

SUPPORT AUTHORIZATION OF THE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT (WRDA)

ACTION NEEDED:

Urge federal lawmakers to pass a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill during the 118th Congress and to continue the two-year WRDA authorization cycle.

BACKGROUND:

WRDA bills authorize water resources studies and projects and set policies for navigation, flood control, hydropower, recreation, water supply and emergency management for the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps). This legislation advances county interests related to ports, inland waterways, levees, dams, wetlands, watersheds and coastal restoration.

Congress has returned to regular order, passing WRDA legislation on a two-year authorization cycle since 2014. The Congressional authorizing committees are expected to consider a new WRDA bill during the 118th Congress as the current authorization will expire at the end of 2024. As owners, users and regulators of water resources and infrastructure, counties are directly impacted by the policies and funding authorized in the legislation. We often partner with the Army Corps to strengthen local infrastructure.

NACo has played a key role in including county priorities in previous WRDA bills. During the 2018 WRDA cycle, NACo members testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works to discuss the county role in strengthening America's water infrastructure. The final 2018 WRDA bill included several provisions supported by counties, such as requiring the Army Corps to consult with impacted stakeholders, including local government, on future pending WRDA projects, annual district budgets, deauthorized projects and guidance documents. NACo leadership was also active during the 2020 and 2022 WRDA cycles, sending multiple letters to Congressional leaders advocating for county priorities.

AS OWNERS, USERS AND REGULATORS OF WATER RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE, COUNTIES ARE DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY THE POLICIES AND FUNDING AUTHORIZED IN THE WRDA LEGISLATION. COUNTIES OFTEN WORK WITH THE ARMY CORPS TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

THROUGH WRDA, THE ARMY CORPS SUPPORTS CERTAIN PROJECTS AND STUDIES, ALLOWING COMMUNITIES WITH LIMITED FUNDS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH VITAL PROJECTS THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE UNAFFORDABLE.

To view the most up-to-date information, scan the QR code below:



2024 POLICY BRIEF

KEY TALKING POINTS:

- Counties support preserving and maintaining the partnership between federal, state and local governments for funding, implementing and maintaining essential and environmentally sound navigation, harbor, beach management, and flow control projects across the nation.
- Local governments need a strong WRDA to address critical water infrastructure needs in our communities.
- Through WRDA, the Army Corps supports certain projects and studies, allowing some communities with limited funds to move forward with vital projects that would otherwise be unaffordable.

NACo WRDA 2024 Priorities

- Improve Consultation with Local Governments on Projects
- Revise the Process to Assess Benefits of Federally Funded Water Infrastructure Projects
- Increase Funding for the Use of Natural Infrastructure to Mitigate the Risk of Storms and Flooding and Improve Resiliency
- Support Research into Harmful Algal Bloom Prevention and Mitigation
- Increase Funding for Publicly Owned Dams and Levees
- Invest in Transboundary Water and Seward Infrastructure Along U.S./International Borders Fund Continued Education and Scientific Studies of Ocean Acidification

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