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INTRODUCING THE AMERICAN COASTAL COALITION

There are trade associations for chicken farmers, dentists and corrugated box manufacturers... But what about coastal communities?

Originally formed in 1996 to combat the Clinton Administration's opposition to beach nourishment, today the [American Coastal Coalition](#) is a network of city managers, mayors and businesses that advocate at the federal level for funding for beach nourishment, resilient community infrastructure and critical facilities.

As a reader of WaterLog, you understand how important beaches, tourism and dredging are to your community, job or business. Join ACC today to support beach nourishment, dredging and promote tourism in coastal communities!

For more information, visit: www.americancoastalcoalition.org

FEMA: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

With the hurricane season upon us, the Trump administration is looking for ways to make it harder for states and individuals to qualify for disaster assistance. A memo from then-acting FEMA administrator Cameron Hamilton (more on his status below) outlined several ways the Administration could significantly reduce the total number of disaster declarations it approved as well as the amount of federal assistance provided. In a House subcommittee hearing earlier this month, Hamilton said the Administration plans to limit assistance for most severe disasters to an as-yet-undisclosed formula based on "each state's efforts." He held out Florida and Texas as two states that have taken the lead in "incentivizing lower

disaster thresholds.” He also said that the federal government should be “backstopping states when their own resources are inadequate.”

As reported in last month’s *WaterLog*, the Administration has cut off the BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities) pre-disaster mitigation program, which Hamilton claimed had violated congressional policies. The only details he provided were alleged deficiencies in the design of projects that had been given BRIC awards. Nevertheless, he said that BRIC grant recipients whose awards had been cut off as well as grant applicants were being reviewed based on the degree they plan to reduce risk or “increase preparedness and capability building.” The subcommittee chair asked each member to submit up to 3 BRIC projects that had been denied by the Administration, with a promise from Administrator Hamilton that he would provide reasons for the denial.

Asked whether he thought FEMA should be abolished, Hamilton responded “I don’t believe it should be eliminated.” The next day, the situation got ugly when Hamilton was fired, probably because his boss, the Secretary of Homeland Security, had said she planned to shutter the agency.

At the same time the agency lost its Acting Administrator, the bipartisan leaders of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee announced they were releasing a discussion draft of a bill that would make FEMA an independent agency reporting directly to the president and make various reforms so that the delays in getting assistance to states and individuals for which the agency had become known would be eliminated. Sponsored by committee Chair Sam Graves (R-MO) and Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA), the proposal is designed to “provide the most robust legislative reform of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and federal disaster assistance programs in decades.” Get the text of the proposed bill [here](#). In addition to returning FEMA to its previous independent agency status, the draft bill sets time limits on FEMA for reviewing applications for disaster assistance, more transparency regarding application status, and incentives for increased federal cost share. The bill is known as *The Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025* is the first time bipartisan leaders of Congress have asserted congressional prerogatives to solve an issue initially raised by the Trump administration.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT GRANTS ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

According to a report from the Coastal States Organization, President Trump plans to eliminate all CZMA Grants in this FY26 budget proposal. According to CSO, CZM programs carry out state and local priorities for the effective management, beneficial use, protection,

and development of the coastal zone and its resources. Elimination of the grants would jeopardize that work. The organization is asking businesses, local governments, and other stakeholders to [sign-on](#) to a statement in support of the grant program.

ARMY CORPS NOMINEE PRESSED ON REBUILDING ERODED BEACHES IN FLORIDA

Adam Telle, the Administration's nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, which oversees the Corps of Engineers, was pressed by Senator Rick Scott (FL) on how he would approach the perpetual easements requirement for homeowners in regard to the Pinellas County beach nourishment project. Whether or not homeowners should be required to provide perpetual (forever) easements for 50-year beach nourishment projects, rather than 50-year easements, has remained sticky issue for several years that lawmakers have not been able to overcome. Mr. Telle is currently the Chief of Staff for Senator Bill Hagerty (TN).

SECTION 7001 PROPOSALS DUE

Proposals by local and state governments for new feasibility studies, proposed modifications to existing water resources development projects, and proposed modifications to environmental infrastructure program authorities are due no later than August 15, 2025. If you have a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) proposed new study or project, it should be submitted following what is known as the Section 7001 proposal. Congress looks first to the report of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to see if the Administration supports the proposal before determining what it will include in its 2026 WRDA legislation. Even if the proposal is not approved and is, therefore, included in the annual report's Appendix, it helps to follow the Section 7001 process which can be found [here](#).

CLIMATE CHANGE COSTS NO LONGER A FACTOR

The Administration has issued a directive that "the calculation of the social cost of carbon is marked by logical deficiencies, a poor basis in empirical science, politicization, and the absence of a foundation in legislation. Agencies should review their various statutory, regulatory, and other policy requirements that govern regulatory and permitting decisions and limit their analysis and consideration of greenhouse gas emissions only to that plainly required in their governing statutes..." Beyond the social cost of carbon, it is unclear whether this regulatory theme could eventually include government sea level rise estimates that are included in all Corps of Engineers project designs. The guidance only says that "agencies

charged with implementing regulations and issuing permits where greenhouse gas emissions have in the past been a factor (erroneously, in many instances) should consider this guidance when engaging in their regulatory activities.”

FEMA CUTS EMERGENCY TRAINING FOR STATE AND LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGERS

As a result of travel bans and budget cuts, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has significantly reduced its training for state and local emergency managers ahead of the 2025 hurricane season. FEMA has canceled in-person workshops, including sessions at the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans. Virtual training is now prioritized despite experts claiming they are less effective for practical exercises.

FEMA’s reorganization alongside the Administration’s push for states to take greater responsibility for natural disasters may catch some communities by surprise as the 2025 hurricane season looms, which predicts 17 named storms and 9 hurricanes. FEMA argues that the cuts eliminate duplicative training and that virtual sessions are sufficient for hurricane preparedness.

History has shown that the federal government has played a major role in disaster recovery. However, given the uncertainty that the federal government will be there post-disaster, state and local governments should consider preparing as if they will have to respond entirely on their own.

NEWS BRIEFS

The FY26 appropriations process is underway with deadlines set in the House and Senate for members of Congress to submit their earmark requests this month with House appropriations committee action expected to come before the July 4th recess. President Trump has signed a memorandum supporting the \$1.5 billion Brandon Road Lock and Dam project designed to prevent the invasion of Asian carp into the Great Lakes. The project has been in development for two decades and is deemed critical to the health of the Great Lakes by bipartisan members of Congress. Elon Musk may be gone but the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) will be having impacts for several months. For example, researchers at NOAA say their work has been slowed or stopped because requests for funding sit on political appointees’ desks awaiting approval. EPA water pollution researchers are facing the same delays, as the R&D work of both agencies is coming under Administration scrutiny first started by DOGE and now ingrained in department leaders. Many have also found that even getting pens and other supplies has become difficult

because government credit cards are now limited to \$1 per purchase, rendering them useless.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A bill (**S. 725**, Sen. Klobuchar, D-MN) to direct the Federal Communications Commission to issue reports after activation of the Disaster Information Reporting System and to make improvements to network outage reporting, to categorize public safety telecommunicators as a protective service occupation under the Standard Occupational Classification system has been approved with amendments by the Senate Commerce Committee and is headed for a Senate floor vote in the next few weeks. Also receiving Commerce Committee approval is **S.759** (Sen. Cruz, R-TX) to require the Department of Commerce to make available on a publicly accessible website geographic information system data that (1) includes information about federal waterway restrictions; (2) describes the location and geographic boundaries of such restrictions; and (3) describes restrictions imposed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on method of catch, such as requirements relating to the use of circle hooks, descending devices, and trolling and, separately, **S.843** (Markey-D-MA), a bill to award grants to address sea turtle rescue, rehabilitation, and response. **H.R. 517** (Rep Kustoff, R-TN) to authorize the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to postpone certain tax filing deadlines by reason of a state-declared disaster has passed the House and is now awaiting action in the Senate Finance Committee.

COASTAL BILLS IN CONGRESS

[Click here](#) for a searchable list of coastal legislation.

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