland Waterways		\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000
Small, Remote & Subsistence		\$60,000,000	\$50,000,000

Other Authorized Purposes		\$75,000,000	\$45,000,000
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Passage by both the House and Senate opens the door to finalize funding for the Corps of Engineers before the start of the new fiscal year on October 1st. The two chambers will now need to conference the legislation, and concerns have already arisen about the ability to do so given differences between the two. While the Senate chose to largely avoid any controversy, the House legislation does address issues that will be hard to reconcile with their counterparts in the Senate.

PNWA would like to thank Senators Murray and Merkley for their leadership on the Senate Energy & Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee, as well as the entire Northwest Senate delegation for voting in favor of this legislation today. We will be tracking progress of FY2019 Corps funding as the process moves forward this year, and we will report any updates to our membership as they are available.

Trump Administration proposes reorganizing the federal government, including the Corps

Last year, the Trump Administration released an Executive Order directing the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to develop a plan to reorganize the Executive Branch of government. This week, the proposal was released and includes suggested changes for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps proposal is outlined on Page 30 of [Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century: Reform Plan and Reorganization Recommendations](#).

The proposal seeks to move the Corps Civil Works program out of the Department of Defense and divide the agency into the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Interior (DOI). Under the current civil works structure, the Corps carries out the Federal role in planning, engineering/design, construction and operations & maintenance of Federal water resources infrastructure including navigation, regulatory activities, and hydropower generation. The Administration's proposal would move Corps navigation to DOT, and transfer the

remaining civil works missions (including flood damage reduction, regulatory and ecosystem restoration) to DOI.

PNWA has historically been opposed to moving the Corps from DOD to other parts of the federal government. We have been most concerned about how the agency would be prioritized within other Departments. It is a routine challenge to bring focus on the nation's waterways, and we believe this proposal could further jeopardize how navigation and Corps activities are prioritized within the federal government.

We've seen a number of these proposals over the years, and overall, Congress has not been receptive either. Congress has instead recognized the need to streamline Corps activities and improve project delivery and stakeholder involvement, and have supported legislative fixes in various WRDAs. Just this year, the House approved a study in their Water Resources Development Act of 2018 (WRDA 2018) which would look impacts of transferring certain Corps functions to new or existing agencies. The Senate bill also calls for a comprehensive look at the agency. If Congress does support changes to the Corps, PNWA encourages a thorough and open process that would consider impacts to ports and navigation stakeholders not only in the Northwest, but across the nation.

PNWA is soliciting feedback from our members on this issue. Please contact [Heather Stebbings](#) to provide information.

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