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**NOTICE: USACE Section 7001 Portal is OPEN!** | [Section 7001](#) refers to the process in which non-federal interests (i.e., you or your community) request new federal water resources projects to the Corps of Engineers for authorization in the Water Resources Development Act. This includes all water resources projects like beach nourishment, dams, levees, and other flood mitigation projects. The [portal](#) closes August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Please let us know if you have any questions or are interested in working with us on submitting a proposal.

**Offshore Wind Legislation Directs Revenues to Beach Nourishment and Coastal Protection** | States impacted by offshore wind projects deserve a cut of the revenues derived from the sale of lease areas to offset impacts to the environment and local economies. The Save Limit Grow Act of 2023, HR.1, or the Debt Ceiling Bill, [HR. 2811](#), both contain the same provisions relating to the revenues derived from the sale or lease of areas along the outer continental shelf for offshore wind. Last year BOEM brought in over \$5 billion in revenue from offshore wind lease sales. Currently, those funds are deposited into the general treasury and are then divvied up further into a variety of other conservation funds. Members of Congress are trying to bring home a piece of the pie for their constituents, with House Member Steven Scalise (R-LA 1) leading the House side. The House legislation would direct 50% of offshore wind revenue to impacted states and political subdivisions based on their geographic proximity to a wind farm, 37.5% to the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, and 12.5% into the general treasury. A similar version proposed in the Senate in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, led by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), [S. 2130](#), would direct 50% of revenues to the general treasury, 37.5% to states and political subdivisions and 12.5% to the National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund. This will be one of the many things that will be worked out if this bill has any chance of passing the democratically controlled Senate.

From our coastal-focused perspective, there are far greater benefits to contributing revenues to the [National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund](#) than to the [North American Wetlands Conservation Fund](#), which is generally more of a sportsman's fund for the conservation of important migratory bird habitat and in establishing or enhancing many of the country's most popular destinations for waterfowl hunting and birding. The National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund invests in projects that restore or expand natural features such as coastal marshes and wetlands, dune and beach systems, oyster and coral reefs, forests, coastal rivers and floodplains, and barrier islands that minimize the impacts of coastal flooding on nearby communities.

**A Promise Politicians Can't Keep - Offshore Wind Jobs** | Politicians frequently offer two false promises related to offshore wind – Tens of thousands of industry jobs and a fix for climate change. Neither are true. In fact, offshore wind is likely to displace more coastal economy jobs than it creates by severely disrupting tourism and commercial fishing economies. According to an [Interior press release](#) last month, the South Fork wind project will create 165 short term construction jobs over two years, giving way to only 10 long-term jobs once operations and maintenance begin. While South Fork Wind is a small project compared to other projects slated to come online, the process for construction doesn't change, with turbines going up one by one, meaning the same crew sizes will be used for other farms regardless of their size.

To make matters worse, there simply aren't enough US flagged vessels to complete the work, meaning foreign developers will continue rely on cheap foreign labor on their foreign-flagged vessels so long as they can circumvent the Jones Act. A Scottish jobs study [showed](#) that the offshore wind industry only produced one tenth of the jobs politicians and the wind industry promised to it would bring. Union workers called it an embarrassment.

Another article [quoted](#), "it is shocking that the Scottish Government is not seeing what is going on here in their waters. This is supposed to be a Scottish green landmark, the green revolution. But it is all about having cheap labor." The loophole is made possible by the Offshore Wind Workers Concession (OWWC) rules which allow the employment of cheaper foreign nationals on offshore wind projects. Many of the UK workers being replaced by Malaysian and Philippine workers were already getting paid minimum wage.

To support American Jobs in the American energy transition, Congressman Garamendi (D-CA) of California recently secured [language](#) in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2023 that would require all vessels servicing US offshore wind facilities affected by the Jones act to ensure their crews are either Americans or legal immigrants, or workers of the flag of the vessel. Offshore wind developers are currently relying on cheap foreign labor to staff service vessels and will continue to do so without such legislation, a blow to American jobs.

**FEMA (NFIP) – Out of Money, Again?** | Not only is the NFIP running out of money, the cost of paying interest on its \$20 billion in debt has ballooned to roughly \$1 million per day. In House committee hearings both the agency and some Members of Congress wondered about the NFIP's long-term fiscal sustainability. However, on every occasion that the program has come up for reauthorization since 2016, Congress has ducked reforms and instead kicked the can down the road by providing a short-term reauthorization of the existing program.

**Debt Ceiling Negotiations** | The US is the only country that has a debt limit. We have appropriations and a budget limit (at least in theory). The debt limit includes money the federal government has borrowed to pay for the expenditures Congress has appropriated plus interest on that debt. Due to both increased spending and higher interest rates, the debt limit set by Congress has to be increased. June 1<sup>st</sup> or thereabouts is when our current debt limit will be reached, so you will be hearing more about this as that deadline approaches. Republicans have tied a debt limit increase to major decreases in spending that could include the Corps, EPA, NOAA, and other so-called domestic discretionary spending. **WaterLog** subscribers will get an update on this issue as soon as there is news to report ... For those readers concerned about the [rising national debt](#), it's "unsustainable over the long-term" according to Congress' own nonpartisan watchdog, the General Accountability office. Click [here](#) to see their recommendations.

**WRDA – It’s Never Too Early** | The next Water Resources Development Act won’t get to the front burner for at least 8 months, but it’s never too early for state and local sponsors of new or modified projects to start the advocacy process. Once you get your proposed project scoped out and bolstered by facts about its benefits, you will need to file a Section 7001 request with the Assistant Secretary of the Army. Requests approved and rejected by the ASA become part of the annual Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development. See our notice at the top for more on this important step in advocating for your project. The same requirements apply for those who want to modify a project that has already been authorized by Congress, even if it hasn’t been constructed.

**Update on Congress** | Despite the lack of agreement on increasing the debt limit, the House and Senate Appropriation Committees have been holding hearings in preparation for finalizing funding bills for the next fiscal year that begins on October 1<sup>st</sup>. We expect the political divisions over spending amounts and priorities to be significant, with a hopeful resolution by December... Last but not least, we are tracking 38 bills that have been introduced affecting coastal America. Find the list and their latest status [here](#).

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