



# Nor'wester newsletter

Issue #652 September 12, 2018

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## FY2019 Energy and Water Appropriations set to pass on schedule

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Congress is set to pass the FY2019 Energy & Water Development Appropriations bill on time, for the first time since 2009. The bill which funds the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is part of a "minibus" which also includes funding for the Legislative Branch and Military Construction-Veterans Affairs. It is expected that the minibus could head to the President's desk within the next week.

The bill includes \$6.998 billion for the Corps Civil Works program, \$2.2 billion more than the Administration proposed in their FY2019 budget request. Account allocations include \$125 million for investigations, \$2.183 billion for Construction, and \$3.739 billion for Operations & Maintenance (O&M).

Important "additional funding" for which the Corps will develop a workplan was also included in the bill. PNWA will continue our efforts to ensure the Corps, OMB and the Assistant Secretary of the Army's office have the information they need to direct funds to our navigation projects in the region. The agency will have 60 days from enactment to complete the workplan, which means that a final product could be released by the end of November. The additional funding provided to the Corps for workplan development includes:

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### Construction

Flood & Storm Damage Protection: \$150 million  
Flood Control: \$150 million  
Shore Protection: \$55 million  
Navigation: \$509 million  
Inland Waterways Trust Fund revenues: \$110 million  
Other project purposes: \$108 million  
Environmental Restoration: \$50 million  
Environmental Infrastructure: \$77 million

### Investigations

Flood & Storm Damage Protection: \$6.5 million  
Flood Control: \$4.5 million  
Shore Protection: \$2 million  
Navigation: \$10 million  
Coastal: \$9 million  
Inland: \$5.5 million  
Other project purposes: \$6.5 million  
Environmental restoration: \$3.75 million

### Operations & Maintenance

Navigation maintenance: \$23 million  
Deep draft harbors & channels: \$475 million  
Donor & energy transfer ports: \$50 million  
Inland waterways: \$40 million  
Small, remote or subsistence navigation: \$54 million  
Other authorized purposes: \$50 million

*Nor'wester* readers may recall that the House and Senate both passed their Energy & Water bills in June, but negotiations were stalled due to some disagreements between the two chambers, including over controversial provisions in the House bill. One of those provisions was regarding the Columbia Snake River System dams and increased spill operations ordered earlier this year by Judge Simon. Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Dan Newhouse have been working to include language that would require the federal agencies to operate the dams in accordance with the Corps' 2017 fish operations plan, rather than with the Judge's order. Compromise language was included in the final bill, which notes that many conferees have concerns with judicial interference in operations of the dams and also precludes any funding from being spent to remove a federal dam in the region or elsewhere. PNWA is very appreciative of the efforts of Rep. Newhouse and Rep. McMorris Rodgers to support safe, efficient, reliable river operations and navigation stakeholders in the region.

The conferenced Energy & Water bill also rejects a proposal by the Administration to reorganize the Corps. Earlier this year, the Administration released a memorandum proposing that the Corps' Civil Works program be moved to the Department of Transportation. Conferees noted that they are opposed to the reorganization, and that no funds from this Act shall be spent on implementation. PNWA has also been opposed to this concept and is pleased that conferees included this language.

PNWA will continue to go through this bill, and will report additional details to our members as they are available. The bill can be viewed [here](#) and report language [here](#). For more information, contact [Heather Stebbings](#).

## Water resources bill agreement reached by House & Senate Committee leaders

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An agreement has been reached today between the House and Senate Committee leaders on bipartisan legislation regarding water resources infrastructure. The House is expected to vote on the legislation tomorrow. Click [here](#) for the text of the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018. In previous years, this legislation has been known as the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

House Transportation and Infrastructure Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-OR) announced that "this bipartisan legislation will authorize water infrastructure projects developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which will strengthen our coastal communities, help keep us competitive in the world economy, and restore our coastal environment. These critical water infrastructure projects will improve our Nation's ports, harbors, and waterways, and create and sustain thousands of good-paying American jobs. I applaud my colleagues for their bipartisan work, and I look forward to getting this bill passed and signed into law."

House Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) noted "this bill is an important step toward modernizing America's critical water infrastructure. Making important improvements to our water resources infrastructure in turn

boosts the economy, strengthens national security, and protects the environment. It also provides much-needed investments and updates to our nation's aging drinking water infrastructure to not only ensure these systems can operate well into the future but also address the most pressing drinking water issues in the States."

The bill includes important language for several PNWA members. We are pleased to announce the legislation supports an expedited feasibility study for the Tacoma Harbor deepening study. Additionally, language was included in support of a potential land transfer between the Corps and the Port of Whitman County. This language was championed by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), and could help expand activities along the Snake River such as the shipping of grain and distribution of other products.

The America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 also includes a number of reports related to administration and management of the Corps, especially with regard to agency prioritization and project oversight. The bill also requires a study about the future of the Corps, evaluating the ability of the Corps to carry out their mission, improvements to the project delivery process, and the impacts of potentially moving the agency out of the Department of Defense (DOD). PNWA has historically opposed the concept of moving the Corps from DOD jurisdiction or breaking apart the Corps over several other agencies. Conferees for the FY2019 minibus have noted their opposition to actual implementation of a similar concept proposed by the Administration earlier this year.

PNWA is very grateful for the longstanding efforts of Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and our entire Northwest Congressional delegation for their support of this important legislation. We strongly encourage continued support and final passage of this bill, such that water resources development legislation can stay on a biennial schedule.



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