



Nor'wester Newsletter

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House releases Energy & Water bill

On June 27, the House Appropriations Committee released their [FY2018 Energy & Water Development bill](#). The bill, which funds the Corps of Engineers, Department of Energy and other related agencies, totals \$37.56 billion and prioritizes national security, encourages energy independence and makes critical infrastructure investments to increase the nation's economic competitiveness. The bill was passed out of the Energy & Water Development Subcommittee by a voice vote yesterday.

Subcommittee Chairman Mike Simpson (R, ID), stated that "This bill prioritizes fulfilling our national security needs and maintaining critical investments to support American competitiveness within tight budget caps. It strikes a responsible balance between modernization and safety of our nuclear weapons, advancing national infrastructure, and strategic investments based on science and energy R&D."

Within the bill, the Corps was funded at \$6.16 billion, \$120 million above FY2017 enacted levels and \$1.16 billion above the President's budget request. It prioritizes activities that will have the most immediate impact on public safety, job creation, and economic growth, including funding to support the nation's ports and waterways. The House legislation includes \$2.8 billion for the Corps navigation program, including \$1.34 billion from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF), exceeding the HMTF target set forth in WRRDA 2014.

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The bill increases all account level funding and activity for the Corps over the President's budget request. It provides \$105 million for General Investigations (GI) and allows six new study starts to move forward in FY2018 with up to five focusing on navigation. For Construction General (CG), the bill provides \$1.697 billion to cover the federal costs of construction projects, and allows for two new construction starts. For Operations & Maintenance (O&M), the account most PNWA supported projects depend on, the bill provides \$3.509 billion, an increase of \$360 million over FY2017 enacted levels. \$200 million is also provided for the Corps regulatory program, an amount that has remained relatively steady of the past few years.

Additional information, including project level details and the funding pot amounts, should be released soon. PNWA will keep our members updated as information is available.

Trump Administration to withdraw "Water of the United States" rule

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced plans to revoke the Obama Administration's controversial "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) ruling. The rule had concerned many in the agricultural, real estate and industrial communities due to its expansion of the definition of "navigable waters" under the Clean Water Act. Many stakeholders in the Northwest, including farmers and ports, raised concern on the implications of the ruling on land use decisions, permit review times, mitigation requirements and supply chain delays. Withdraw of the rule will allow the Trump Administration to draft its own proposed rule for defining navigable waters, which will then also be subject to public comment. PNWA will be tracking this issue and will alert our members to opportunities to participate in the process as it moves forward.

