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## Corps Work Plan

Sources tell us the Corps intends to have its FY20 Work Plan released on February 10th. That's the same day the president is expected to release his budget proposal for FY21. Right now, the Corps' recommended Work Plan allocations are at the Assistant Secretary's office. They have the hard job of working with the president's Office of Management and Budget, which imposes its own standards on which projects get into the final Work Plan.

As the Work Plan release date gets close, members of Congress have been sending letters to the Assistant Secretary and OMB listing their Corps funding priorities. That's one of the few things they can do, given that the President earmarks the Corps budget and then has final say on which projects get the additional \$2 billion-plus that Congress added. The two Florida Senators have a huge laundry list of vetted projects in need of funding. They posted their list [here](#). Senator Shaheen of New Hampshire made a similar [effort](#) for her state's more limited coastline. These are just two examples of elected officials doing the best they can for their water resources projects.

**FY19 Supplemental Appropriations** →

## Corps Releases FY19 Supplemental Appropriations

Nine months ago, Congress provided the Corps with \$3.258 billion of funding to repair projects damaged by natural disasters in 2019. Last September, it allocated \$1 billion of that total for emergency repairs to coastal and other flood control projects. On January 14th, the Corps announced the recipients of \$35 million in investigations funding, including Wrightsville Beach and Carolina Beach in North Carolina, and Mexico Beach and Gulf Counties in Florida. Almost all of the projects on this list got a flat \$3 million, indicating full federal funding for a feasibility study. Another \$608 million in construction funding was also released. Recipients included Surf City and North Topsail as well as Bogue Banks in North Carolina. Another \$132 million is awaiting action.

Why did it take so long for the Corps (OMB, really) to release this list? What's the total list of projects considered for funding? And how were these projects chosen? Those are questions Congress ought to be asking since there is zero transparency in this or the Work Plan allocations. Note also, that the two North Carolina projects selected for construction funding were authorized at least four years ago. As new starts, they had a hard time competing for the limited number of new starts allowed for all types of Corps projects. That number is usually around six. For both construction and investigations, there's far more gold in getting hit by a storm and funded post-disaster than in the budget and Work Plan process pre-disaster. That's a sad commentary on how the U.S. handles flood risks. To see the lists of projects and related materials, click [here](#).

## FEMA Asked to Put Climate Change Front and Center

Sen. Markey (D-MA) has introduced S. 3204, the FEMA Climate Change Preparedness Act. It directs FEMA to re-insert climate change into the agency's strategic plan and all future plans and directs that agency to perform a national assessment on climate change risks and preparedness, to be updated periodically. The text of the bill is available [here](#).

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**Impeachment** →

# Impeachment

The Senate trial on the impeachment charges brought by the House against President Trump require each Senator to be present in the chamber during the trial without cell phones, tablets or staff. The process starts today, Tuesday the 21st, and is expected to last from three to six weeks.

## A Focus on Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico has gotten really, really, unlucky. From hurricanes to earthquakes, Puerto Ricans can't get a break. And the Federal Government has not helped much.

In a press release from Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), the Administration was thanked for lifting a hold on long delayed disaster relief funds for Puerto Rico from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. However, citing the Administration's disdain for the people of Puerto Rico, Rep. Velázquez stated, "we cannot afford for the Trump Administration to repeat the mistakes of Maria, which cost thousands of our fellow citizens their lives. Our government must do better."

Puerto Rico has been wildly unprepared (evidenced through the series of recent disasters) for natural disasters. As a US territory and Part of FEMA's region II, there is no excuse for the failure of FEMA, the Corps and the Administration to execute proper disaster relief.

Last week the President signed a major disaster declaration for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Mr Trump was egged on by a letter from 34 Democratic Senators requesting a disaster declaration, in addition to a letter from the Governor of Puerto Rico.

## FEMA Administrator Confirmed

Mr. Peter T. Gaynor has more than 11 years of experience in emergency management. Prior to coming to FEMA, Gaynor served as the Director of Rhode Island's Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) in 2015. During that time, RIEMA responded to numerous small and large disasters, including one presidentially declared disaster and at least seven pre-existing active federal disasters. Gaynor oversaw response and recovery efforts to blizzards, floods, tropical storms and public health emergencies. He also coordinated evacuations, mass care, special events, and school safety.

**Great Lakes** 

## Great Lakes Erosion

It's not all about the ocean-facing coast. And while most of us would not consider the Great Lakes to be oceans, they are massive bodies of water with massive, eroding coastlines just like the Atlantic, Caribbean and Pacific coasts.

Representatives from Michigan met with FEMA and the Army Corps last week to discuss and request assistance for mitigation erosion along their shoreline to alleviate the burden on some of their constituents.

Water levels across the Great Lakes are higher than ever and bluffs and beaches are eroding rapidly. Houses are falling off their foundations and flooding from high winds and rain. Lake Michigan is 15 inches above its level from a year ago. High water levels not only cause erosion, but threaten property values and damage docks, breakwaters and other coastal features.

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