

# WATERLOG

NEW IDEAS IN COASTAL RESILIENCY

September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Appropriations – Supplemental already?

We're back with Hurricane season in full swing. Laura did major damage in the Gulf and Senators Cassidy, Kennedy, Cornyn, and Cruz, have requested supplemental funding from Senate leadership. The [letter](#) does not include a dollar figure, but highlights that other natural disasters and the pandemic have spent a majority of the existing disaster relief funds. So far, the Administration hasn't proposed a supplemental disaster funding bill, and the House – which lately has been quick to jump-start that process – has shown no interest of jump-starting the process while the Senate leadership has failed to act to agree on another major spending bill to keep our pandemic-fueled recession from spiraling further downward.

What is also interesting to us here at Waterlog, is the minimal news coverage on Laura. Hurricane Laura was one of the most powerful Hurricanes to ever develop in history in the Gulf of Mexico, with winds exceeding 170mph, yet news coverage lasted only a few days. With the pandemic and the election taking the spotlight, we can't forget mother nature is still full speed ahead. Did you notice less news coverage too?

The House has passed 10 spending bills while the Senate has passed none... leaving not much to talk about. That means a Continuing Resolution will be necessary to keep the government funded on October 1<sup>st</sup>, the beginning of the federal fiscal year. It will extend funding until sometime after Labor Day.

## WRDA – Discussions beginning soon

The Water Resources Development Act of 2020, [H.R. 7575](#), which passed the House in July, and [S. 3591](#), which passed the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in May, are in early talks between House and Senate staff, with hopes of getting a bill finalized and in front of the President this Fall. Despite the fact that the Senate version hasn't made it to the floor, we think the secret staff negotiations will lead to a final WRDA bill that will be already amended when it gets to the Senate floor, passed and quickly passed by the House, too. That's the only way it can get done before election day. The holdup right now appears to be efforts by some Senate Republicans to add a highway bill to the water resource bill and claim victory for passage of an Infrastructure package – an unfulfilled Trump campaign pledge from 2016. We think that won't happen and WRDA will pass on its own.

Also expected to be included in WRDA is new money authorized for clean water resiliency and watershed-based projects, and language that calls upon the Army Corps of Engineers to consider natural formations

and features when boosting coastal resiliency and restoration from the threat of climate change. The bipartisan nature of infrastructure and WRDA in particular has led to a swift passing in prior years.

### **NFIP – An extension through FY21?**

The Trump Administration requested an extension of the NFIP through fiscal FY21. Lawmakers are pressed for time battling other issues such as economic relief, the pandemic alongside appropriations and infrastructure legislation including WRDA, which could kick the can further down memory lane. It is becoming tradition!

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