

# 2019 POLICY BRIEF

## SUPPORT AUTHORIZATION OF THE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT (WRDA)

### QUICK FACTS

- 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)
- As owners, users and regulators of water resources and infrastructure, counties are directly impacted by the policies and funding authorized in the legislation. Counties often work with the Army Corps to strengthen local infrastructure
- 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

### ACTION NEEDED:

Urge federal lawmakers to pass a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill during the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress and continue a regular two-year 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 is usually passed on a biennial basis and addresses county interests related to ports, inland waterways, levees, dams, wetlands, watersheds and coastal restoration.

Congress has recently returned to regular order, passing WRDA legislation on a two-year authorization cycle in 2014, 2016 and 2018. The current authorization will expire at the end of 2020 and the congressional authorizing committees are expected to consider a new WRDA bill during the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

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NACo played a key role in including county priorities in the 2018 WRDA bill, testifying before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and discussing the county role in strengthening America's water infrastructure. The final 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.

### KEY TALKING POINTS

- As owners, users and regulators of water resources and infrastructure, counties are directly impacted by the policies and funding authorized in the legislation. Counties often work with the Army Corps as a non-federal partner to strengthen local infrastructure
- 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



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For further information, contact: Julie Ufner at 202.942.4269 [jufner@naco.org](mailto:jufner@naco.org).



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