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House Committee Approves Corps Funding Bill

The House Appropriations Committee has passed a FY26 funding bill that would give the Corps about a 13.5% increase to \$9.883 billion. Of that amount, \$1.97 billion is for the broad category of flood and storm damage reduction activities. However, only \$23 million is for beach nourishment. Of that small amount, just \$15,600,000 is for placing sand on beaches. The American Coastal Coalition has written to the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees that oversee the Corps' budget urging \$200 million for beach nourishment. The expected federal cost for the NJ projects alone exceeds \$115 million. The Senate Appropriations Committee has yet to act on its Corps funding measure, which must include a significantly larger beach nourishment figure than the House.

Government Shutdown Looms Once Again

It's no surprise that Congress will not complete its action on funding bills by the September 30th deadline. That date marks the end of the federal government's fiscal year, and it's impossible for both the House and Senate to get their funding work done by that time. What's worse is the possibility that there will be no appropriations bills passed forcing Congress to pass a Continuing Resolution to keep the government funded through FY26 at the same levels as FY25. We'll have more to say about that subject in future issues. However, it's important for the funding of programs in the Corps, NOAA, EPA, and elsewhere that Congress find a way to get funding bills passed for FY26, even if it takes a few extra months to reach that goal. Otherwise, allocation of funding is left almost entirely in the hands of the Administration.

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Future of FEMA Still Uncertain

The acting head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency was unable to tell a congressional committee this week what FEMA's future will be under this Administration. Testifying before the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, acting FEMA director David Richardson would only say that "the president wants a better emergency management for the American people." In last month's issue of WaterLog, we reported that the bipartisan leaders of that committee have circulated a discussion draft of a bill that would guarantee FEMA's continuance as an agency but make it independent of the Department

of Homeland Security among other reforms. A hearing to discuss that bill was postponed earlier this month, but the [proposal](#) will be formally introduced today. Richardson repeated that the Administration wants FEMA to return to its “statutory mission” and shift disaster response to state and local governments. That view apparently clashes with the proposed reform bill, so the outcome of this debate remains to be decided.

NEPA Reform Sees Action

Following a May Supreme Court decision that invalidated the White House Council on Environmental Quality’s regulations governing agency enforcement of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), President Trump ordered each agency to terminate its NEPA rules and replace them with new “streamlined” policies designed to speed the NEPA process. The Corps of Engineers published its proposed new NEPA rules in the July 3rd issue of the Federal Register. Comments are due on or before August 4, 2025. [Here is a link](#) to the proposed rules for the Corps.

Coastal Legislative Update

We’re tracking 137 bills so far in this first year of the two-year 119th Congress. [View the list here.](#)

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